

**Testimony in Support of HB 2572**  
**Relating to paramilitary activity; creating new provisions; and amending ORS 166.660**  
**Submitter- Teri Mills RN**  
**May 4, 2023**

Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs Breese-Iverson and Kropf, and members of the House Rules Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2572 relating to paramilitary activity; creating new provisions; and amending ORS 166.660. My name is Teri Mills. I reside in Washington County. I am a retired nurse, a mother, and a grandmother.

Please allow me to briefly reminisce. In 1987, I began working as a nurse practitioner for the Multnomah County Health Department in downtown Portland. I loved it! Businesses were thriving; there was no shortage of restaurants within walking distance of our clinic; Pioneer Square bustled with activity. There was never a time when I felt unsafe or threatened. The same was true with my visits to our state Capitol. My family and friends often visited from out of state and were impressed by Oregon's beauty and friendliness. Fast forward to 2016 and our way of life began to change. Today, we frequently hear from hard working business owners that their store windows are shattered with graffiti written all over their buildings. These actions have led to their closure. Our state is now known for extreme political protests and those looking for violence will often travel here from other parts of the country. According to a 2022 report released by the Oregon Secretary of State Audit Division, Oregon ranked sixth in the nation for domestic violent extremism incidents.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, as cited by OPB <sup>2</sup>, "in 2016, armed, anti-government extremists took over the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge for 41 days in a stand-off that ended with one leader dead and the others arrested. In 2017, far-right groups such as the Proud Boys and Patriot Prayer began holding rallies in Portland that were met with counter-protesters and frequently descended into violence. In 2020, months of largely peaceful racial justice protests eventually gave way to property destruction at the hands of anarchists in black bloc. During that summer, a self-described supporter of antifa shot and killed a protester on the far right. Weeks before the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol, [protesters broke into the Oregon State House](#), which was closed to the public due to COVID-19 restrictions. Some of those who showed up at the State House in Salem went [on to](#) storm the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C."

HB 2572 will:

1. Clarify Oregon's existing statute to better define unlawful paramilitary activity.
2. Introduce a 'private right of action' for civil damages if an individual or group infringes upon your constitutionally protected rights while engaging in unlawful paramilitary activity.

3. Allow the Attorney General to bring an ‘injunction’ in cases where a group has clearly stated their intent to engage in unlawful paramilitary activity.

I strongly urge your yes vote for HB 2572 to help mitigate future political violence.

<sup>1</sup> OR Secretary of State. Oregon Can Do More to Mitigate the Alarming Risk of Domestic Terrorism and Violent Extremist Attacks. (March 2022). *Report 2022-12*. Retrieved May 4, 2023 from <https://sos.oregon.gov/audits/Documents/2022-12.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Wilson, C. Oregon bill aims to crack down on paramilitary activity. (Feb. 7, 2023). *Oregon Public Broadcasting*. Retrieved on May 4, 2023 from <https://www.opb.org/article/2023/02/07/oregon-house-bill-2572-prevent-paramilitary-activity/>