Statement on Mary Starrett, Candidate for Yamhill County Commissioner

The campaign of Mary Starrett, Communications Director of the national Constitution Party, for the Commissioner seat in Yamhill County, is an alarming sign of the ability of the far-Right and its current manifestation in the Tea Party movement to mobilize significant numbers and political support. It is not certain that Starrett will lose the election to Mary Stern, the incumbent candidate. Neither Stern nor Starrett carried a clear majority in the May primary, forcing the current runoff election for the position. While the Commissioner role is supposed to be nonpartisan, a victory for Starrett would be a significant gain for both the Constitution Party and other forces on the far-Right. Starrett's participation in the race and her strong showing in May suggest that the Tea Party is not an insignificant fringe, but increasingly has real—if still limited—political power.

We view Starrett as representative of the Tea Party movement in general, in that just beneath its surface of populist rhetoric, is a hard core of bigotry and ultra-reactionary ideology. Unfortunately, Starrett's run for Commissioner has been made easier by local media, who have de-emphasized the role of ideology in the County Commissioner election, as if doing so will make it evident to all that Starrett is simply unqualified for the managerial County position. However, like it or not, ideology does matter in the Yamhill County race—it is a powerful mobilizing force. It is patronizing and dishonest to deploy euphemisms when the topic of Starrett's broader political beliefs inevitably surfaces. It is this sort of patronizing attitude that—in the absence of any liberating alternative to the status quo—sends the "protest vote" to the very worst political sectors. We believe that Starrett's ideas and politics deserve accurate representation; they should have been investigated and exposed much earlier, and in much greater depth.

From an anti-fascist perspective, the following facts about Mary Starrett are significant to us:

Anti-Queer Hostility

- The Constitution Party in Oregon has historically been linked to Lon Mabon, former head of the Oregon Citizens' Alliance, whose campaigns such as for Ballot Measure 9 (1992, which attempted to link homosexuality to pedophilia) led to significant increases in violence against gays and lesbians in Oregon. Lon Mabon has worked in collaboration with Starrett before in militant anti-choice campaigns. The anti-choice group Mabon is part of, Life Support, endorsed Starrett's campaign for Governor in 2006, and also endorses Starrett's current campaign according to the Mary Starrett for Commissioner page on Facebook.
- The Constitution Party nationally also has deep theocratic undercurrents. When the party had its founding convention in 1992—it was named the US Taxpayers' Party at the time—one of its main speakers was "Christian Reconstructionist" ideologue Rousas Rushdoony, who believed in implementing Biblical Law throughout the land, including death by stoning for homosexuals (plus adulterers, and several other types of people.)
- Amy Coburn, who co-founded the anti-choice group Oregonians for Life alongside Mary Starrett—Coburn was named Amy Rabon at the time—targeted Kelly Clark of the Oregon Republican Leadership Institute for being insufficiently hostile to homosexuals in 2004, when

she covertly recorded and then circulated a speech he had given. Clark was an attorney for the Oregon Family Council at the time. Amy Coburn is currently the Campaign Director for Starrett's County Commissioner campaign. (Is it a coincidence that Coburn's name has come up in the recent Yamhill County campaign scandal about another instance of secretly-taped materials being circulated?)

Anti-Choice Violence

- Writing for the *NewsWithViews* website where she had a regular column, Mary Starrett wrote a defense of Eric Rudolph entitled "Run, Rudy, Run" in 2003 shortly after his capture. Rudolph eventually took a plea deal for his bombings of two abortion clinics, a lesbian bar, and the Centennial Olympic Park during the 1996 Summer Olympics, some of which caused fatalities.
- Starrett has twice received endorsements from the Life Support anti-choice group, which she has worked alongside in the past. Life Support Executive Director Keith Humphrey is also the head of Christian Exodus, a Christian secessionist group with close ties to neo-Confederate white nationalists. Humphrey has been involved with organizing the Paul deParrie Northwest Camp Meetings for anti-choice militants, as has Robert Rudnick, another anti-choice zealot who has an email address at the *lifesupportoregon* domain. The camps are named in memory of Paul deParrie, a signatory of the "Defensive Action" statements that killing abortion doctors is morally justified (and who died in 2006 of a heart attack after speaking at a Constitution Party of Oregon meeting about abortion issues.) Starrett worked alongside deParrie's Believers Against Child Killing campaign while he was still alive. The 2009 deParrie memorial camp told participants to bring "your own weapons and ammunition for target shoot."
- During her 2006 gubernatorial campaign, Starrett sent campaign printing business to the Good Impressions Printing company, which is run by Andrew Burnett. Burnett is a signatory of both Defensive Action statements, and worked alongside deParrie in Advocates for Life Ministries and its publication *The Life Advocate*. *The Life Advocate* profiled clinics and abortion doctors, advocated harassment tactics, and covered both the pro- and con- sides of the debate about murder for the anti-choice cause. Burnett and deParrie were both connected to Rachelle Shannon, who set fire to several abortion clinics and shot Dr. George Tiller in Wichita, Kansas in 1993. Tiller survived the shooting—which hit him in both arms—but was assassinated by anti-choice militant Scott Roeder on May 31, 2009. Just two months earlier, Starrett had decried the labeling of "pro-life groups and individuals [as] 'terrorists'" in a March 22, 2009 *NewsWithViews* column, instead singling out "Tiller the Killer" for abuse.

