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LD 303

Hello Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

If the file uploaded, do you know what this flag is? If you can't see it, it is a black iron cross on a red background with the letters NE WN. I didn't have a clue, when I saw it flying by a driveway on my road last summer.

(Thank you internet!) It is the flag of the New England White Network, identified by the ADL as a white supremacist hate group out of New Hampshire!

Further lookingbrought up

<https://manchester.inklink.news/nh-white-supremacist-warned-by-police-in-maine-after-racist-email/>

So...in December of 2023, this person threatened/harassed a South Portland school employee, as well a couple of Portland City councillors. The school employee, an Iraqi immigrant, was so disturbed that he quit his job and planned to leave Maine altogether to protect his family.

To date, my flag waving neighbor, a supporter or member of NE WN, has not acted in a violent manner. However, with the current Federal government employing self identified racists, not to mention the release and glorification of violent militia groups, I feel less safe. Already, there's the gravel pit behind my property which, during summer weekends, often sounds like a war zone, with all manner of automatic or semi-automatic weapon fire. These aren't target shooters...these are folks with military fire power. They are not practicing for anything good.

This hearing is about proposed legislation to repeal LD 2130, an act prohibiting "Unauthorized Paramilitary Training". Why does this seem problematic?! Even to have needed LD 2130, in the first place, is a sorry reflection on our violent society.

But now, during a period of official government policies of intolerance and celebration of racist militarized groups, to invite this into our state is insanity. It will almost certainly embolden violent actors and lead to heightened fear in peaceful rural communities, especially among members of vulnerable and already targeted groups...I know I will be very fearful and would consider moving to escape the hatred and potential violence.

Please....stand up for true "public safety" and propose strengthening, not eliminating prohibitions on militarized groups operating in our state.

Thanks

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