The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Portland Protesters Deserve the National Guard

By John and Andy Schlafly

October 14, 2025

On Saturday night, October 4, a federal district judge blocked President Trump from deploying the National Guard to restore order in Portland, Oregon, which is notorious for the Antifa riots there in 2020 that shut down much of the city. Portland is one of the most Left-wing large cities in the United States, comprised overwhelmingly of white liberals.

Violent protesters in Portland, probably funded by radical groups from elsewhere, have spat at Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, obstructed their vehicles, and even started a fire outside of an ICE facility. More recently additional protesters against ICE have shown up naked as part of their bike ride, which locals defend as a longstanding Portland tradition.

On October 8, the White House posted that "for years, an Antifa-led hellfire has turned Portland into a wasteland of firebombs, beatings, and brazen attacks on federal officers and property – yet the Fake News remains in shameful denial about the Radical Left's reign of terror."

President Trump has posted quotes from many in Portland about the violence they face and fear. "Yesterday morning, I was broken into again for the tenth time," said one downtown Portland business owner. "We need help here and something needs to be done, so if [the National Guard] is what we need to do to get our leaders paying attention to what's happening in Portland, then I think it's a good thing."

"Since early June, Antifa militants have laid siege to the ICE field office in south Portland," the White House points out. "The terrorists have violently breached the facility by using a stop sign as a battering ram, hurled explosives and projectiles, burned American flags, viciously assaulted, attacked, and injured officers, doxed officers, berated neighbors, and even rolled out a guillotine."

In a recent op-ed for TheHill.com, renowned law professor Jonathan Turley decried Democrats who have responded by denying the existence of Antifa. "Antifa was first created in the 1920s, associated with the Weimar-era German communist group Antifaschistische Aktion," Turley observes, and "it is very real."

Trump's Attorney General Pam Bondi declared that "Just like we did with cartels, we are going to take the same approach, President Trump, with Antifa – destroy the entire organization from top to bottom. We're going to take them apart."

At first the federal judge blocked President Trump from using the Oregon National Guard. No problem for Trump, as he then directed the California National Guard to restore order in Portland, but the judge issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) against them, too.

In an expedited appeal to the Ninth Circuit, where the Republicans comprise about 40% of that court, a fortunate draw of two Trump-appointed judges was randomly assigned to the three-judge panel for this case. Their questioning was critical of a district court judge preventing a president from restoring law and order.

Some of the Portland protesters "are violent people," the Department of Justice attorney Eric McArthur informed the appellate judges. "The president is entitled to say enough is enough and bring in the National Guard to reinforce the regular forces," he argued.

Ninth Circuit judges Ryan Nelson and Bridget Bade, both previously appointed by Trump, seemed to agree. Their questions emphasized that the president has broad authority to establish law and order.

"It just seems a little counterintuitive to me that the City of Portland can come in and say no, you need to do it differently," commented Judge Ryan Nelson during the oral argument. He was unpersuaded by Oregon's attorney, Stacy Chaffin, who argued that presidential deference "has a limit, and that limit is this case."

Oregon's attorney insisted that the rationale given by Trump for sending in the National Guard is "untethered to the facts," as the district court judge had held. The only appellate panel judge likely to agree with that assessment is Susan Graber, a law school classmate of Bill and Hillary Clinton who was appointed by Bill to this court.

Meanwhile, a similar standoff between local officials and the Trump Administration is occurring in Chicago. Its Mayor Brandon Johnson has only a 6.6% approval rating among Chicago voters according to one poll, while 79.9% disapprove of his performance.

As in Portland, a district court judge granted a request by Democrats to block Trump's use of the National Guard to restore law and order in violence-ridden Chicago. But on an expedited appeal, the Seventh Circuit has already ruled in favor of Trump by partly staying that injunction against him and allowing the troops to remain in northern Illinois.

The No Kings protest this Saturday is co-sponsored by MoveOn.org, which was founded in 1998 with funding from the flying toaster screen saver. Its original slogan in 1998 was “Censure President Clinton and move on to pressing issues facing the nation.”

John and Andy Schlafly are sons of Phyllis Schlafly (1924-2016) and lead the continuing Phyllis Schlafly Eagles organizations with writing and policy work.