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now," he said.

Ben Basom, spokesperson for the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters, said the carpenters' recent anti-hate resolution is not about party politics.

"We are a nonpartisan organization. We're not tied at the hip to the Democrats; we do support Republicans," he said. "We are a diverse organization made up of all races, nationalities and sexual orientations, and it's at our core principles to stand up for our membership."

**Hate groups and Patriots**

While it's uncertain whether the number of white supremacists in Oregon is increasing, a couple of groups, one a racist skinhead group and the other a white nationalist group, popped up in Oregon for the first time this past year, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. But much of the organizing around xenophobic and nativist ideologies has been in rural parts of the state.

Oregon is also home to 28 extreme anti-government Patriot groups, according to the law center; only Virginia, Texas and California host more of these groups than Oregon. They're concentrated along the west and central regions of Oregon, and nationwide, about a quarter of these Patriot groups are militias.

Members of one listed group, the "Three Percenters," clashed with anti-Trump activists at a pro-Trump rally in Salem on March 25. One man, who was hiding his face behind a yellow and black mask, verbally attacked and threatened Portland activist Cameron Whitten, who is black and was leading a counter protest live-streamed on social media.

According to an anonymous post recently uploaded to an anarchist and antifa, or anti-fascist, Web platform, the attacker is allegedly a Three Percenter, and so were many of the other participants who were there to support Trump.

Street Roots was able to independently verify that there were Three Percenters at this rally who were engaged in shouting matches with the counter-protesters.

According to "Up in Arms: A Guide to Oregon's Patriot Movement," the Three Percenters (often shortened to III%), along with the Oath Keepers, participate in vigilante border militias, spread anti-Muslim rhetoric and "tend to be more aggressive and violent than other Patriot movement groups."

Rural Organizing Project and Political Research Associations released the Oregon guide in 2016. It reports that there are thousands of Patriot activists in Oregon and that the Three Percenters surfaced shortly after the 2008 election of Barack Obama.

According to SPLC, III% United Patriots and American Patriots III% are both a statewide presence in Oregon, and the Oath Keepers are present in 10 counties, including Washington, Columbia, Lane and Marion.

"This election has empowered people to become more brazen," said Basom, of Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters. He said he's keeping the lines

**FACT SHEET: OREGON HATE GROUPS**

*What we learned from Southern Poverty Law Center data*

In 2016, **Wolves of Vinland** (white nationalist), **American Front** (racist skinhead) and **Black Riders Liberation Party** (black separatist) all surfaced in Oregon for the first time.

Also new to the list was Portland's **Soleilmoon Recordings** (hate music), which is a music label that's been operating out of Portland since 1987. It got listed for selling and promoting neo-Nazi music.

While Southern Poverty Law Center hasn't found evidence of the Ku Klux Klan in Oregon since 2011, it reports that an affiliated group surfaced in Vancouver, Wash., in 2016. And, as reported by Willamette Week, a prominent member of the KKK popped up in Lake Oswego on March 11.

The **Northwest Hammerskins** (racist skinhead) surfaced in 2016 for the first time in five years.

The **National Socialist Movement** (neo-Nazi) has been present in Oregon steadily since 2004.

The **National Prayer Network** (evangelical, anti-Semitic) in Clackamas has been around for 10 years.

Oregon somewhat follows national trends, which show hate groups have been steadily increasing since 1999. Nationally, hate groups peaked in 2011 with 1,018 active hate groups, then dropped to 784 in 2014, and are now on the rise again, with 917 last year.

**Extreme anti-government groups**

Oregon had 28 active extreme anti-government groups in 2016.

Only Virginia, with 33, and Texas and California, both with 32, had more.

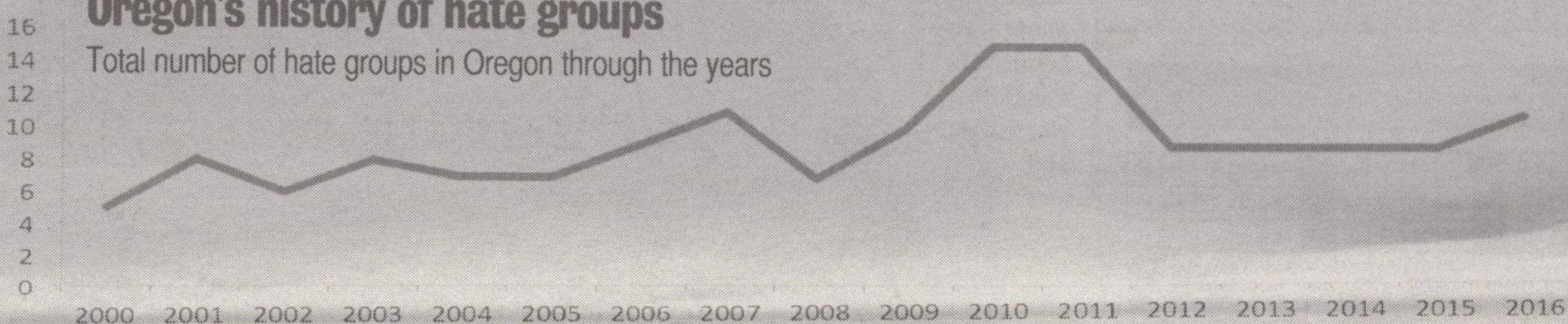
Florida also had 28.

