



The League of Women Voters of Portland

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January 26, 2020

To: Mayor Wheeler, Commissioners Eudaly, Fritz, and Hardesty

From: League of Women Voters of Portland,
Debbie Kaye, president

Re: **2020 Joint Terrorism Task Force Annual Report**

The League of Women Voters of Portland “promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive... and that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution.” It further “promotes political responsibility through informed and active participation in government.”

We first testified on this issue in 2001 because we value the protections afforded by Oregon law (ORS 181A.250) to individuals engaging in political and other non-criminal First Amendment activities. City Council made the right decision when it withdrew Portland from membership in the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) and agreed to make annual reports to the community.

Community concerns about the JTTF have been reinforced by recent news about surveillance of activists protesting the proposed Jordan Cove LNG project and revelations about San Francisco police officers’ inappropriate work with the FBI. The League believes that our democracy is strengthened and sustained by the public’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.

Finally, we are troubled by the prohibition on oral testimony on reports presented to the Portland City Council. In our experience, when given the opportunity to comment, community members often provide valuable insights and raise important questions. We urge Mayor Wheeler to reconsider this policy and resume accepting public testimony on the reports presented to City Council.