



League of Women Voters of Portland

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Date: January 26, 2022

To: Mayor Ted Wheeler, Commissioners Hardesty, Mapps, Rubio, and Ryan

From: Debbie Kaye, president
Debbie Aiona, Action Committee chair

Re: **Joint Terrorism Task Force Annual Report (item #54)**

The League of Women Voters first commented on the city’s involvement with the Joint Terrorism Task Force in 2001 and has shared our views on the issue with you throughout the years. We appreciate the opportunity to provide oral testimony on the report once again.

We believe that our democracy is strengthened and sustained by active and informed participation in government. Participation can take many forms from voting, to testifying before a decision-making body, or joining in a demonstration. The freedom to express one’s political views is threatened when people feel they have to look over their shoulders because they fear they may be targets for government surveillance and FBI files.

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In Oregon, we are fortunate that state law (ORS 181A.250) prohibits the collection and maintenance of information related to First Amendment activities, unless there are reasonable grounds to suspect that an individual is or may be involved in criminal conduct. On the other hand, FBI actions in Oregon and around the country raise concerns those protections may be ignored when Portland police work with federal agents. Specific instances in recent years of FBI tracking and surveillance of Muslims and climate change, Palestinian solidarity and Black activists underscore the reason for community concern. Furthermore, these revelations can and do have a chilling effect on public involvement, activism, and lawful dissent.

In the interest of making Portland a city where community members are free to act without fear, the League encourages the city to end its case-by-case participation with the FBI and in the future work with the FBI only when necessary to pursue legitimate criminal actions. If council determines the city should maintain the status quo, then please consider incorporating more detail in the annual reports.

Again, we truly appreciate the opportunity to provide oral testimony this year.

News articles

Revealed: FBI and police monitoring Oregon anti-pipeline activists

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/aug/08/fbi-oregon-anti-pipeline-jordan-cove-activists>

The FBI Spends a Lot of Time Spying on Black Americans

<https://theintercept.com/2019/10/29/fbi-surveillance-black-activists/>

FBI Opened Terrorism Investigations Into Nonviolent Palestinian Solidarity Group, Documents Reveal

<https://theintercept.com/2020/04/05/israel-palestine-fbi-terrorism-investigation/>

US citizens v FBI: Will the government face charges for illegal surveillance?

Muslim citizens are suing the FBI for subjecting them to undercover surveillance after 9/11 in violation of rights

<https://www.theguardian.com/law/2021/nov/07/us-citizens-fbi-government-surveillance-guilty-9-11-muslims>