



League of Women Voters of Portland

PO Box 3491, Portland, Oregon 97208-3491

503-228-1675 • info@lwvpx.org • www.lwvpx.org

Board of Directors

Debbie Kaye
President

Marion McNamara
1st VP

Chris Cobey
2nd VP

Nancy Donovan
3rd VP

Anne Davidson
Secretary

Don Brenneis
Treasurer

Debbie Aiona

Carolyn Buppert

Judy Froemke

Linda Mantel

Amber Nobe

Margaret Noel

Audrey Zunkel-
deCoursey

Off Board Leaders

Adrienne Aiona
Budget

Doreen Binder
Nominating

Mary McWilliams
Membership

Philip Thor
Endowment Fund

January 26, 2021

To: Mayor Ted Wheeler, Commissioners Jo Ann Hardesty, Mingus Mapps, Carmen Rubio, and Dan Ryan

From: League of Women Voters of Portland
Debbie Kaye, President
Debbie Aiona, Action Committee Chair

Re: Portland Police Bureau Report to City Council on the Joint Terrorism Task Force – 2021

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners:

As an organization that “promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive... and that protects individual liberties established by the Constitution,” the League of Women Voters of Portland continues to support the city’s decision to withdraw from the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). Further, the League “promotes political responsibility through informed and active participation in government,” and believes that First Amendment rights should be vigorously defended.

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. In contrast, FBI regulations are significantly more permissive and allow agents to open assessments on individuals engaging in political and similar pursuits without reasonable suspicion of criminal activity.

Our democracy is strengthened and sustained by the public’s active participation in government. When individuals feel they have to look over their shoulders because they fear they are targets of government surveillance, that involvement is threatened.

The U.S. Department of Justice deputizing Portland Police Bureau (PPB) officers as federal agents during last year’s racial justice protests raised questions about whether PPB was adhering to the Oregon law protecting political speech. In response to those questions, more information and specificity in future annual reports should be included in order to assure the public that when the PPB and FBI work together, the law is being followed.

To promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government.

Furthermore, we would like to thank you for the responses the city provided to the questions raised in the report that a group, including the League, submitted on January 4.

Finally, we believe that the annual JTTF reporting process would be substantially improved if Mayor Wheeler allowed the public to provide oral testimony. In our experience, when given the opportunity to comment, community members often provide valuable insights and raise important questions. We urge the mayor to reconsider this policy and resume accepting public testimony on the reports presented to city council.