SMOKESCREEN

How Timber Unity has mainstreamed militia groups, Alt Right, and conspiracy theories in Oregon politics

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Since its launch in June 2019, Timber Unity has become a major political force in Oregon, with many on the right looking to it as the future of conservative politics in the state. Republican party leaders and donors, reeling from a string of election losses and a Democratic super-majority in the legislature, have eagerly embraced Timber Unity and its activism. With its noisy diesel truck protests and aggressive efforts to block legislation that addresses climate change, the group has helped Republicans stoke rural resentment toward wealthier, more diverse, and more liberal urban centers—while blocking key Democratic legislative priorities.

Timber Unity has sought to present itself as the legitimate—and even non-partisan—voice of rural concerns about economic issues. Their media-savvy rallies and charismatic spokespeople have garnered national attention, including from the Trump re-election campaign, and their pressure has led to unusual concessions from Democratic lawmakers. But at its heart, the organization simply rehashes a false narrative: that a robust rural economy and strong environmental protections cannot co-exist.
But putting aside this argument, Timber Unity wildly misrepresents itself. From its inception, the organization has attracted a range of Far Right supporters who are visible and vocal in the movement. Timber Unity rallies have repeatedly included QAnon followers (whom the FBI has identified as a domestic terrorism threat), militia groups, advocates of “Constitutional Sheriffs,” anti-vaxxers, and Islamophobes.

While Timber Unity has sought to downplay these links, an investigation of its social media channels has found extensive ties between its leaders and Far Right figures, as well as the use of racist, homophobic, Islamophobic, and violent rhetoric by its supporters. The organization already has a history of and association with groups who have either made violent political threats or have supported violent actions, like the armed takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in 2016. This ongoing behavior demonstrates an extremely disturbing pattern of Timber Unity leaders publicly denying links to extremist groups or claiming to reject bigoted and violent rhetoric, while openly accepting many of these elements in private social media channels and at its rallies.
The engagement with militia groups and other Far Right organizations is especially disturbing given how eagerly the Oregon Republican Party and its donors have embraced Timber Unity. Oregon’s GOP has long had ties to militia and Patriot movement activists, particularly in Eastern Oregon. The party’s 2020 “Vanguards of Victory” dinner, where Timber Unity received an award, featured a keynote speaker so extreme that she resigned from a Far Right group after a media firestorm because of her comments about Adolf Hitler. Social media captures from the event document Timber Unity leaders in selfies with militia supporters and a prominent Proud Boy figure.

Elected officials and the Oregon news media cannot turn a blind eye to Timber Unity’s connections to Far Right organizations and conspiracy theories, nor should they ignore the group’s tolerance for its supporters using bigoted language and advocating actions that the overwhelming majority of Oregonians would find abhorrent. By refusing to distance themselves from these parts of the movement, the Timber Unity leadership is simultaneously harnessing the energy of these extremist elements for their own benefit, while proclaiming that they are a mainstream representative of the rural Oregon. Far Right groups have long sought to mainstream their ideology by linking themselves with conservative politicians and organizations, and it appears Timber Unity is a willing participant in this effort in Oregon.
The most visible and extreme participation in Timber Unity has been from the Patriot movement and associated militias. It was the rally these activists called, and its accompanying threats of violence, which caused the state legislature to be cancelled on June 22, 2019.¹

The Patriot movement is a part of the Far Right which promotes a program of radical right-wing decentralization, while wrapping itself in patriotic symbolism. Often using threats of violence and espousing conspiracy theories, it opposes most federal regulations. The Patriot movement is best known for forming paramilitary units, which are commonly referred to as militias. Oregon’s large movement came into the spotlight after the armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge outside of Burns, Oregon in January and February 2016.

While only a few members of the occupation were from Oregon, the state’s local militia groups went to Burns to provide support and share the spotlight. And a number of the same activists have been involved in various stages of Timber Unity. The most obvious Oregon militia involvement is the readily visible presence of Three Percenters at the Timber Unity rallies.

Although the first Timber Unity rally was June 12,² the movement took off after the walkout of the Republican senators later that month. This tactic, which prevented the Democratic super-majority from gaining its necessary quorum to conduct legislative business, was supported by a Republican base angry about several different bills. Most
prominent was the Cap and Trade climate bill, HB2020, but there were also bills that affected vaccination exemptions, diesel fuel, and guns.

On June 19, one of GOP walkouts, Senator Brian Boquist, made national news after threatening to shoot state troopers who were being sent bring him back to Salem. Boquist said, “Send bachelors and come heavily armed. I’m not going to be a political prisoner in the state of Oregon. It’s just that simple.”

