Chair Holvey and House Special Committee on December 21, 2020 members,

My name is Ross Swartzendruber and I've lived in rural Polk County for more than 50 years and was the Democratic candidate for House District 23 in 2012. I'm testifying today in support of House Resolution 3, which resolves that Representative Mike Nearman engaged in disorderly behavior and should be expelled from the Oregon Legislature.

First, I would like to offer some historical context to the current proceedings. Political violence has always been a part of Oregon politics. Secret groups like the Know-Nothings. Knights of the Golden Circle, Salem Clique and Ku Klux Klan jostled for control of Oregon using violence, threats and dishonesty to create a white utopia. Representative Nearman and his supporters are merely continuing this pattern.

How did Oregonians deal with these groups in the past?

Viva Voce, the requirement to vote publicly, ended secret ballots and the Know-Nothings influence.

Tension between the Salem Clique and the Knights of the Golden Circle likely contributed to the State Capitol being burned to the ground in 1855 and the Legislature moving to Corvallis. After three ballots, voters approved returning the Capitol to Salem.

The tensions with the Knights of the Golden Circle continued during the Civil War, forcing Union soldiers to guard Oregon ballot boxes.

In 1896, silver Republicans and their coalition walked out of the legislative session for 40 days to thwart the appointment of John Mitchell to the United States Senate.

During the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan forced their way into politics in both parties. The 50s and 60s saw the growth and influence of the John Birch Society on Oregon politics.

Now in the 21st Century, the cycle continues. This time, gerrymandering in District 23 for the past 20 years allowed this movement to grow. And what happens in District 23 doesn't stay in District 23.

Please approve HR 3, expel Representative Nearman and create a fair redistricting of house District 23 so this won't happen again.