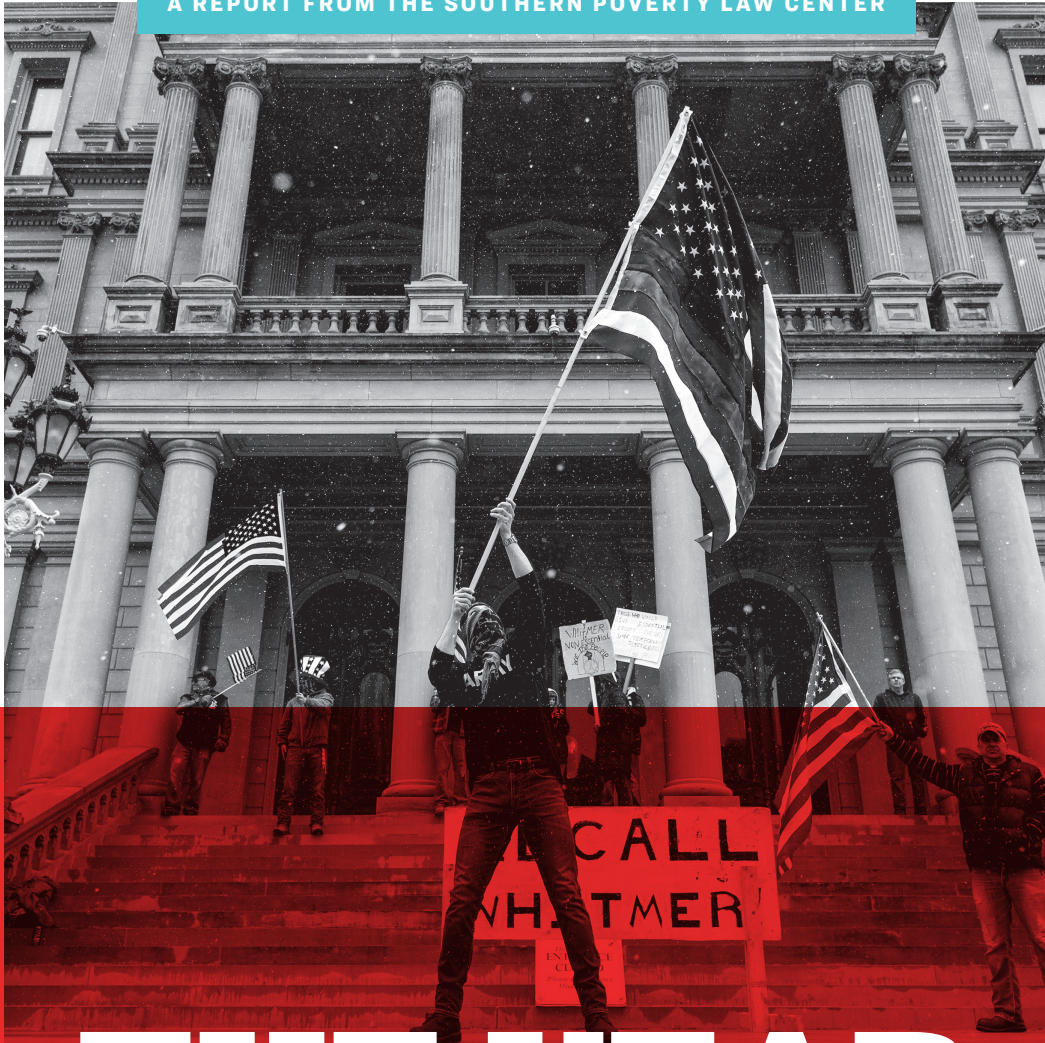


A REPORT FROM THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER



# THE YEAR IN HATE AND EXTREMISM 2020



SPLC  
Southern Poverty  
Law Center

## ABOUT THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

The SPLC is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements and advance the human rights of all people.

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ON THE COVER As coronavirus spreads in April 2020, supporters of the Michigan Conservative Coalition protest the state's stay-at-home orders on the steps of the Capitol building in Lansing.