This attracted a groundswell of militia support. Oregon III% (the state’s main Three Percenter organization) announced that they would “provide security, transportation and refuge for those Senators in need.” One of the group’s officers, Paul Luhrs, said, “We will stand together with unwavering resolve, doing whatever it takes to keep these Senators safe.” Eric Parker, leader of the Real Three Percenters Idaho, said, “We see it the same as we saw the protesters in the wash at the Bundy Ranch.” (Parker became famous after being photographed pointing a rifle at federal agents during the 2014 Bundy Ranch standoff.) Jon Ritzheimer, who served prison time for his part in the Malheur occupation, expressed his support for Boquist as well.
The Oath Keepers, one of the largest national Patriot movement organizations, wrote on Facebook, “Gov. Brown, you want a civil war, because this is how you get a civil war.” The comments below included suggestions of “hanging, arresting, or taking up arms against Brown.”

Oregon Patriot movement activist, John Parker, Jr., was an initial demonstration organizer. He wrote on Facebook that, “I was asked by a Senator of the State of Oregon to start the ball rolling. This may not be dolled up with frills but when a Senator asks to get a rally going, you get a rally going. 50,000 people is our goal, I hope we have 100,000. There will be no permits, There will be no apologies. We will take our state back, how that happens is up to the tyrants!”

Supportive statements were also issued by Oregon militia leaders who had also supported the Malheur takeover. These included Joseph Rice, formerly the leader of the largest Oath Keeper chapter in the state, and BJ Soper of the Central Oregon Constitutional Guard.

Parker said he was in direct contact with Senator Heard. Various posts implied that, initially, the militias were hoping for a major conflict. Brand Thornton, who was part of both the Bundy Ranch standoff and Malheur takeover, posted, “Patriots in Southern Nevada it’s on in Oregon!! Deploy Deploy Deploy!!” Soper wrote, “This is not a rally... let’s be very clear... this is an action.”

But it seems the Republican Senators quickly got cold feet. On June 21, their spokesperson Kate Gillem said, “The Senators are not with any militias,” and “are not accepting their help.” The militia members who had sought a direct confrontation became publicly disenchanted with the project as they realized they would not be able to use it as
an excuse for an armed confrontation. Parker bitterly complained that he had been “burned by cowards.”

In the end, three separate rallies happened. On June 22, 2019 the militia groups, led by the Three Percenters, held a “Rally to the Capitol!” National media attention followed the Statehouse being closed that day due to a “possible militia threat.” On June 23, 2019 a GOP-sponsored “Occupy the Senate” event took place, where Republicans pressured elected officials inside the statehouse. Meanwhile, the main Timber Unity rally, with their signature noisy diesel trucks, was rescheduled to June 27, 2019. It was a success, drawing favorable media coverage and leading to the group’s representatives going to the White House on July 8.

However, while the more flamboyant figures of the militia movement may have been disillusioned, a number of other militia and Patriot movement activists remained involved in Timber Unity. The Oregon III% have been very visible at both main Timber Unity rallies, coming in organizational hoodies, waving flags bearing their logo, and occupying prominent spaces near Timber Unity’s podiums and public speakers.

Social media posts and photos from Timber Unity events demonstrate that ties run deeper than simple attendance at rallies. Angela Roman, a candidate for the Oregon’s 5th Congressional District, appears in numerous photos with Timber Unity leaders at both private gatherings and public events, and is a prolific poster to the group’s closed Facebook page. She has been a prominent member of the Three Percenters. Roman’s campaign is endorsed by Scot Seddon, the “commanding officer” of the Three Percenter group AP III. In 2017, when she was an aide to Republican Rep. Mike Nearman, Roman was convicted
of giving a gun to a convicted felon Matthew Heagy, a Three Percenter himself. At the same event, Heagy was arrested for pepper spraying a state trooper, and received a two-year sentence. In addition to the Patriot movement, Roman is also has documented ties to Oregon’s Alt Right (see section below).

Maureen Peltier, who helped provide support for the Malheur occupation and remains a prominent militia figure, said she participated in the June 27 Timber Unity rally. More recently, Kenneth Medenbach, a Patriot movement activist for many decades who was arrested during the Malheur takeover, has been posting in the Facebook group. He has used Timber Unity’s platform to disseminate Patriot movement ideology, claiming that the Supreme Court does not have the power to interpret the Constitution. Jason Patrick, who served prison time for his role in the Malheur occupation, has similarly weighed in on the debates about open carrying guns at Timber Unity rallies. Other Oregon militia members can also be found in the group, including J.D. Parks, David Samuel Hill, and many members sporting Three Percenter symbols.

