

Group seeks to expose people who make OSHA complaints

By **CARISA CEGAVSKE**
The News-Review via AP
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ROSEBURG — Two local women have been targeted by a group calling itself Citizens Against Tyranny, and more are likely to be targeted in the future.

State Sen. Dallas Heard, R-Myrtle Creek, is backing the movement. The tyranny, according to the group's website, involves COVID-19 safety mandates the group says have harmed local businesses.

But this group has gone far beyond criticizing the governor.

In late December, it also began publishing names of people it alleged have turned in businesses to the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration for violating COVID-19 safety rules. And it demands that all elected officials sign the group's declaration or face recall.

Two women, both senior citizens and Douglas County residents, were recently fingered by this organization. Their names were published on a website called citizensagaintyranny.net as part of "The LIST," and they were labeled "Filthy Traitors." The words were spattered in red, as if to indicate blood.

The website encourages businesses to sign on to "86"-ing, or banning, anyone on "The LIST," which as of early Friday afternoon, Jan. 8, had just the two women on it.

The names were removed after an inquiry from a News-Review reporter.

Heard encouraged businesses to file public records requests to obtain names of people who have filed OSHA complaints at a Dec. 13 Sunday service at Garden Valley Church. Heard was featured as a guest speaker for the service and spoke about the group's plans.

"There's going to be stuff in it that might make you pause for a second, like when we discover that someone has betrayed their community, betrayed their own freedom and turned in their neighbor for nothing but going to work and earning a living the most basic of rights, we're going to expose them. We're not going to return evil for evil though. But their faces and their names and what they did must be known," Heard told them.

The News-Review spoke to the women targeted on the Citizens Against Tyranny website. Because of concerns over the potential for harassment, both agreed to speak on condition of anonymity.

One said she was shocked by it.

"I'm not a filthy traitor, I'm a good American," she said.

She said she had reported the Reedsport Safeway back in May for allegedly having workers not wearing masks.

The other told us she's never reported anyone for a COVID-19 violation.

"I don't even have any numbers to OSHA. I don't even know what they're talking about," she said.

She said she sent a message to the email address listed on the site, and asked them to take her name off the list. She told them she had nothing to do with any of this.

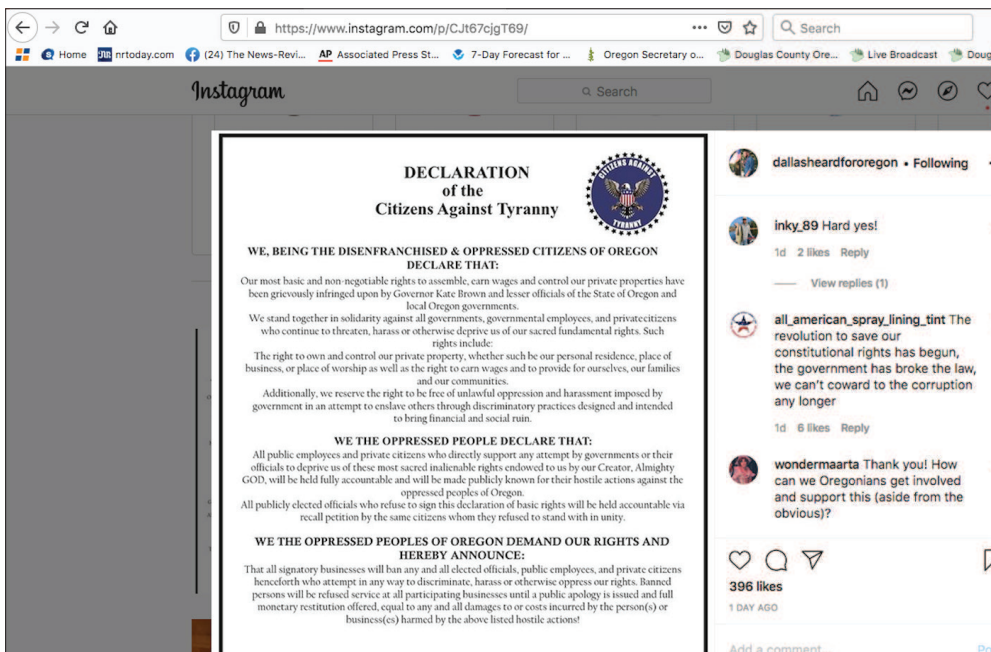
Next, she called the police and filed a police report.

