

Patriot Prayer group closes Clark College



Tusitala 'Tiny' Toese, left, speaks at the protest held Oct. 22 on the Clark College campus. Patriot Prayer members, top, hold signs on the overpass above I-5. Patriot Prayer members, bottom, march toward the overpass.

Announced several days beforehand, Clark College was shut down Monday by the college's president in anticipation for a Patriot Prayer rally scheduled to be held that day. The group of activists, led by Patriot Prayer founder Joey Gibson, gathered at the college around noon carrying signs urging Washington residents to vote no on Initiative 1639.

The measure, which seeks to place restrictions on the purchase and ownership of firearms, would increase the minimum age to purchase semiautomatic rifles from 18 to 21 and require those seeking to purchase a firearm to complete a recognized firearm safety program within the last five years. It would also require dealers to be notified in writing by the chief of police or sheriff of the jurisdiction that the purchaser passes a background

check ran through the national instant criminal background check system.

The measure also expands some restrictions previously placed only on the purchase of pistols to include all firearms, including semiautomatic rifles.

The rally began with Gibson speaking out against Portland's Mayor, Ted Wheeler, before moving on to the initiative. A few other speakers followed Gibson, including Tusitala 'Tiny' Toese, another leader within the group.

Though the event mostly only drew media attention, as few outside of the group chose to attend, there were two or three onlookers who shouted disagreements at the speakers during their speeches. After the speeches had ended, several members of Patriot Prayer, including Toese, began a discussion

with these people which quickly devolved into shouting.

A striking moment from the rally came when one of the attendees, sporting a Proud Boys hat, began to shout down and throw obscenities at the hecklers. Though Patriot Prayer has been widely reported as a violent, fringe group, members of the movement immediately decried the man's tone stating that it was not the way they wanted themselves to be represented.

Shortly thereafter, Gibson led the group away from the Clark campus to a nearby overpass where they held their signs up for those passing by on I-5 to see.

The group has promised to return to the campus on Wednesday in hopes of bringing their message to students attending classes on campus.

—Ian Van Orden



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