

Washington State Senate

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Senator Steve O'Brien (R-University Place) announced today that he is introducing legislation to prohibit the City of Seattle and other cities from withholding police, fire and rescue, and other essential services from a neighborhood or community in its jurisdiction. His legislation is intended to prevent OIAZ or OIAOP from ever happening again.

"I fully support the constitutional rights to peacefully assemble and of free speech, especially to correct leaders of injustice and unfairness," said O'Brien. "But that does not mean the Mayor and Seattle City leadership should have allowed, encouraged, supported, and even celebrated the establishment of the so-called autonomous zone and occupation of the East Precinct and streets, sidewalks and parks in Capitol Hill."

The City of Seattle abandoned and closed off the East Precinct of the Seattle PD and a several block area, designated by protesters as the Capital Hill Autonomous Zone, or OIAZ. It appears, after two killings, assaults and substantial property destruction, to be starting the process of retaking the area.

"Occupants of OIAZ have had varied and shifting demands," said O'Brien. "But the one demand that had remained unchanged was their refusal to allow law enforcement to timely perform their vital functions of protecting residents from violence, threats and property destruction."

O'Brien said that because of the City's actions and inactions, police and fire and rescue have been unable to adequately protect the citizens and businesses within OIAZ, subjecting them to unreasonable and preventable harm, including killings, assaults, vandalism, extensive property damage, and other crimes.

"The City did little for weeks to restore public order while the conditions deteriorated by the hour, resulting in two murders, gunshot victims, other assaults and an array of property crimes and destruction," O'Brien added. "The City refused to permit the police to re-assert their authority and protect residents."

O'Brien said the legislature must act to prevent another OIAZ like occupation from ever happening again in the state.

"Why should state tax dollars and funds to the City of Seattle for services they refused to render?" said O'Brien. "My bill will prohibit cities from taking taxpayer money intended to protect citizens, and then not protect citizens."

O'Brien's legislation, linked here, prohibits cities from allowing so-called police free, autonomous zones in the future, withholds state funding if they do, imposes an cities fines of up to \$10,000 per day and allows residents a private cause of action for the foreseeable damages caused by a city's willful withholding of police and other vital services.