"The police told me to notify them immediately if



Mike Henneke/News-Review, File

State Sen. Dallas Heard, R-Myrtle Creek, speaks during a rally at the Douglas County Courthouse in August 2020. Heard is backing Citizens Against Tyranny, a group revealing who has complained to Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration about businesses regarding COVID-19 safety rules.



Instagram/Screenshot

The declaration of the Citizens Against Tyranny on state Sen. Dallas Heard's Instagram account.

anybody tried to make contact with me," she said.

The woman said she didn't want anything to do with the people behind Citizens Against Tyranny.

"They're just a bunch of bullies, that's who they are. They're just a bunch of bullies," she said.

She was surprised to learn of Heard's involvement.

"I really think he is not representing me, I don't want anything to do with him. He is not representing the people, he is not representing me or anybody else," she said.

"I think really, to be very honest with you, I think people should just report him and get him out of office," she said.

She said she's a big supporter of local businesses and has been eating a lot of takeout meals.

"Why would they ban me from trying to support them and trying to order from them? That doesn't even make sense," she said. If that's Heard's plan, she said, "he's one brick short of a full load."

Her fiance had just one thing to say about it all.

"Don't worry about us. I've got a 12-gauge shotgun that will take care of us just fine," he said.

The other woman, the one who did make an OSHA report, said she wanted to help an elderly friend of a friend in her 80s who has access to no other grocery store. At the time, she said, there was no plexiglass up and store employees weren't wearing masks.

"I was very concerned and I just really felt for that poor woman who walks with a little wheeled cart. That was the only place she can shop. You can't live off the groceries at the Dollar Tree. This is small town stuff, it's heartbreaking," she said.

The risk of dying from COVID-19 increases with age, with the death rate for those over 80 being 17% in Oregon.

The woman said she doesn't believe any harm came to Safeway because she reported them.

"I honestly wouldn't have if I had thought that I was reporting to OSHA and they would shut Safeway down in Reedsport. That would be a terrible thing. I knew they wouldn't. I reported them so that they would hopefully be told that really people, you should wear a mask," she said.

Reedsport Safeway Manager Mike Overton said he had no idea what the Citizens Against Tyranny group is, but would not comment further. When asked if Safeway had made an effort to discover who turned them in to OSHA or made changes in response to a complaint, he referred questions to a public affairs officer in Portland. A request for information from that officer did not get a response on Jan. 8.

The website encourages businesses to "86" or ban the women and others who file complaints. It also contains sign-up sheets, a sign to post at businesses and detailed instructions about how to file information requests to Oregon OSHA to try to uncover the names of those who have made reports.

The person who wrote the instructions used the term "constituents" to describe those who would be filing the information requests, a term generally used by elected officials.

Heard told The News-Review he's not in control of the Citizens Against Tyranny group, which he said was formed by a group of 20 or 30 small businesses such as restaurants and gyms.

After being questioned

by a reporter about the women on the list, Heard said he did not know that any individual names had been posted on the website, of which he said he is not the administrator.

He also said he would contact the administrator and ask that the names be removed. The names were promptly removed following the interview, and so was the "Filthy Traitors" label.

Heard said names shouldn't go up unless the group has gone through a process to confirm they have made OSHA complaints.

"We are not the pitchforks and torches crowd," he said.

But Heard stands by the plan to put those who the group decides have made complaints on the list.

"I'm not sympathetic to people who are actually calling the government to turn in their neighbors for simply earning a living," he said.

If there's concrete proof, he said, their names should be on the list.

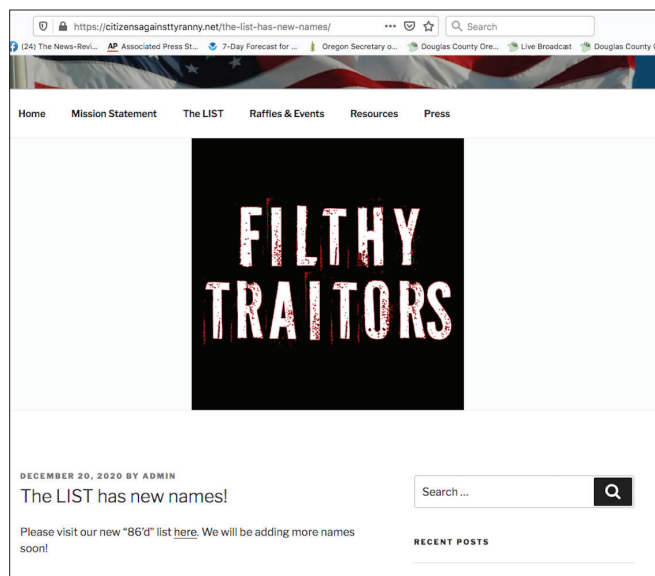
"If that's the case then I support those people being known for what they did," he said.