Last, Jeannette Finicum also uses the group to promote her brand of Patriot movement ideology. She is the widow of LaVoy Finicum, the hardline Malheur occupation leader.
who was killed in a confrontation with law enforcement. Finicum has posted about a dozen times to the Timber Unity Facebook group, promoting her videos and giving updates about the legal battles around her husband’s death.22

A number of current and former elected officials, who are sympathetic to the Patriot movement, are also close to Timber Unity. First district state senator Dallas Heard was one of the walkout members, and is one of the most prominent Timber Unity supporters; he spoke at the February 2020 rally. Heard allegedly solicited the Oregon militia activists to call the initial June 2017 rally in Salem. In 2016, when Heard was a state representative, he took part in a visit to the Malheur armed occupation as part of a sympathetic COWS (Coalition of Western States) delegation, which is a Patriot movement legislative group that includes embattled Washington state Representative Matthew Shea.23 Douglas County Sheriff John Hanlin, who has views in line with “constitutional sheriffs” (who believe they, and not the Supreme Court, can interpret the Constitution), spoke at the February 2020 rally.24 Hanlin had previously refused to enforce gun restrictions, and has spread conspiracy theories about Sandy Hook massacre and 9/11.25 Patriot movement-aligned candidates in the Timber Unity base, like Bruce Cuff, running for House District 17, also support some of the more extreme positions of the Patriot movement. Cuff has posted in the Timber Unity Facebook group over a dozen times.26

Douglas County Sheriff John Hanlin speaks at the June 27, 2019 Timber Unity rally.
Oregon and southwest Washington are known for their large and violent Alt Right movement, and unsurprisingly Timber Unity had found itself in the company of these activists.

A. CANDACE OWENS

Candace Owens is closely associated with the Alt Right. She was the spokesperson for Turning Point USA, a Far Right group focused on college students, until May 2019. She left after saying, “if Hitler just wanted to make Germany great and have things run well, OK, fine. The problem is that he wanted, he had dreams outside of Germany. He wanted to globalise.” 27 Owens has described Trump as the “savior” of Western civilization.28 She was also referenced in the manifesto by Brenton Tarrant, who killed 51 people at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Owens was the keynote speaker at the “Vanguards of Victory” dinner on January 11, 2020, which was hosted by the Oregon Republican Party. Timber Unity was given an award at the ceremony, and Owens took a special picture holding a Timber Unity flag with Todd Stoffel, who is variously described as the group’s Vice President or Executive Director.29
B. PROUD BOYS
Members of the Proud Boys also attended the Vanguards of Victory dinner, and were photographed with Timber Unity officials and high-profile supporters, while flashing Alt Right hand signals. The Proud Boys are an Alt Right “fight club” and have been involved in numerous instances of violence in the last few years. Many members have been imprisoned for assault, including two who are serving four-year sentences in New York. And a Proud Boy was the organizer of the 2017 fascist-led rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, which ended in the murder of counter-protestor Heather Heyer.

In one picture, Timber Unity Vice President Todd Stoffel photobombed Angela Roman posing with Proud Boy Matteo Dagradi, who was flashing the “OK” hand sign. (When Roman posted the photo on Facebook, Stoffel gleefully commented “couldn’t resist.”) The “OK” hand sign has been popularized by the the Alt Right to represent support for their movement. It is used by both explicit White Supremacists and by more moderate Far Right activists. For example, when white supremacist Brenton Tarrant appeared in court after the mass murders in New Zealand, he flashed the OK sign.

Dagradi is of the region’s first Proud Boys. He has been photographed at numerous Patriot Prayer and Proud Boys rallies, sometimes in the company of open White Supremacists. This included at the April 2017 Portland rally attended by Jeremy Christian, who later murdered two people. Additionally, Angela Roman was also photographed at the Vanguards of Victory event with Proud Boy James Johnson, also flashing the OK sign.
C. JOEY NATIONS
Joey Nations is running in the GOP primary for the 5th Congressional District. He made his name in the Alt Right by fighting alongside Joey Gibson’s violent Patriot Prayer group in Portland, including the bloody August 6, 2017 brawl in Portland’s Tom McCall Waterfront Park. There he was photographed making speeches to a number of well-known White Supremacists, and was also filmed repeatedly striking counter-protestors.

In 2018, the Willamette Week wrote, “Online and in recorded speeches, Nations has made jokes about rape, led nationalist chants as self-avowed white supremacists cheered along, and derided undocumented immigrants and LGBTQ people.” Nations has also courted the anti-immigrant group Oregonians for Immigration Reform (OFIR).

Nations is an early and avid supporter of Timber Unity. He joined the Timber Unity Facebook group on June 14, and has posted over twenty times in it. Nations was at the Salem rally on June 19, 2019—the first day the walkout—in addition to making videos at both main rallies. At the February 6, 2020 event he set up a candidate booth.

D. JOEY GIBSON and PATRIOT PRAYER
Patriot Prayer’s Joey Gibson and his group Patriot Prayer have supported the Salem protests. Gibson is famous for being the lead figure behind years of violent Far Right protests, centered in Portland, Oregon, which have frequently drawn White Supremacists. Gibson is currently facing criminal charges for a group assault, and is the
subject of a lawsuit stemming from the same violent confrontation.

