

PROTEST from page 1A

Because of his comments, fears have arisen that he will work to undermine the investigation. Whitaker has not yet stated how he will handle the probe since becoming acting attorney general, though he has stated he will not recuse himself because of the previous comments he made.

Regardless, the possibility he may derail the investigation is what is sparking the current spate of nationwide protests, which have been planned for months in the event of Sessions' dismissal.

"It was almost a year ago when we saw millions of people signing up on MoveOn.org," said Paula Ziegler, who organized Thursday's event.

MoveOn, a political activism platform, began organizing the rallies earlier in the year, with the suggestion that if the Mueller investigation was ever put in danger, protests would begin at 5 p.m. the day after Sessions was let go.

"This was really the line in the sand for me," said Ziegler, who used to work for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. "I work for the law — I believe in the law — and I feel it was threatened. So, I drew the line. They called me and asked me to be the host. I did my emailing to the 75 that had signed up, and we got a pretty good turnout and we're here to fight the fight."

The Thursday night march on Highway 101 was peaceful, with protestors waving signs and chanting support of Mueller. Dozens of cars honked in approval of the protest, while one person shouted out their window, "Protect Trump."



PHOTOS BY JARED ANDERSON/SIUSLAW NEWS
The Florence march linked with MoveOn.org to be part of a national protest attempt to protect Mueller's investigation.

The protestors did not shout anti-Republican slogans, nor were they aggressive toward Trump himself. This protest was meant for a different audience.

"This is about getting Congress to protect Mueller," Allen said. "I know that's been a hard road for them, but maybe now they will act with that with these 900 protests across the country."

In April, the U.S. Senate created a nonpartisan bill titled the Special Counsel Independence and Integrity Act, which would have codified into law the existing Justice Department regulation that says a special counsel may be fired only by the attorney general, and only for good cause.

The bill would call for a 10-day window within which the special counsel, if they felt the investigation was terminated without cause, could petition a panel of judges about the termination. The bill would ensure that the

special counsel's staff and materials would be preserved until a decision was met.

The bill never made it to the Senate floor for a vote, with many Republican senators questioning its efficacy. At the time, Republicans had not seen Trump make any concrete moves to end the investigation, and some senators questioned the constitutionality of the bill.

However, now that there is a possibility of the investigation being impeded, the bill is showing signs of bipartisan traction again.

"Jerry Moran, who was my senator in Kansas, has come out and told Trump that he should not do this," said Frank Smith, a Florence protestor who moved to the area three years ago. "I've spoken to him a lot. If he's there, I can't imagine that people like Corker and Flake aren't going to say something."

Two days ago, Moran did express support in protecting the investigation, and Republican Jeff Flake stated that he would introduce the bill to the Senate floor.

While local protestors stated the march was about Mueller, it was clear there was little love lost for the president, with some signs reading "Impeach Trump."

Regarding impeachment, Allen said, "Down the road, when our new House is in order, maybe then we can answer that question."

While the Mueller investigation has been able to produce multiple indictments for Russian nationals attempting to disrupt the election and has been able to indict some Trump campaign officials for lying to authorities, thus far no hard evidence of actual collusion or coordination between Russia and the Trump campaign has

surfaced. If Mueller is unable to find any impeachable offense by the Trump administration, and the president is exonerated, would the protestors accept Mueller's findings?

"Based on the respect that everyone has given to Mueller, I would accept that, if that was the case," Allen said.

But to make that conclusion, the report has to be released, unhindered. While it is unknown when this journey will ultimately end, it is known that the endgame is beginning: CNN re-

ported this week that Mueller's team has begun writing its final report.

Whatever the outcome of the Mueller investigation is, those who came to protest Thursday night are ready and willing to make their voices heard until the matter is resolved.

"I'm just really pleased that people will step up, show up, practice their first amendment right, and speak up when we need to do it," protestor Nora Kent said. "This is what democracy looks like."

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SAVING LIVES from page 1A

Additional training on Narcan has continued, with a training session between the departments held this week.

While funding sources for further purchases of Narcan for the police department are yet to be determined, the October incident has proven the decision to equip officers with doses was a good one.

Bailey believes that having the drug with him saved the overdosed individual's life.

"We've only been carrying Narcan for a month or so, as it is relatively new to the police department, and it's the first time I've ever used it," he said. "But it's another tool that we can use

that is in our tool bag, and we can help more people, and that is the important thing — helping to save people."

The last few years have seen a marked increase in opioid related deaths across the country and in Lane County, according to the police chief.

"Opioid overdoses have become an emerging issue across the country. The opioid fentanyl is a strong synthetic pain killer and it is the main cause. This a prescription drug that has become one of the most abused substances ever," Turner said. "Lane County experienced 40 opioid deaths last year and, in just the last couple of months, there have been 38 opioid overdoses that were saved by the ad-

ministration of Narcan."

Narcan is also now without a prescription in 46 states, including Oregon.

According to the National Institute on Drug abuse, 115 people die each day from an opioid overdose.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the total "economic burden" of prescription opioid misuse alone in the United States is \$78.5 billion a year, including the costs of healthcare, lost productivity, addiction treatment, and criminal justice involvement.

In addition to the serious risks of addiction, abuse and overdose, the use of prescription opioids can have a number

of side effects, even when taken as directed. These include needing higher dosage for the same pain relief; physical dependence and signs of withdrawal when the medication is stopped; increased sensitivity to pain; constipation, nausea, vomiting, dry mouth, itching and sweating; sleepiness, dizziness and confusion; depression and even lower levels of testosterone.

There are programs available for people with a dependence on opioids. For more information, contact Oregon Health Authority Addictions and Mental Health Services at 1-800-923-4357 or www.oregon.gov/OHA/HSD/AMH/Pages/Get-Help.aspx.

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