In his December speech, Heard said the movement would demand that every elected official in Douglas County — from mayors to county commissioners to legislators — sign on to a declaration endorsing Citizens Against Tyranny. Anyone who doesn't should be "purged" from office, he said.

There are approximately 500 elected officials serving all or parts of Douglas County.

Douglas County Sheriff John Hanlin, an elected official, said what Heard's doing is inappropriate and he doesn't plan to sign on to his declaration.

"I don't feel that sharing



Citizens Against Tyranny/Screenshot

A screenshot of the label given to two women, senior citizens from Douglas County, who were on the Citizens Against Tyranny's "list." The label and the names were removed after The News-Review questioned Sen. Dallas Heard about it and his involvement with the group.

the names of individuals who think or may believe that they are reporting appropriate violations of law or violations of the governor's orders, I don't believe it's appropriate to shame them or publish their names for doing what they believe may be the right thing," Hanlin said.

"As an elected official, certainly as a sheriff, I've already taken a couple of oaths that I take very seriously and so to just jump on board and sign this declaration of the Citizens Against Tyranny, I'm not sure that that's an appropriate thing for me to do at this point. I'm trying to be fair and impartial and serve everyone and I don't feel that this necessarily does that," he said.

"Certainly we don't publish the names of individuals who report drunk drivers or who report a domestic disturbance going on or those sorts of things," Hanlin said.

One issue that gives him heartburn over this, Hanlin said, is the demand that elected officials sign the declaration or have a recall effort started against them.

"So there's coercion. They're threatening elected officials into signing it and that doesn't settle well with me," Hanlin said.

State Rep. Gary Leif, R-Roseburg, said Jan. 9 on Facebook he was distressed about Heard's connection to Citizens Against Tyranny. He said he supports the position expressed by Hanlin.

"(W)e have a duty to represent all the citizens in our elected area, and we have a duty to uphold the constitution. I have experienced threats from members of these extreme groups and experienced pressure to sign letters and documents that after investigation proved to be less than forthright," Leif said.

The singling out and publishing of the women's names is similar to a practice called doxing, in which identifying information is divulged to supporters of a particular cause to encourage harassment. It's popular with some extremist movements.

Doxing is not currently illegal in Oregon, though Willamette Week reported last year that a proposal to outlaw it was expected to come before the Joint Committee on Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform — a committee on which Heard sits.

It could be taken up by the 2021 legislature.

The proposal would make doxing a misdemeanor and a second offense a Class C felony.

A spokesperson for Oregon OSHA said there are laws protecting employees from retaliation for reporting potential COVID-19 and other safety violations. However, he said he's not aware of any that would apply to non-employees.

He said people making reports about COVID-19 or other safety issues can ask for confidentiality. If they do, no identifying information will be released.

This is an incredibly difficult and stressful time, he said, but decency remains important.

"That's what I have on my mind. Where is the decency?" he said.

In his speech at Garden Valley Church, Heard referenced the demonstration that would occur at the Capitol building in Salem a week after his sermon, and insisted that parishioners participate.

"I'm going to force that door open. When the time comes you better be standing outside that door to push your way in and establish your, you gotta establish your rights as the people. Do not let your servant take all of God's blessing and glory for you. Take it for yourself. So your children have an inheritance worth having," he told the parishioners.

On Dec. 21, he removed his mask on the state Senate floor as protesters attempted to push their way into the Oregon Capitol, and later he went out to speak to the protesters.

Heard believes his cause is just. He said businesses are hurting because of Brown's mandates, and he believes those mandates are illegal.

"I'm just gonna stand with the people I know are being trampled. It doesn't matter if it's a lemonade stand, a nail hair salon, a grocery store, a lumber mill, a diner, they have the right to open for business and earn a living to feed their selves their children their employees to be able to do the same for that community to be able to feed itself by going there and being patrons," he said.

He said the movement isn't going to be perfect and he's not a dictator who can control everything that members of it do.

"I'm doing my absolute best to make sure all of you know that you are still free people," he said.

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