REUTERS/SETH HERALD

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# The Year in Hate 2020

By Keegan Hanks and Rachel Janik

“Our country has had enough. We will not take it anymore, and that is what this is all about ... we fight, we fight like hell, and if you don’t fight like hell, you’re not going to have a country anymore. ... So we are going to, we are going to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue... And we’re going to the Capitol...” – with those words on Jan. 6, Donald Trump incited a mob that included the hate and antigovernment groups the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers, and the Three Percenters to storm the U.S. Capitol in an insurrection to maintain white supremacy.

Trump refused to condemn the insurrection, which left five people dead, including a Capitol law enforcement officer. He even praised the rioters, calling them “patriots,” saying “we love you” and “you are very special.” The episode was reminiscent of his notorious declaration that there were “very fine people on both sides,” in the aftermath of the violence at the deadly 2017 white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.

While every few months it seemed there was a new, brazen moment that would define the Trump presidency, it was this siege of the U.S. Capitol, with pro-Trump rioters parading through the halls of Congress with Confederate flags and a self-described white nationalist pilfering from the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, that will exemplify Trump’s racist demagoguery for posterity.

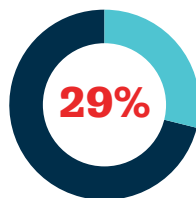
Historically, SPLC research shows that when extremists perceive more allies in the halls of power, their numbers dip. Not so with the Trump presidency. For the first three years of his presidency, SPLC recorded historically high hate group numbers as bigotry found a comfortable home in the White House, and white nationalist ideologues influenced policies like the Muslim ban

and separation of immigrant children from families at the border.

Hate groups that traditionally occupy the mainstream, like anti-LGBTQ groups and anti-immigrant groups, saw their influence in government balloon over the last four years, with serious consequences for human rights in America and around the world. Nativist bigotry brought about one of the worst human rights crises in modern U.S. history, when the Department of Homeland Security separated children from their parents at the southern border. The administration also effectively suspended the legal asylum process, stranding people who fled violence in their home countries, and vacated asylum protections for survivors of intimate partner violence. Anti-LGBTQ appointments to the judiciary will likely threaten trans and queer Americans’ civil rights for a generation.

838

hate groups in  
the U.S. in 2020



29%  
of Americans  
personally know  
someone who  
believes that white  
people are the  
superior race.

## Hate groups declined, but hate did not

In 2020, SPLC tracked 838 active hate groups. Though numbers have dropped 11% overall, we are still recording historic highs. In 2015, the numbers jumped from 784 to 892, and they have remained well above 800 for the duration of the Trump presidency.

It is important to understand that the number of hate groups is merely one metric for measuring the level of hate and racism in America, and that the decline in groups should not be interpreted as a reduction in bigoted beliefs and actions motivated by hate. The SPLC has begun conducting polling as an additional tool to measure extremist sentiment. Our August 2020 polling, for example, revealed that 29 percent of Americans personally know someone who believes that white people are the superior race.





As another metric, SPLC keeps track of extremist flyers reported around the country. This year we recorded almost 4,900 flyering incidents. Groups under the white nationalist ideology exploited flyering as a tactic to spread their hateful worldview nearly twelve times more than all other ideologies combined.

Typically, new hate groups are formed and membership grows in reaction to changes in society, especially changes that challenge white hegemony. A historical example of this is the Ku Klux Klan, which was virtually nonexistent in the 1930s and 1940s after its membership reached record levels in the 1920s, and came roaring back in the 1950s. White nationalist beliefs had not declined in the 1930s and 1940s alongside group membership, a fact that became clear when organized hate activities erupted after the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* made segregation illegal. In the modern era, we tracked a gradual rise of hate groups during the George W. Bush administration, when numbers peaked in the 800s. After Barack Obama became the nation's first Black president, the number jumped to more than 1,000.

The demise of the Klan in the last decade has specifically resulted in an overall reduction in the number of hate groups that the SPLC tracks. The Ku Klux Klan, formerly a significant generator of white supremacist terror, saw its count dwindle



Above: Far-right extremists storm the U.S. Capitol on Jan 6.  
Below: Proud Boys march in Washington, D.C. in December 2020 in an effort to overturn the results of the presidential election.

to 25 groups in 2020. The number of Klan groups the SPLC tracked used to be consistently over 150; in recent years they dropped below 100, and then under 50. A major reason for this is that the Klan's name has become extremely toxic – if you are a Klan member and your employer finds out, for instance, you are all but guaranteed to be fired. Unfortunately, those declining numbers do not reflect a parallel reduction in support for their ideas.

