

## Public Testimony Regarding the Task Force to Address “Domestic Violent Extremism”

Submitted by Erica Engelhart, resident of Snohomish County, Washington

In 2022, Bob Ferguson’s office spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund a 6-month long study on what he calls “domestic violent extremism” in Washington state. The result of the study was a report that offered suggestions including forming a commission to combat all these awful things listed in the report.

The report describes “domestic terrorism” as, *“An undefined term in the Revised Code of Washington, but is defined in the U.S. Code as “activities that (A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; (B) appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and (C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.”*

The report continues, *“Although this is a useful working definition, because the statutory term “domestic terrorism” necessarily includes “acts dangerous to human life,” it fails to capture the full scope of the problem Washington State faces, which encompasses other forms of extremist and political violence; threats, coercion, and intimidation; online disinformation; extremist recruitment and government infiltration efforts; and the general spread of extreme white supremacist, anti-government, and other ideologies.”*

The bill was never passed through the legislature and did not become law. So now Bob is changing it from a commission to a task force because he is so bent on taking on this battle, which many would argue is an imaginary problem.

My family is multi-racial/multi-cultural. Growing up here, I never experienced or witnessed anything described in the report that this whole effort is based on. The report and the testimony given in the legislature last year in support of the failed bill claim that white supremacists are violently attacking others and are committing frequent dangerous crimes around Washington, which does not match my experience as a resident of this state. In fact, this state is more accepting and welcoming of people from all races and backgrounds than any other I have been to across the country.

The crime problem I see is at the hands of the people Bob’s office has failed. The ones who have given up hope and replaced it with drugs which his office is enabling and his policy supports. These people are the ones who end up hurting others or stealing and robbing to feed their addictions. Often these people end up with mental health issues and are stuck on this path of committing crimes to survive.

The fact that he now wants to focus on an imaginary problem, rather than fix the ones he is responsible for, tells me this “task force” isn’t about protecting the people of Washington state. The purpose of this is to persecute and prosecute the people of Washington state who disagree with him. Bob Ferguson wants to further weaponize the government against his political opponents and anyone who has a different opinion than he does and who are not in line with his political agenda. It would appear that he is the one who is extreme and potentially dangerous.

This “task force” should have never been formed and those involved with it should be aware that the dangerous rhetoric they believe they are combating is the same as the rhetoric they are enabling, encouraging, and participating in.