



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 103-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 6, 2023

To: House Committee on Judiciary
[Representative Jason Kropf, Chair](#)

Re: [HB 2572](#) – Relating to paramilitary activity – **Support**

The League of Women Voters supports the provisions of HB 2572, based on our positions on violence prevention and gun safety. We are concerned about the relationship between unlawful paramilitary activity and the many reported instances of armed voter intimidation, threats to public officials, and violence directed toward racial, ethnic, and political groups.

HB 2572 expands the definition of “civil disorder” in Oregon law (ORS 166.660) to include acts of intimidation or force by three or more armed persons that hinder law enforcement or assert authority without consent. It also creates the right of those harmed by paramilitary activity to bring civil action against those who engage in such behavior. It defines “private paramilitary organization” as “any group of three or more persons associating under a command structure for the purpose of functioning in public, or training to function in public, as a combat, combat support, law enforcement or security services unit.”

The US Supreme Court decided in 1886, and again in 2008, that the Second Amendment “does not prevent the prohibition of paramilitary organizations.” Today all 50 states forbid private military units from engaging in activities reserved for the state militia, including law enforcement activities. Yet the threat of militia activity was able to shut down the Oregon Capitol in 2019, and enforcement of these laws in Oregon continues to be lax. Two OPB articles offer insight: [“Oregon’s long history of enabling extremists”](#) (January, 12, 2021) and [“Dozens of Oregon law enforcement officers have been members of the far-right Oath Keepers militia”](#) (October 15, 2021). We are hopeful that HB 2572 is a step in the right direction, and we strongly urge passage of the bill.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becky Gladstone".

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marge Easley".

Marge Easley
LWVOR Action Committee