Despite the massive drop in Klan groups, there are now many alternative hate organizations that make Klan membership obsolete. For example, the



Proud Boys, which SPLC lists under the General Hate category, vandalized historically Black churches in Washington, D.C. during a December pro-Trump demonstration, and members of the Proud Boys were front and center during the U.S. Capitol insurrection.

Many extremist ideologues are not formal members of any organization. Online platforms allow individuals to interact with hate and antigovernment groups without joining them, as well as to form connections and talk with likeminded people. And, despite the lack of formal affiliation, these individuals still take real-world actions. The U.S. Capitol insurrection exemplifies this. Most of the people storming the Capitol building may not be card-carrying members of a hate or antigovernment group, but they harbor extremist beliefs.

The U.S. Capitol insurrection also showed us how the Trump campaign and the MAGA movement offered individuals a twisted kind of camaraderie that you get from being a member of a hate or antigovernment group, where Trump himself was a radicalizing force. We again see this with the people who were arrested – many had previously attended several rallies, and viewed President Trump as their leader.

Two other trends that impacted the count in 2020 and will likely affect it in future years: 1) COVID-19 minimized overt hate group activity. There were some groups that we did not relist this year because they ceased their in-person activity and did not appear to do anything online; and 2) Hate groups are increasingly being booted from popular social media platforms and moving their communications into encrypted chatrooms, which makes it harder for the SPLC to track them.

**Online platforms allow individuals to interact with hate and antigovernment groups without joining them, as well as to form connections and talk with likeminded people.**

### The hate group landscape in 2020

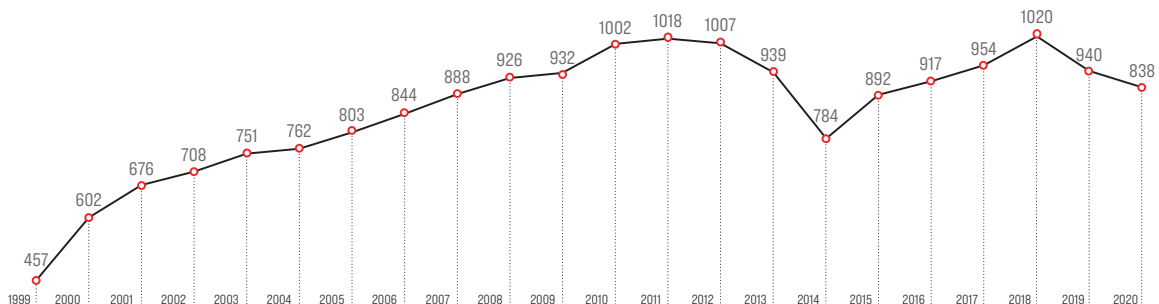
As previously mentioned, The Ku Klux Klan continued its collapse, with only 25 active chapters in 2020.

White nationalist group numbers also dipped by over 100, a change that does not signal a trend toward less white nationalist organizing. Both white nationalist groups and neo-Nazi groups are becoming more diffuse and difficult to track and quantify as they proliferate online and communicate on encrypted platforms.

Anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and anti-LGBTQ hate groups, which are typically more successful at laundering their ideas into mainstream political discourse, saw their numbers remain largely stable, though their in-person organizing was curtailed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even though anti-immigrant groups were not able to hold as many in-person events as years past, their influence was felt where it mattered: in policy and legislation. Over Trump’s four years in office, according to data published by the Migration Policy Institute, the Trump administration implemented more than 400 policy changes to curb both legal and illegal immigration. Exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic to stoke health and economic fears, the Trump administration enacted a de facto moratorium on all immigration to the U.S. by the end of 2020.

## HATE GROUPS 1999 – 2020





Influential anti-LGBTQ hate groups became further entrenched in the Trump White House, and the Trump administration continued its years-long pattern of appointing federal judges with ties to anti-LGBTQ groups. The most high-profile of these appointments was Amy Coney Barrett, who joined the Supreme Court last fall and has ties to Alliance Defending Freedom, which SPLC has designated an anti-LGBTQ hate group. Though the anti-LGBTQ hate movement has lost an ally in the president, they are likely to continue to use the lower courts and the Supreme Court to try and roll back LGBTQ rights.

