



The League of Women Voters of Portland

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FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force City Council Testimony February 13, 2019

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Over its 99-year history, the League of Women Voters has developed a set of fundamental principles upon which we act. Two of those principles relate to the city's participation in the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). The League "promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive ... and that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution." Furthermore, "it promotes political responsibility through informed and active participation in government."

The League first testified on this issue in 2001 and again urges City Council to withdraw from the JTTF. We value the protections afforded by Oregon law (ORS 181A.250) to individuals engaging in political and other non-criminal First Amendment activities. Portland residents have no guarantee that our local officers assigned to the JTTF are honoring those protections due to FBI restrictions on access to information. The FBI is not responsible for ensuring our officers comply with state law and asking them to monitor their own behavior is impractical and lacks accountability.

A December 2018 Guardian* [article](#) underscores the community's concern about FBI actions. The article revealed that the FBI created files on climate change activists in the Midwest. These files are part of a larger effort to assess the work of 350.org. Mike German is quoted in the article expressing concern about this news:

"The fact that the FBI is tracking civil disobedience arrests and logging that information into FBI files is quite troubling," he said. Absent intelligence indicating a planned act of violence German said there was little justification for creating such a file on individual activists and this was precisely what the 2010 IG report warned against. (The Guardian, Revealed: FBI kept files on peaceful climate change protesters, Dec. 13, 2018)

The League of Women Voters believes that our democracy is strengthened and sustained by the community's active participation in government. That involvement is threatened when individuals feel they have to look over their shoulders because they fear they are targets of government surveillance and file keeping. We urge you to withdraw and instead work on legitimate law enforcement investigations when actual criminal activity is suspected and detected on a case-by-case basis.

*www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/dec/13/fbi-climate-change-protesters-iowa-files-monitoring-surveillance-