

NEWS RELEASE for Tuesday, October 27, 2020

For more information: Lisa Hubbard, 213-716-2172, media@rop.org

Rural Oregonians Intensify “Defend Democracy” Campaign to Support Voting in Final Election Week with Hotline and Radio Ads

COTTAGE GROVE, OR, October 27, 2020: As rumors fly and tensions rise in the last week of voting, the Rural Organizing Project (ROP) has intensified its “Defend Democracy” campaign to counter disinformation about who can vote, make sure all voters can safely access ballot drop boxes, and effectively de-escalate any election-related threats and intimidation. The campaign, rooted in the electoral organizing of 70 volunteer-run human dignity groups that make up the ROP network, has established a hotline and is reaching thousands more via paid radio ads and public service announcements as the final day to cast ballots approaches.

ROP created the Defend Democracy Hotline (541-714-3257, democracy@rop.org, rop.org/democracy) to respond to voting disinformation spreading on social media and any threats of voter intimidation that may take shape. Despite a presidential election in which the incumbent candidate has threatened to take power by force, by not counting all votes and/or ignoring the vote if he loses, groups have been getting out the vote by:

- Distributing statewide more than 30,000 paper copies of the ROP [STAND election guide](#) in English and Spanish with voting and ballot measure endorsement information. The election guide is playing on a special election edition of [Rural Roots Rising](#) on 16 radio stations throughout the state and as a podcast.
- Canvassing door-to-door in Clatsop County to meet neighbors and share voting information.
- Distributing information to voters via social media in English and Spanish about how to fill out a ballot correctly for first time voters and voters whose first language isn't English in Umatilla County.
- Organizing caravans with voters who are Black, Indigenous and People of Color to vote together in Deschutes County.
- Holding daily walks in Curry County to pick up and deposit signed, sealed ballots in the local dropbox.
- Sharing voter information at the US Post Office in Klamath Falls.
- Notifying elections officials when ballot boxes are overflowing due to unprecedented early voting. In nearly every rural Oregon county a week out from the election, more than a third of registered voters have voted as of October 26.

To ensure more people have access to voting resources, ROP produced and bought radio ads to spread the word. “Everyone has a right to participate in our democracy,” the 60-second ads say, and share ROP’s Defend Democracy Hotline number (541-714-3257) to report concerns and access voting information. Audio recordings of the two 60-second radio spots, running in English and Spanish, are [here](#).

“Whether we live in Brookings or Burns, rural Oregonians care deeply about our communities and groups across our network are working hard to make sure everyone can participate this election season,” said Jessica Campbell, ROP’s Executive Director. “After countless conversations with rural leaders across our network, ROP is operating the Defend Democracy Hotline and campaign to help keep temperatures low and ensure that everyone can participate fully in our democracy in November and beyond.”

Rural Organizing Project is a statewide nonpartisan organization supporting a rural-centered, multiracial, multi-issue, grassroots base in Oregon. Since 1992, we’ve worked to build and support a shared standard of human dignity: the belief in the equal worth of all people, the need for equal access to justice and the right to self-determination. <https://rop.org/>

###