The number of anti-Muslim hate groups dropped by 12, from 84 last year to 72 this year. The largest anti-Muslim hate group in the country, ACT for America, enjoyed attention from the Trump White House, which met with ACT head Brigitte Gabriel on at least two documented occasions in 2020. A former ACT staffer was also hired at the State Department. Despite that influence, the group suffered from infighting between smaller local chapters and the national office in Washington, D.C. Following Trump’s election loss, some leaders in the anti-Muslim movement have signaled a shift toward local and state-level organizing.

### Confronting far-right and racist narratives

The incoming Biden administration faces dual challenges: reversing the catastrophic damage to civil rights done by Trump and his allies, and doing the harder work of exposing and dismantling the engines of entrenched, systemic white supremacy that have always threatened inclusive democracy in the U.S. For example, SPLC’s August 2020 poll

Left: Amy Coney Barrett is sworn in as Supreme Court Justice. She has ties to anti-LGBTQ hate group Alliance Defending Freedom. Right: Brigitte Gabriel and other nativist extremists enjoyed easy access to the levers of power during the Trump presidency.

found that 65 percent of respondents believe racism exists and is harmful, but 49 percent believe that people of color are more likely to be poor because of a lack of work ethic.

Findings were similarly disturbing around gaps in health outcomes, with only 38 percent of respondents believing that systemic racism played a role, even as COVID-19 ravages communities of color.

Despite some high-profile support for Black Lives Matter demonstrations this summer, the poll showed that 51 percent of Americans thought that the looting which occurred in several cities was a bigger problem than police violence against Black people, and 51 percent also thought that the demonstrations were not justified because the problem with police violence was isolated to a few “bad apples.”

These racist narratives and beliefs have been reinvigorated thanks to one of the most enduring and pernicious legacies of the Trump era: the far right’s success constructing a false alternative reality, bolstered by a never-ending stream of baseless conspiracy theories and disinformation. This fight over the frame of reality has polarized American society further and fundamentally ruptured trust in institutions and information. The tech sector, an opportunistic ally in the propagation of this fraud, abdicated its responsibility so long ago that it has not been able to meaningfully recover. Only after



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**65%**

Believe racism exists and is harmful.

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**49%**

Believe that people of color are more likely to be poor because of a lack of work ethic.

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**51%**

Believe that the looting that occurred in several cities during Black Lives Matter demonstrations was a bigger problem than the police violence against Black people.

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**51%**

Believe that Black Lives Matter demonstrations were not justified because the problem with police violence was isolated to a few “bad apples.”

—SPLC’S AUGUST 2020 POLL

Trump incited a deadly insurrection and Democrats flipped the Senate did they suspend the President’s accounts and begin to purge other extremists from their platforms. The echo chambers have formed, trust in the credibility of reputable media outlets has been disastrously diminished, and the polarization of American society has accelerated.

Some of the robber barons of social media are warming to revisions of section 230 of the Communication Decency Act – legislation that, in its current form, insulates platforms from liability for the content users post – long after its true utility ran out for their companies. The toxic networks that they nurtured are migrating to new platforms, like Parler and Telegram.

The dangers of these isolated and tainted wells of information reached their most critical point during the 2020 election, when Trump, his allies and the extremists who support him, denied the severity of COVID-19 and preemptively declared the results of the general election fraudulent. Throughout the year, armed militias became fixtures at state houses, and election officials were targeted and threatened in multiple states, including at their private homes.

Fortunately, predictions of violent attempts to disrupt voting proved largely unfounded, and the U.S. celebrated historic voter turnout. But in the weeks after Biden’s victory, Trump and his compatriots spread disinformation and conspiracy theories at a breathtaking

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMBAT EXTREMIST GROUPS

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**Enact the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act**, which would establish offices within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Justice, and the FBI to monitor, investigate and prosecute cases of domestic terrorism – and require these offices to regularly report to Congress. Passed overwhelmingly by the House of Representatives last September, this legislation would also provide resources to strengthen partnerships with state and local law enforcement

authorities to confront far-right extremism and create an interagency task force to explore white supremacist activities within the U.S. armed forces and federal law enforcement.