Gibson actively promoted the June 23, 2019 “Occupy the Senate” rally, including making sure to post his support on the event page itself. He also supported the earlier Republican walk-out and later celebrated the success of the big June 27 Timber Unity rally.

E. ANDY NGO
At the Republican political events, Timber Unity President Mike Pihl has shared a stage and posed for photos with Alt Right propagandist Andy Ngo. Ngo has become notorious for his deceptively edited videos, Islamophobia, and claims dismissing many hate crimes as hoaxes. Pihl spoke alongside Ngo at the November 2, 2019 “Reagan Dinner 2019,” hosted by the Washington County GOP. Also at the event were former governor Scott Walker; Peggy Grande, Ronald Reagan’s former assistant; and Alek Skarlatos, candidate for Oregon’s 4th Congressional district.
From the beginning, online Timber Unity supporters have issued many threats. Threats by supporters of the Senate walkout caused the Statehouse to be closed during the initial militia rally on June 22. But these violent threats have continued up to the present day. Moderators of the Facebook group have repeatedly complained about the difficulty they have caused, but have failed to take down numerous posts containing violent or threatening rhetoric.

Additionally, Timber Unity has repeatedly said it is a non-partisan, single-issue campaign. In response to media inquiries about QAnon involvement at the February rally, Parrish said, “We're very clear with our folks: We're here for one issue, and one issue alone.” Furthermore, she said that “The Capitol steps are a free speech zone, but they’re not part of our group.”42 But the reality is that many unrelated—and sometimes even bigoted—right-wing views and campaigns are part of the Timber Unity movement.

A. THREATS
The threats have come in several waves. There was an initial wave of threats around the June 22 rally in Salem that was organized by the militias. The threats had become so intense that Reddit had to quarantine the subreddit /The-Donald/ — a huge pro-Trump forum on the platform — after threats against Oregon police and public officials were made.43 Many other threats have been directed toward Gov. Brown—an ongoing problem since the 2016 Malheur occupation. But more recently, violent rhetoric on the Timber Unity page has appeared which targets a range of other elected officials. This includes U.S. Senator Ron Wyden after he held a town hall in early February 2020.
More disturbing has been the denial of these threats. On June 22, the Oregon Republican Party tweeted a picture of a previous rally at the Statehouse, writing “Heavily armed militia lays siege to Oregon's Capitol as Senate Democrats cower in fear.” This was incredibly disingenuous for two reasons. First, this was in response to the Republican Party-sponsored lobbying day—not the militia-organized demonstration the day before. Second, the photo they tweeted was actually of a prior Timber Unity demonstration on June 19. The Oregon Firearms Federation had a similar tweet about the same June 22 demonstration. It said, “The endless tweets about ‘credible threats’ from militias have made laughing stocks of Democrats and reporters. Today’s threat turned out to be about 20 men, women and children armed with.. nothing. Oh yeah and one log truck.”

An individual with experience working in a former Oregon Governor’s administration has asked that written threats made against elected officials, climate activists, and Democrats in general on Timber Unity’s closed Facebook page not be republished directly in this report for fear of inciting copycat behavior, and interfering with ongoing law enforcement investigations.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES

B. QANON
Conspiracy theories help drive Timber Unity in a more radical direction. They fuel belief among the group’s supporters that HB2020 (and related bills) are part of a looming tyrannical government threat that seeks to enslave or destroy rural communities. Some Timber Unity supporters portray this as a “globalist” plot run by Jewish financiers.
The most visible conspiracy theory has been QAnon. It claims that the world is ruled by a cabal of child-molesting Satanists, and only Donald Trump is trying to stop them. A number of QAnon believers have been arrested, including for murder and an armed standoff, and recently the conspiracy theory has been influencing more mainstream politics.\(^46\) QAnon members use the phrase “WWG1WGA” (“Where We Go One We Go All”). At multiple Timber Unity rallies, large QAnon banners were held up in front of the statehouse steps. Bizarrely, photos of these banners were reproduced on the Lumber website. Additionally, two images of QAnon banners at the June 2019 Timber Unity rally appeared on the official website promoting the February 2020 rally.\(^47\) QAnon posts are also readily visible in the Timber Unity Facebook group. For example, an admin of the Oregon QAnon Facebook group posted a recruiting message in the Timber Unity page on August 28, 2019.\(^48\)

