

PETITION, from page 4

his petition.

When she explained the measure would repeal Oregon's sanctuary status, the woman first jerked her hand away from the petition, and then scribbled out her name, Fisher said.

She said the woman appeared to be upset and said to the signature gatherer, "That's not what you told me."

The next evening, other students at PSU spotted the two men gathering signatures near Pioneer Courthouse Square while making the same misleading claims about what IP 22 would do. Fisher also included social media messages from these students in her complaint to Richardson's office.

One student's comment stated: "He presented it as a bill preserving sanctuary status and when I confronted him about it, he got suuuuper weird and dodgy about it."

Another student wrote: "String Bean (the canvasser's rap name) tried to get me to sign and when I asked him if it was for measure 22 he said no. 'It's for sanctuary cities.'"

Susan Mays, a spokesperson for Ballot Access LLC, said just one signature gatherer was misrepresenting the ballot initiative and that he was only doing so for two days. She said all the signatures he collected during that time have been thrown out. Mays also said that he has since been re-trained on what the initiative means, and that all Ballot Access's signature gatherers are required to go online and research the initiatives they are promoting.

The man who owns Ballot Access LLC, Lee Vasche, is also the treasurer at Oregonians for Immigration Reform, the main proponent of IP 22. His various companies – Triton Polling and Research, Triton Communications, Signature Gathering Company of Oregon – have all performed work for Oregonians for Immigration Reform in recent years.

Vasche is scheduled to give a presentation at the next Oregonians for Immigration Reform meeting on "how his PAID signature gatherers enhance our initiative efforts and increase the likelihood of success," according to the organization's website.

This is only the most recent controversy surrounding the signature collection for IP 22.

Two of the three state representatives sponsoring the proposal, Reps. Sal Esquivel (R-Medford) and Mike Nearman (R-Independence), were denied a ballot title back in 2016 when their effort to get the measure on the 2018 ballot began. And it was denied because according to the Department of Justice, the language used to gather the initial 1,000 signatures to get the process started was misleading. OPB reported that based on DOJ's review of the language, a person signing the petition would not necessarily understand they were signing a petition in favor of repealing Oregon's sanctuary status law.

Then in 2017, Oregonians for Immigration Reform collected thousands of signatures under a set of new rules from Richardson that allowed the collection of signatures before a ballot title is finalized.

Our Oregon challenged the new rules with a lawsuit, and Richardson rescinded them with the hopes the Legislature would adopt the new rules this session.

Adding to the controversy surrounding the measure is that it's largely being funded by an out-of-state, white nationalist group.

Its sponsors, Reps. Esquivel and Nearman, along with Greg Barreto (R-Cove), also run the Repeal Oregon Sanctuary Law Committee that's backing the initiative. The committee's top donor is Washington, D.C.-based Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), which was founded by John Tanton, a white nationalist who has advocated for eugenics.

FAIR has contributed more than \$60,000 to the campaign, making its most recent donation of \$30,000 on Feb. 9.

Oregonians for Immigration Reform is a Salem-based group with close ties to FAIR and a history of backing statewide anti-immigrant measures. It has hosted representatives of white nationalist groups at its meetings, such as Jessica Vaughan, policy director at Center for Immigration Studies. The center releases fear-mongering "studies" and "reports" full of cherry-picked and misleading information, many written by Vaughan herself, that promote anti-immigrant sentiment against undocumented and documented immigrants alike.

Oregonians for Immigration Reform also recently received a donation of \$3,000 from

another white nationalist group Tanton founded, U.S. Inc.

Jim Ludwick, Oregonians for Immigration Reform spokesperson and co-founder, said he can't see why anyone would lie about his group's anti-sanctuary initiative to get signatures.

"I went down to the flea market in Eugene, and we were inundated with people who wanted to sign the initiative," he said. "We were up at the sportsman show and were overwhelmed there as well."

Street Roots stopped at the Stop Oregon Sanctuaries booth at the Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show last weekend, and while "overwhelmed" is not how we'd describe the scene, the women manning the booth did not appear to be misleading about what the initiative would do.

While holding up photos of Kate Steinle and Jose Ines Garcia Zarate, subjects in a San Francisco murder case that's been a talking point among nativists nationwide, one of the women told show-goers that signing her petition would get a measure on the ballot to repeal a law that prevents law enforcement from upholding federal immigration laws.

"We have no interest in evading the truth or saying something that's not there because the issue sells itself to a large extent," Ludwick said. "We're the same group that got Measure 88 on the ballot in 2014. And what we do, we're totally upfront; we've got no reason to lie."