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**Improve federal hate crime data collection, training, and prevention.** Data drives policy. The FBI’s annual Hate Crime Statistics Act report is the best national snapshot of hate violence in America, but data received from the 18,000 federal, state, local and tribal law

enforcement agencies is vastly underreported – in part because reporting is not mandatory. In 2019 (the most recent report), 86% of police agencies either affirmatively reported that they had zero hate crimes, or they did not report any data to the FBI at all.

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As we work to build support for mandatory hate crime reporting to the FBI, Congress should **enact the Khalid Jabara and Heather Heyer National Opposition to Hate,**

rate, and called on state and federal elected officials, as well as judges, to overturn the will of voters in five states. By late November, only 20 percent of Republicans surveyed said they believed Joe Biden was the true winner of the election, after he won the popular vote in a free and fair election by a margin of more than 7 million and secured the electoral college by 74 votes.

While most – but not all – elected officials and judges ignored Trump, his followers succeeded in temporarily halting the certification of the 2020 election during the joint session of Congress on Jan. 6.

The election, and the violent backlash from the right, have all taken place against the backdrop of a global pandemic which has claimed the lives of more than 500,000 Americans in less than a year – disproportionately people of color, who have to contend with white supremacist systems that limit their access to high-quality healthcare and other vital resources. And skepticism towards safety measures and the vaccine – much of it fueled by right-wing conspiracy networks – remains high.

#### **American attitudes about racism**

Just weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic took hold of the United States, a different tragedy gripped Brunswick, Georgia when Ahmaud Arbery was pursued by three white men (one a former police



Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed Black man, was pursued and fatally shot by white vigilantes while jogging in Brunswick, Georgia in February 2020.

officer) while he was jogging and shot to death. Despite the incident being captured on video, law enforcement made no arrests in connection with the attack for more than 70 days.

Arbery's death was among the first extrajudicial killings of Black people in 2020 to garner national media attention. Each one is a reminder that the census of hate groups undertaken by the SPLC's

**Assault, and Threats to Equality Act of 2019 (NO HATE Act)**, which would authorize incentive grants to spark improved local and state hate crime training and data collection initiatives, as well as state-based hotlines to connect victims with support services.

The law is a blunt instrument to address violent hate and extremism – it is much better to prevent these criminal acts in the first place. Congress should **shift funding away**

**from punishment models and toward the prevention of violent extremism.** It should focus on programs that build resilient communities and empower adults – including parents, teachers, caregivers, counselors, therapists, faith leaders and coaches – to help steer young people away from dangerous ideas. These programs are better housed in the Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services than DHS or other national security agencies.

**Reject efforts to create a new criminal domestic terrorism statute – or the creation of a listing of designated domestic terrorist organizations.** A new federal domestic terrorism statute or list would adversely impact civil liberties and could be used to expand racial profiling or be wielded to surveil and investigate communities of color and political opponents in the name of national security.



## RECOMMENDATION TO ADDRESS FAR-RIGHT AND RACIST NARRATIVES

**Hold former President Donald Trump and those who helped incite the deadly assault on the U.S. Capitol accountable.** Action by the House of Representatives to impeach former President Trump was absolutely necessary to protect the future of our democracy. Now the Senate must have the courage and true patriotism to convict him and permanently disqualify him from holding public office. In addition, Congress should discipline, censure, or expel all of the 147 Senators and Representatives who supported the insurrection and baseless “Stop the Steal” lies by voting against Electoral College certification of President Biden’s victory.

Public figures involved in inciting and giving encouragement to the armed insurrectionists who stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 – destroying property, injuring dozens of officers, and leaving five people dead – **should be permanently deplatformed from all social media.** In addition, corporations should permanently suspend political donations to Members of Congress and other elected officials that helped incite the violent siege and request that any past political donations to their campaigns be returned.

**Provide funding for the Department of Education to develop a curriculum on structural racism and funding for states to implement their own related initiatives.**

Americans can only dismantle white supremacy if they understand how racism shaped (and continues to shape) housing, education, policing, health care and other policies and practices that affect our everyday lives.