C. AGENDA 21

Agenda 21 is a popular, but groundless, conspiracy theory that often circulates in rural Oregon when there are conflicts over land use and other environmental rules. These ideas were part of the argument driving the Malheur armed takeover in 2016.
The real Agenda 21 (since replaced by Agenda 2030) is a 1992 non-binding United Nations resolution that encourages environmental sustainability. However, conspiracy theorists claim that Agenda 21 is a plan by the federal government, in coordination with the United Nations, to seize rural land and start a dictatorship.49 Denunciations of Agenda 21 are visible in Timber Unity; for example, at the June 2019 rally, one sign said “To Hell With Agenda 21!”50 The Facebook group has dozens of posts and comments attacking Agenda 21, as well as organizations that are alleged to be part of the global conspiracy. One comment says, “If you read HB2020 in its entirety, you absolutely see Agenda 21 throughout it.”51

D. CLIMATE CHANGE DENIAL, MINIMIZATION AND DISMISSAL

One of the most worrying threads in the Timber Unity discourse is the rampant misinformation about climate change. While many environmentalists see Cap and Trade itself as inadequate to address the growing planetary environmental crisis, many on the right insist that there is no such thing as climate change caused by humans. Some believe, as Donald Trump said in 2012, that it is a hoax.52

Most of the public figures associated with Timber Unity have remained coy about their position on climate change. Timber Unity Association board member Julie Parrish did acknowledge it in her February 2020 rally speech, saying that Timber Unity offered Gov. Brown four options to reduce carbon emissions without raising taxes.53

However, there is a range of opinion inside the movement. The leaders supported the denialists by inviting Chuck Wiese, who the Oregonian describes as a “climate change
denier,” to speak at the February 6 rally. In his speech he said, “CO2 does not cause the climate to change.”

Opinions among supporters range from minimizing the problem—a popular talking point is to point out that changes in Oregon will have limited impact on the problem globally—to outright denial. Comments in the Facebook group include “fight the climate hoax” and “Climate change is a hoax.” One post by Timber Unity Secretary Angelita Sanchez, which invokes the Agenda 21 conspiracy, implies that the real agenda of climate scientists is to decimate the human population. Sanchez says that by advocating for birth control, scientists “are actually speaking it out in broad daylight to youth of all people...mass genocide.”

E. GEORGE SOROS

George Soros, a liberal Jewish financier who is frequently described in anti-Semitic terms, is regularly attacked by Timber Unity supporters. Comments include:

- “does anybody know what ethnicity soros is, and who he panders to, the same ethnicity group that has been destroying these United States since 1913.”
- “A globalist gathering that runs...every September has as part of its agenda a plan in partnership with George Soros to use the local governing bodies of major cities to flood Western countries with Third World immigrants and refugees.”
- Soros is funding a “one world order plan to destroy [Oregon] from within.”
Others comments attack the Rothschilds, a Jewish banking family who have been the target of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories since the 19th century. These include those by conspiracy theorist Cole Rainey, who has posted almost fifty times to the Facebook group, often promoting his videos. Rainey testified before the state legislature to denounce Soros, the Rothschilds, and Michael Bloomberg (all three are Jewish) as being the financial forces behind the Oregon gun control bills. Using traditional anti-Semitic imagery, one Rainey post claims that Brown is a “Swamp Puppet” who is a “Soros/Bloomberg dependent globalist.”

OTHER RIGHT-WING ISSUES

F. ANTI-VAXXERS

While Timber Unity came together over opposition to HB2020, opponents of two other bills had also galvanized opposition which helped fuel the movement. This included HB3063, which removed a religious exemption allowing parents to deny children vaccines (although the bill was abandoned as a concession to Republicans in May 2019).

Preferring the “medical freedom movement” label, anti-vaxxers are very visible in the rallies and on the Timber Unity Facebook group. Breeauna Sagdal, one of the early Timber Unity leaders who left the movement, has been described as a “leading voice” in the anti-vaxxer movement.

Signs opposing mandatory vaccinations appeared at the February 6, 2020 rally as well, including one that said, “The only vaccine Oregon needs is one to prevent Cap and Trade.” There appears to be cross-membership with Oregonians for Medical Freedom, a group opposed to mandatory vaccination.

Both groups are also part of an right-wing umbrella group called Oregon Grassroots United. It also includes the Oregon Republican Party, Western Liberty Network, Freedom
Believers, Slavic Vote, and the Oregon Firearms Federation.62) 

G. GUN CONTROL OPPONENTS
There also exists a close tie between Timber Unity and opponents of gun control, including the Oregon Firearms Federation (OFF), led by Kevin Starrett. He has close ties with Oregon militias, and in 2004 addressed the Constitution Party, a Christian theocratic group. OFF has also raised funds to support embattled Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer.63

After 22,000 people attended an armed gun rights rally in Richmond, Virginia rally on January 20, 2020, there was a heated debate inside of Timber Unity over incorporating gun rights—or at least open carry—at the February 6 rally. Supporters of this included Timber Unity's militia contingent. The Timber Unity leadership put their foot down and issued a statement, saying that pictures of open carry at the June rally were damaging, and that “It hurts our movement if we’re perceived as a militia group.” They also expressed concern about their non-profit status being compromised, and being locked out of the statehouse again.64