With the defeat of Measure 88, Ludwick's organization was successful in preventing undocumented immigrants in Oregon from being able to obtain driver's cards.

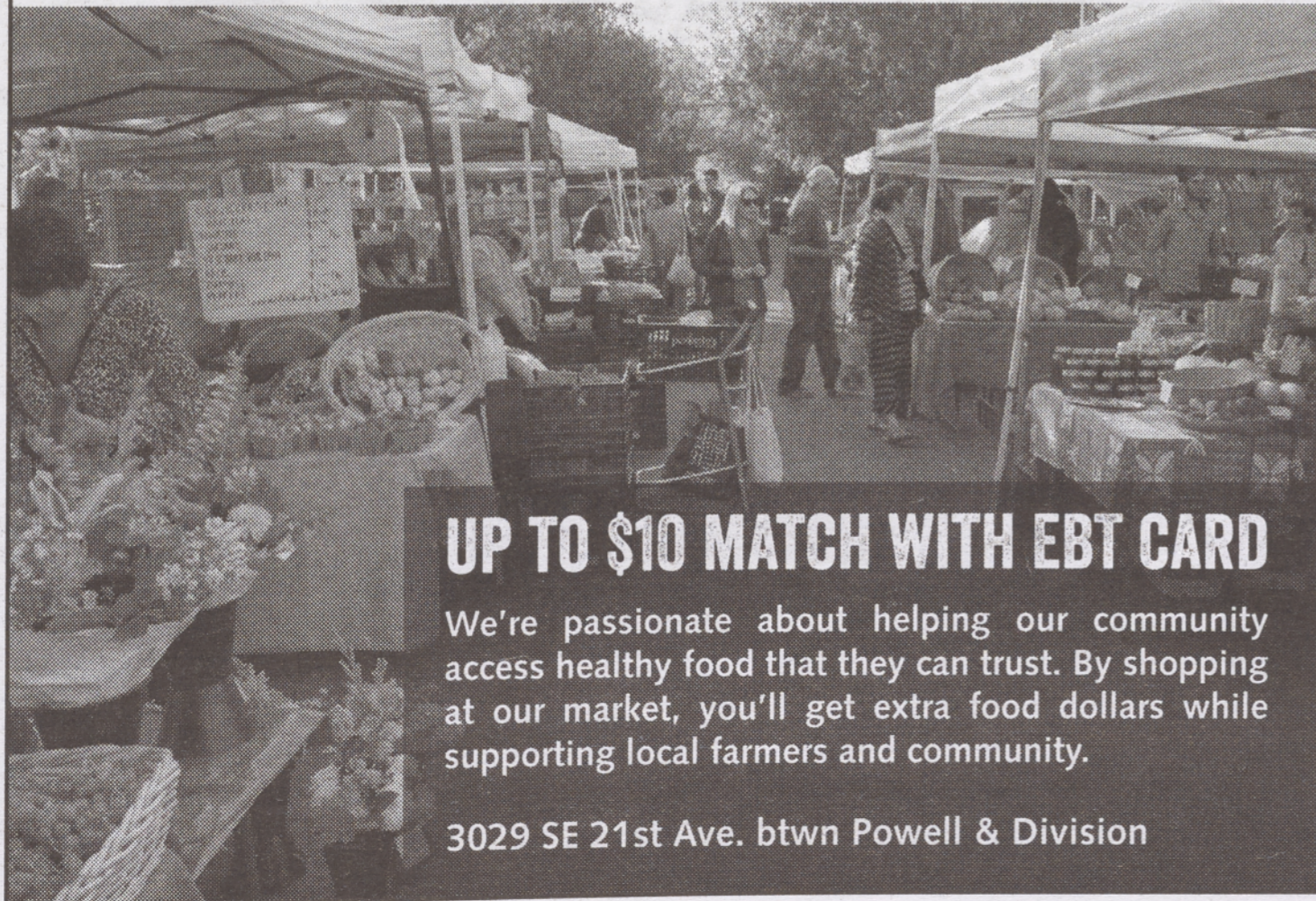
Earlier this year, a district court judge in Nevada blocked supporters of a similar anti-sanctuary measure in his state from gathering signatures after ruling that the petition's language was overbroad and could mislead voters.

Royal said the secretary of state's investigation into Ballot Access LLC's collection of signatures is ongoing and she cannot say whether criminal charges will be filed.

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