**Require renaming of military bases named for Confederate leaders, and ban the display of Confederate flags or other racist symbols from all military installations, federal parks, streets and highways.** The 2015 Charleston church massacre sparked a nationwide effort to remove Confederate symbols from public places, but hundreds remain – a sign that we have failed to fully acknowledge the injustices of slavery or affirm our commitment to a wholly inclusive, pluralistic democracy. In addition, Congress should create a federal grant program to help municipalities remove symbols of the Confederacy.

Intelligence Project is only one metric for understanding the toll that white supremacy takes on Black and Indigenous Americans, along with other Americans of color.

Despite a historic, national outcry over these murders, SPLC’s poll showed a limited understanding of such structural racism. Large majorities of the population surveyed acknowledged the dangers posed by organized antigovernment and white power groups, but failed to connect their existence and influence to the greater culture of white supremacy. For example, the narrative of the odd “bad apple” in police departments persists, even as reports of violence and death at the hands of law enforcement proliferate across the country.

Throughout his presidency, Trump and his allies denied and minimized the reality of bigotry in this country, and legitimized white supremacy through policies like the Muslim ban and the child separation, through personnel like Stephen Miller, Julia Hahn, Jason Richwine and Darren Beattie, and through behavior like defending Confederate monuments and the extremists who marched in Charlottesville. His administration mocked and resisted public education about our country’s racist legacy, attacking *The New York Times’s* The 1619 Project in particular. In late September, President Trump issued an executive order banning some forms of diversity training for federal employees and contractors.

### Antigovernment uprising

On Aug. 25, a 17-year-old named Kyle Rittenhouse traveled the 20 miles between his hometown of Antioch, Illinois and Kenosha, Wisconsin. He was answering an open call, sent out over social media, for armed militia to “defend” Kenosha from the mostly peaceful demonstrations that had sprung up in the city after a Kenosha police officer chased Jacob Blake into his car and shot him four times in the back, paralyzing him. Rittenhouse, despite being a minor, had procured a semiautomatic rifle and brought it with him to the protest. Before the night was over, he allegedly shot three men, killing two. He has been charged with multiple counts of homicide, and his attorneys are arguing he acted in self-defense. People on the right, from the mainstream to the fringe, not only defended his actions, but celebrated them.



The shootings in Kenosha were the apex of a year of feverish paramilitary vigilantism, which began in January 2020 when militias showed up in Richmond, Virginia to oppose gun measures promised by a newly Democratic-controlled state legislature. Soon, they found a new mobilizing cause: As COVID-19 began to spread across the country, antigovernment groups came out in force to oppose mask mandates and other safety measures to slow the spread of the disease. As mass demonstrations for racial justice mobilized around the country, paramilitaries styled themselves as ad hoc deputies of law enforcement, “patrolling” the streets in opposition to the largely peaceful demonstrations.

A similarly laudatory reaction from the right greeted Mark and Patricia McCloskey, who brandished guns at a passing group of Black Lives Matter demonstrators in St. Louis. They were rewarded with a speaking slot at the Republican National Convention.

Left: The Boogaloo boys hold a rally in Lansing, Michigan in 2020. Right: The Boogaloo boys march in Richmond, Virginia. The Boogaloo movement is a loosely connected group with ideological roots in white nationalism and antigovernment beliefs. Boogaloo boys believe a second civil war is imminent, and desirable.

In their defense of Rittenhouse and other armed militia action, the right has signaled that antigovernment participation is an acceptable form of right-wing political expression, a stance that did not even waver when members of a Michigan militia were arrested and charged with plotting to kidnap their governor, Gretchen Witmer.

The thwarted plot came after a string of violence and arrests attributed to the Boogaloo movement, a predominantly white and heavily armed online subculture that began as a racist meme. The subculture is an illustration of the porous boundaries between the antigovernment movement and the larger hate

#### RECOMMENDATIONS TO CHANGE ATTITUDES ABOUT RACISM

**Establish a national truth, racial healing and transformation commission to examine the history of white supremacy and structural racism in the United States.** This long-overdue truth and reconciliation commission would help the United States reckon with the injustices our country has committed and help spark a movement to eliminate racial discrimination.