Racism

- The Constitution Party has always had a racially-charged aspect. When it was founded in 1992 as the US Taxpayers' Party, one of the groups it brought in was the American Independent Party, under which George Wallace ran for US President in 1968 in an effort to defeat federal desegregation efforts. The Constitution Party's 2004 candidate for US President was Michael A. Peroutka, who as endorsed by the neo-Confederate and white nationalist League of the South: "Mr. Peroutka is a League member, and it has been our policy to support our members when

they run for office." Chuck Baldwin, who was the Vice-Presidential candidate in 2004 on the Peroutka ticket, ran for President in 2008 as the Constitution Party candidate, while Starrett was serving as National Communications Director for the Party. Baldwin has written: "I believe the South was right in the War Between the States, and I am not a racist. […] Neither do I believe that the leaders of the old Confederacy were racists." Despite his denial of racism, Baldwin writes regularly for the white nationalist and nativist *VDARE* website, and has also been a guest on the racist *Political Cesspool* radio show.

- Starrett has interviewed white supremacist Randy Weaver several times. Despite Weaver's well-documented links to the Aryan Nations and to the racist and anti-Semitic "Christian Identity" movement, Starrett presents Weaver as a "separatist, which means that we're all separatists, I'm a separatist… I live up on a mountaintop." (The quote is from Starrett's February 28, 2007 presentation to the Portland 9/11 Truth Alliance.)
- Starrett has also accepted an endorsement and funds from Oregonians for Immigration Reform, a group which circulates materials from the white nationalist *VDARE* site, and whose site used to be part of the *New Nation News* website, which describes itself as a "racist 'online' news paper catering to white people."

Anti-Semitism

- Starrett's article "How a Marxist Came to be an American Hero" of January 16, 2004 (again on *NewsWithViews*) attacks Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The article portrays the Southern Christian Leadership Congress of which King was president as ominously "founded by two Jewish New Yorkers," and calls King a "dupe." Starrett's most frequently cited source in the article—three of five citations—is a book by Des Griffin, an Oregon anti-Semitic conspiracy author. (In addition, Starrett's article mirrors the white nationalist fixation with undermining Dr. King's legacy, which they see as a first step to rolling back civil rights in general.)
- Starrett took over as a guest host for three episodes of the *Mark Dankof's America* radio show in October, 2007, immediately before and after the "No More Wars for Israel" anti-Semitic gathering in Irvine, California which Dankof attended. Starrett was also a guest on Dankof's show at least five times during the same year. The radio show was part of the Republic Broadcasting Network at the time—both Dankof and the Network were affiliated with the *American Free Press*, a widely-circulated anti-Semitic, far-Right and white nationalist tabloid. Dankof also promotes, amongst other things, the writings of white supremacist David Duke and the Holocaust-denial and anti-Semitism of the Institute for Historical review. Another anti-Semitic radio show which Starrett appeared on is *The Jeff Rense Program*, on which Starrett was interviewed in 2003.
- Starrett has also talked before the Portland 9/11 Truth Alliance, an activist group which considers the September 11, 2001 attacks to be an "inside job." When talking to the group on February 28, 2007, Starrett confirmed their beliefs: "I guess if I had to go on record, I would say, yeah, it was an inside job." Starrett also promoted other conspiracy theories about 9/11: "The Israeli company that knew that there was… something was going to happen." The Portland 9/11 Truth Alliance has itself become increasingly explicit in its Jew-hatred and conspiracy talk about

Jewish people. The Portland 9/11 Alliance has built links to Eugene, Oregon's Pacifica Forum—another anti-Semitic group—and on June 10, 2009 it hosted a Portland event for Valdas Anelauskas, a self-described "racialist" and "separatist" affiliated with Pacifica Forum. The Alliance followed this up by sending several of its members to a talk by notorious Holocaust-denier David Irving when Irving passed through Portland on July 19, 2009. After all this excitement—including opposition from militant anti-fascists—the Portland 9/11 Truth Alliance hosted a return visit of Mary Starrett on August 12, 2009, according to an announcement from 9/11 Truth Alliance leader Tim Titrud. It should also be noted that Titrud is active in Believers Against the War—the Constitution Party of Oregon's front in the anti-war movement—and has given a speech denouncing the "mostly Jewish" Neo-Conservatives who "hate God" and "love death" at a Believers Against the War event on October 18, 2007 where Starrett also spoke. (At the time of writing, Titrud's speech is available on Youtube.)

-Rose City Antifascists, October 25, 2010
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