Nonetheless, as an obvious concession, OFF’s Starrett addressed the February 2020 rally as an official speaker. Numerous signs at the rally advertised the “Oregon Push Back” campaign, which is primarily focused on opposing gun control legislation.65

H. ANTI-IMMIGRANT XENOPHOBIA
Even further from Timber Unity’s stated goal of being a non-partisan, single-issue group is the frequent discussion among its members of restricting immigrants’ rights. There is visible support for both OFIR, who oppose these rights, as well opposition to HB2015, a 2019 bill that allowed undocumented Oregonians to obtain drivers licenses.
Congressional candidate Angela Roman has used her ties to the Timber Unity leadership to promote IP52, a ballot measure which would overturn HB2015, and make citizenship a requirement again for drivers licenses. She manages the “Stop Illegal Drivers” Facebook page. Roman wrote that she was “honored to announce that the petition IP-52 to repeal drivers licenses for illegals that I am a Chief Petitioner of will be officially hosted at the #TimberUnity Rally February 6th 2020. I and my team will be there to collect signatures.”

I. JEFFERSON STATE SECESSIONISTS
Advocates of the proposed new State of Jefferson, which seeks to be carved out of northern California and southwestern Oregon, have appeared at both main Timber Unity rallies. Jefferson State secessionists are readily identifiable by their green flag with a yellow circle with two X’s, symbolizing their belief that the area has been double-crossed by Salem and Sacramento. There is a strong anti-regulation sentiment in the movement, and Jefferson State secessionists are frequently seen at militia and other Far Right rallies.

J. UNREGULATED MINING
Rules to protect salmon from destructive suction dredging and other forms of mining have long been a hot-button issue on the right in southwest Oregon. Mining activists have been closely involved in the Patriot movement, militias, and similar Far Right politics in both Oregon and the region, and they are also an important part of the Timber Unity base. Two miners spoke at the February rally. Shannon Poe, president of the American Mining Rights Association (AMRA), gave a fiery speech, proclaiming that “gold miners are united with Timber Unity” and advancing the conspiracy theory that “this isn’t about a fish, saving an
owl—or global warming, cooling, climate change, or whatever they’re calling it today” but “absolute power and they want it more than anything; they will do anything to get it.”70 Tasha Webb, a Timber Unity board member and gold miner, also spoke at the rally to address miners’ issues. She has posted in the Facebook group, asking members for help with a court case about Dept. of Environmental Quality dredging permits. Timber Unity also said it would donate merchandise proceeds to a legal battle by the Bohemia Mining District.71

BIGOTRY
K. ISLAMOPHOBIA, RACISM, and HOMOPHOBIA
Views in the Timber Unity Facebook group reflect a variety of bigotries, and Timber Unity leaders have allowed dozens of bigoted posts to remain online. These include attacks on Muslims and people of color, as well also a slew of bigoted statements directed toward Gov. Brown’s perceived sexual orientation.

Muslims are blamed for setting forest fires, as well as for Oregon gun control bills. Other comments about Muslims include:

- “Muslims for ya.do not need their beliefs in our society.”
- “The Muslims who are getting stronger every day in silence is the real enemy.”
- “Tennessee, unfortunately, is becoming liberal to the point of Muslims running for offices.”
- “Every mass shooter they talk about is a registered Dem or a dam Muslim...”
- Regarding the anniversary of the 9/11 attack: “Every time Muslim stand up in Congress and tell us they are going to change the constitution, impeach our president, or vote for socialism, remember you swore you would never forget. They swore they would destroy us from within.”72
Gov. Brown, who is married to a man and identifies as bisexual, is repeatedly and consistently attacked in the Timber Unity group with homophobic slurs. Examples include:

- “Recall the Dyke turd”
- “Dyke whore”
- “Nasty Dike!”
- “It has no morals doesn’t know what sex it is… She needs to crawl back up the ass she crawled out of. The p.os.”
- “Liberals/democrats are either super ugly DIKE looking or just don’t give a shit about how they look. She’s super f*cking ugly and depressed or retarded... Sorry for her/its luck.”
- “Oregon voters would like to ask Kate LesBo to go swim in the Pacific with a pair of cement slippers.”

Anti-Native American and anti-black racism can also be found in the Timber Unity group. For example, comments about African-Americans include:

- “NAACP is itself a racist organization”
- “Negroes Are Actually Colored Polaks???”
- “should’ve tased da nicka back to da ghetto”

Comments about Native Americans include:

- “Guess its time to relocate them again.”
- “run them back to the reservation. Give them some fire water. Then tell them to shut up.”
APPENDIX 1: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Timber Unity is multiple things: a movement, a Facebook group, a PAC, and a 501(c)6 non-profit organization.