**Prohibit racial, ethnic and religious profiling in federal, state and local law enforcement.** Black, Latinx, Muslim and Indigenous people are subject to discriminatory policing, including increased surveillance, more harsh criminal sentences and disproportionately high rates of being killed by police.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SQUELCHING THE ANTIGOVERNMENT UPRISING

**End funding for police militarization and the transfer of excess military property to law enforcement agencies.** Police militarization disproportionately exposes communities of color to police violence and it inflames the paranoia of the extreme right, which uses state-sponsored violence as evidence of government tyranny and impending civil war.

**End funding for DHS Countering Violent Extremism/Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention programs that profile and target immigrants, Muslims and Black Americans and result in illegal spying and surveillance.** They are not only ineffective, but harmful.

**Codify independent authority and autonomy protections for whistleblowers and inspectors general at federal agencies** – including federal law enforcement agencies. President Trump’s unprecedented purge of several federal agency inspectors general revealed the limits of current law to protect these necessary government watchdogs, who are capable of injecting much needed accountability into the federal government. Whistleblower protection can help address the “Blue Wall of Silence” and encourage reporting of racist law enforcement officials.

ecosystem, and how anonymous posting forums like 4Chan continue to influence both. Its adherents advocate for a second civil war and have been involved repeatedly in acts of violence, including murder.

The antigovernment movement will be explored in detail in a subsequent installment of this report, along with SPLC’s 2020 list of antigovernment groups.

### **The path forward**

As we move into 2021, and beyond the Trump presidency, we must find ways to counter the reactionary, authoritarian populism that is mobilizing on the heels of Trump’s loss. Hate groups that lose salience or public attention will not go away. Instead, they will find shelter elsewhere among the far right, particularly in the militant edge of campaigns like “Re-Open” and “Stop the Steal.”

An effective opposition to this antidemocratic movement has to dismantle the symptoms of white supremacy culture that justify it and give it fuel. The SPLC has developed four Impact Statements that help define and quantify our mission, and each has a role to play in combating the extreme right.

First, **dismantling white nationalism and protecting democracy.** With robust anti-racist education, we can reduce the population of Americans that harbor sympathy for a white nationalist worldview.

Second, **protecting voting rights and civic engagement.** By dismantling voter suppression laws, we can keep the power in the hands of the American people and safe from undue influence by the small antidemocratic minority.

Third, **decriminalizing and decarcerating Black and Brown people.** Mass incarceration and overcriminalization saps resources and opportunities from communities of color and contributes to a culture that dehumanizes Black and Brown people and fuels the core ideology of white nationalism.

Finally, **eradicating poverty.** Yet again, systemic racism creates barriers to advancement, meaning Black and Brown people are overrepresented in populations experiencing poverty. The challenges poverty presents overlap with the other challenges we face in the fight against white supremacy.





## Flyering Remains a Recruitment Tool for Hate Groups

In 2020, a year marked by political and social turmoil, the repugnant messages spewed by hate groups across the U.S. only proliferated. Fueled in part by a presidential administration steeped in racism and misogyny, the number of racist flyering incidents in 2020 grew to well over 4,000.

Used as a tool for recruitment, publicity and intimidation, flyering is a relatively low-risk, contactless activity during a pandemic, therefore contributing to the rise in incidents. Most often, those posting flyers or hanging banners wear masks to conceal their identities. Thus, the only revision to this tactic in 2020 was a focus on public spaces rather than on campuses, as many academic institutions moved to online learning. The number of campus flyering incidents dropped from 530 in 2019 to about 250 in 2020.

Patriot Front, pictured, was among the hate groups that have enthusiastically embraced flyering as a propaganda tool.

With regard to groups and ideologies that carried out the bulk of flyering, trends remained largely the same across 2019 and 2020. White nationalist groups disseminated the most flyers, banners and stickers across the country. Among groups under that ideology, Patriot Front was again by far the most active, with over 3,500 incidents. These incidents include posting flyers and stickers in public places, attaching banners to highway overpasses, and spray-painting racist and antisemitic messages. Among the more notable actions in 2020, Patriot Front dropped a banner reading: “The United States is no longer of America. Now we are on our own,” over a Black Lives Matter billboard in Houston, Texas.