"Generally, such groups define themselves as opposed to the 'New World Order,' engage in groundless conspiracy theorizing, or advocate or adhere to extreme antigovernment doctrines," according to Southern Poverty Law Center. They are not necessarily racist or criminal.

There are 623 of these groups nationwide, and 165 of them, including a handful in Oregon, are militias.

**Oregon's history of hate groups**

Total number of hate groups in Oregon through the years



of communication open with other unions so that "when and if" hate groups initiate actions in Portland, they will be ready.

"We need to take proactive steps," Basom said.

**Rebuilding strength**

Part of how the resolution materializes will likely be through education. Basom said this would take the form of teaching the regional council's 20,000 members, some who live in Oregon's rural areas, about the history of the labor and civil rights movements working together. But most importantly, it's about teaching members how fighting for union standards for all workers helps keep those standards up for everybody, he said.

Differences in opinion among membership of the regional carpenters union, is evident on its Facebook page.

Numerous union carpenters voiced dissent below a post of photos from a protest outside the Oregon GOP's Freedom Rally at the Oregon Convention Center on Feb. 25, while many other commenters voiced their support. That day, the regional council "stood up for the dignity of immigrant workers," according to the post's author.

"I have a hard time seeing why we support the very labor force that takes our jobs and drives down wages in our industry," one commenter wrote. "Too many illegal aliens inside our unions already," another wrote. "Today I'm embarrassed to say I'm a Union carpenter," another commenter wrote.

But as labor history experts and union leaders argue, these attitudes are a result of

union busting efforts to pit workers against one another – which deflects attention from the likelihood that low wages and poor working conditions are the fault of the employer rather than other workers.

The Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters' resolution stated, "If the U.S. labor movement is to rebuild its strength during this period of crisis of racist organizing and attacks, it must take up the struggle against white supremacy/white nationalism, not as an abstract debate, but as part of its social, political, and organizing agenda."

The resolutions passed by local carpenters and painters unions show a "sea change" has taken place in some of the more traditionally conservative unions, said Widener, who taught at UO's Labor Education and Research Center before retiring in 2012.

"When I see a resolution like this," Widener said of the carpenters' statement, "I think: Wow, that's a lot of progress! Because the construction unions have a history of being more conservative than the industrial unions or the public employee unions, so I think that this marks a transition for them."

Wyatt McMinn, vice president of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades Local Union No. 10, believes decisive action is needed from the labor movement. He said his local union has created an Anti-Racist Mobilization Committee.

"We have a lot of Latino brothers and sisters," he said of his union's membership. "We figured it was important to take action."

Becca Lewis is a member of International

Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 28, which represents about 200 workers in Portland.

"The resolution is important to my union," she said, "because it gives us the framework to mobilize using our power as workers against the KKK and other white supremacist groups. It can also act as an example to other unions who want to confront fascists."

Some members of the carpenters union showed up to help on March 13 when Southeast Portlanders woke up to swastikas painted all over property along 33rd Avenue. Basom said regional union membership also showed up in Redmond, Wash., to help repair a mosque's sign that was vandalized in November. When the same sign was re-vandalized in December, they showed up again.

His union has been working to organize immigrant workers for some time, as Street Roots reported in October. (See "Worker Exploitation in Portland's Building Boom" at [news.streetroots.org/construction-worker-exploitation](http://news.streetroots.org/construction-worker-exploitation).)

But lately, said Juan Sanchez, the union representative leading that effort, the union has also been participating in a lot of marches and immigrant rights rallies – including a recent rally asking the city not to cooperate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The Portland office issued a letter urging other carpentry locals to pass similar anti-hate resolutions, Basom said, and carpenters in Eugene and Renton, Wash., have already followed suit.