It appears that from the beginning, Timber Unity has had support from three sectors. The first is timber industry interests, including wealthy logging company owners Andrew Miller of Stimson Timber and Freres Lumber president Rob Freres, a major a Trump donor. The second are those who work in the logging and trucking industry, including several small business owners. (They were later joined by veteran GOP operatives like Julie Parrish, as well as being feted by the state’s Republican apparatus.) Third are existing right-wing activists, who have joined forces with Timber Unity. They include the Patriot movement and militias; and opponents of mandatory vaccinations, gun restrictions, and immigrants’ rights.

The initial Timber Unity rallies and Facebook group all predated the Republican Senators’ walkout. However, wealthy interests were also involved early on; the Timber Unity PAC was formed on June 20, the day after Sen. Boquist threatened to shoot state troopers. The PAC’s officials are Carol Russell, Dannielle Mongar, and Andrew Miller, the latter of whom donated $5,000 to the PAC on June 21. (Miller also spoke at Timber Unity rally in June 2019.) Julie Parrish also donated $2,500 to the PAC. Currently, the Timber Unity website lists the PAC board members as Angelita Sanchez, Marie Bowers, and Todd Stoffel.

On June 24, 2019, a second organization, the Timber Unity Association, was registered as a state nonprofit organization. In September 2019, the organization filed paperwork describing itself as a 501(c)6. The officials are Parrish, Scott Hileman, and Mike Pihl. On October 1, the Timber Unity Association opened up as a membership-based group, with dues starting at $50. It says it represents workers in five different natural resources industries: foresters, truckers, ranchers, farmers, and miners. Members are encouraged to contribute separately to the PAC.

Timber Unity Association officials who spoke at the February 6, 2020 rally included Vice President Todd Stoffel, Secretary Angelita Sanchez, President
Mike Pihl, and board members Tasha Webb and Julie Parrish. The Timber Unity website lists its “Organizers” as Jeff Leavy, Adam Lardy, and Scott Hileman.83

Early on, there was a power struggle in the group, resulting in Loren Hutnick and Breeauna Sagdal being forced out. They claim Timber Unity was “hijacked” by Republican insiders. The current leadership disputes this, saying Hutnick was expelled from the group for being disrespectful.84 Hutnick and Sagdal had originally tried to register the group’s name as a trademark and form a 501(c)4. But after lawyers were involved, Hutnick and Sagdal turned over control to the current officials, who in turn founded the Association as a 501(c)6.85

Rob Freres appears to be the key figure in connecting Timber Unity to the Trump administration. Soon after the June 2019 rally, Timber Unity representatives Marie Bowers and Todd Stoffel went to the White House for a meeting on July 8.86 In addition, Laura Trump and Brad Parscale, Trump’s campaign manager, flew to Oregon and meet with Timber Unity officials at Freres Lumber on November 20, 2019.87
APPENDIX 2: THREATS

A review of social media captures from Timber Unity's close Facebook page found dozens of violent threats, rhetoric, and memes directed at Governor Kate Brown, Oregon elected officials, climate activists, and Democrats in general. In reviewing this report, individuals with experience in previous Oregon Governor's administrations asked that these threats not be published for fear of inciting copycats and interfering in law enforcement activities. Given the numerous violent threats last summer, including the militia threats that shut down the capitol building on June 22, 2019, we have decided to honor that request.

Other threats include:

- “My wife’s dead, kid are raised. Come on, do your best.”
- “How can this happen. WE HAVE GUNS !!!”
- “Get your pitch forks and head for Salem. Take plenty of rope.”
- “I suggest we buy lots of rope!”
- “Get a rope”
- “Not worried about the state police or any other authority. If it comes down to it, let the bullets fly.”
- “I’m willing to die for my rights / Are you willing to die trying to take them?”
- [on environmentalists] “Give them a rope and tie them to a tree”
- [on the Clintons] “Tall tree short rope fer both of em”
- [on the state government paying for ballot postage] “Rope and a tree”
- [on Sen. Wyden] “He needs to take a helicopter ride”
APPENDIX 3: TIMELINE

2019

June 6. Timber Unity Facebook group created.

June 12. First Timber Unity rally.

— Timber Unity rally in Salem.

June 20.
— GOP senators don't come to work.
— Gov. Kate Brown authorizes state police to get the senators.
— Oregon III% says they will provide shelter and security for the senators.
— Timber Unity PAC forms.

June 21. Andrew Miller donates $5,000 to Timber Unity PAC.
— Saturday Oregon Senate session cancelled.

June 22. Oregon Capitol closed due to “possible militia threat” during Republican Senator protest. Three Percenters hold a “Rally to the capitol!”

June 23. Oregon GOP “Occupy the Senate” lobbying event.

June 26. Reddit quarantines /The_Donald/ subreddit over threats against Oregon police and public officials.

June 27. Large Timber Unity anti-HB2020 rally.

July 8. Timber Unity representatives Marie Bowers and Todd Stoffel go to a White House meeting.

July 24. Timber Unity Association is registers with Oregon Secretary of State as a non-profit.

October 1. Timber Unity Association opens up membership rolls.


November 20. Brad Parscale and Lara Trump come to Oregon and meet with Timber Unity at Freres Lumber.


2020

January 11. Timber Unity leadership attends the Vanguards of Victory dinner with Candace Owens.

February 6. Timber Unity #LetsRoll rally.
ENDNOTES

Note:
The #TimberUnity Facebook book is a “Closed” group and not publicly visible; membership requests must be approved by administrators. Therefore screenshots of references to posts and comments in the group are available in directory that is available at https://bit.ly/39dTrIS. Each is marked with a letter, for example “Image A.”

All links are active as of February 20, 2020.


4 Oregon III%, Facebook, June 20, 2019, www.facebook.com/oregon3percent/posts/2441429432806866


6 @CTRNewsFeed, Twitter, June 20, 2019, https://twitter.com/CTRNewsFeed/status/1141678449980891136/photo/1


8 @CTRNewsFeed, Twitter, June 20, 2019, https://twitter.com/CTRNewsFeed/status/1141850725854539777/photo/1

9 @CTRNewsFeed, Twitter, June 20, 2019, https://twitter.com/CTRNewsFeed/status/1141725922673876993/photo/1; https://twitter.com/CTRNewsFeed/status/1141873255671664640/photo/2

10 @CTRNewsFeed, Twitter, June 21, 2019, https://twitter.com/CTRNewsFeed/status/1142128613455589377

11 @CTRNewsFeed, Twitter, June 21, 2019, https://twitter.com/CTRNewsFeed/status/1142068233190559750/photo/1

12 @CTRNewsFeed, June 20, 2019, https://twitter.com/CTRNewsFeed/status/1141873255671664640/photo/2


15 @CTRNewsFeed, Twitter, June 21, 2019, https://twitter.com/CTRNewsFeed/status/1142141349170315264/photo/1


18 “Oregon lawmaker’s aide gets jail time for gun charge"

19 Image A1.

20 Image A2.

21 Image B.


22 Images C1–C6


25 Sunshine, Up in Arms, 67

26 For some examples, see Images D1–D3


28 @RealCandaceO, Twitter, April 16, 2018, https://twitter.com/RealCandaceO/status/986066422399774720
29 Oregon Republican Party, “Oregon Republicans - Vanguards of Victory Awards Dinner,”
www.oregon.gop/event-details/oregon-republicans-vanguards-of-victory-awards-dinner;

Image E

30 Image F


Image G

“Pacific Northwest Proud Boys - Matteo Dagradi, Donovon Flippo, Jason James, Aaron Williamson”


34 Shepherd, “Joey Nations Brawled on the Portland Waterfront in a MAGA Helmet.”

35 He addressed a February 17, 2018 meeting. “OFIR meeting,” www.oregonir.org/calendar/ofir-meeting-2


Images H1–H9


41 Dan Mason for Oregon, Facebook, November 8, 2019, www.facebook.com/DanMasonforOregon/posts/2709900009068351


@Oregon_GOP, *Twitter*, June 22, 2019, https://twitter.com/Oregon_GOP/status/1142619631095439360

@OregonFirearms, *Twitter*, June 22, 2019, https://twitter.com/OregonFirearms/status/1142550437662343168


@realDonaldTrump, *Twitter*, November 6, 2012, https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/265895292191248385


Images L1–L4

Images M1–M3

Images N1 and N2

“Gun Testimony Exposing the Rothschilds, Michael Bloomberg, George Soros and The Oregon Democrats,” *YouTube*, August 31, 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdpqx1trqro; Image O

60 Nigel Jaquiss, “Truckers and Loggers Started a Rebellion in Oregon. Political Insiders Took It Over”

61 Ted Sickinger, “Timber Unity members protest cap-and-trade climate bill with convoy, rally in Salem”

62 www.facebook.com/OregonGrassrootsUnited

63 Sunshine, *Up in Arms*, 69

64 Image P


67 Images R1–R3


Image S

69 Sunshine, *Up in Arms*, 39, 54, 83, 86, 89


72 Image U1–U5


74 Images V1–V5

75 Images W1 and W2

76 Image X

77 The Facebook group was started on June 6, while the walkout was confirmed on June 19.

78 “Timber Unity PAC,” *Oregon Secretary of State*, https://secure.sos.state.or.us/orestar/sooDetail.do?sooSrn=87280; ob Davis, “Here’s who put $120,000 behind Oregon’s climate walkout and protests,” *Oregonian*, July 20, 2019,