Also continuing on the same trajectory from 2019, the number of flyering incidents attributed to the American Identity Movement continued to drop significantly until the group’s leader announced their disbandment on Nov. 2. However, having increased their flyering efforts in June 2019, white

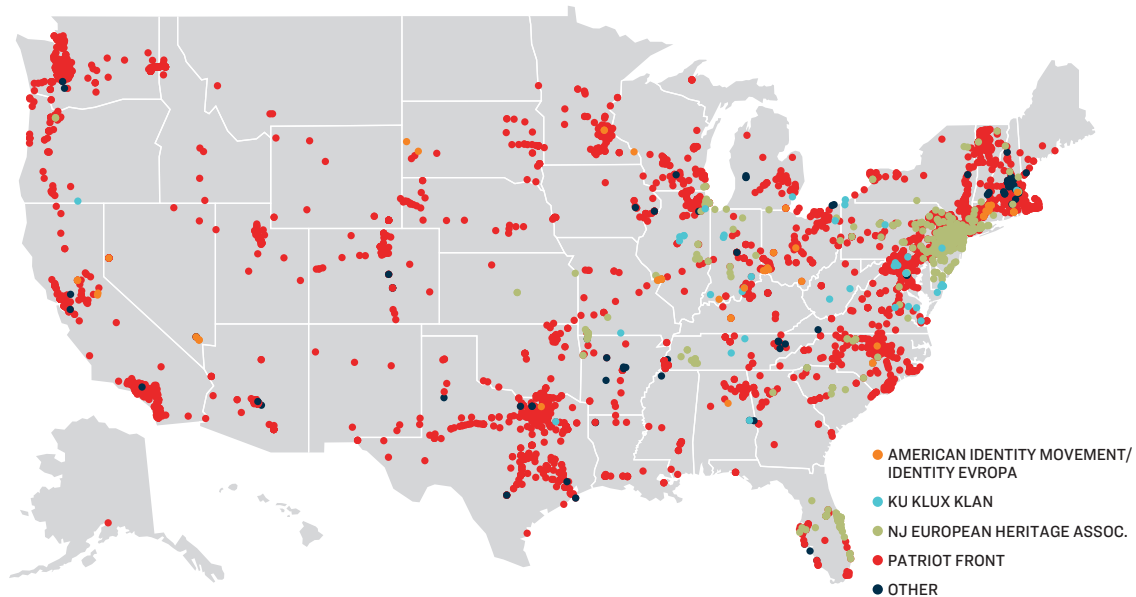
**4,000+**

flyering incidents  
in 2020

**250**

flyering incidents  
on college campuses

## FLYERING INCIDENTS IN 2020



nationalist group New Jersey European Heritage Association continued to regularly post flyers up and down the Eastern Seaboard in 2020. Posting roughly 630 flyers and banners throughout the year, most efforts were concentrated in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Florida, with occasional postings in the Carolinas, Tennessee and Kansas.

Outside of the white nationalist ideology, several newly formed neo-Nazi groups utilized the tactic to recruit and spread their odious messages. Most notably, Nationalist Social Club (NSC 131) distributed flyers over 130 times in states across the country, including Massachusetts, New York, Arkansas and New Hampshire. Other recently formed neo-Nazi groups partaking in racist flyering during 2020 include Moonkrieg Division, Iron Youth, Folks Front/Folkish Resistance Movement and 14First. Since each flyering incident compiled on this map denotes real-world activity from members of organized hate groups, this map is largely a reflection of where each of these hate groups are currently located.

Most of the aforementioned groups across the white nationalist and neo-Nazi ideologies post about their flyering endeavors on such platforms as Telegram and Gab, where racist rhetoric flourishes completely unfettered. As various social and political events transpired throughout the year, the messaging – both in print and on social media – changed accordingly. In mid-February, when reports of the coronavirus were initially surfacing, the American Identity Movement posted flyers

emulating President Trump’s xenophobic, anti-immigrant rhetoric about the virus.

Months later, as Black Lives Matter demonstrations coalesced around the need to confront systemic oppression and racist policing, hate groups tailored their messaging to support Kyle Rittenhouse. Police say Rittenhouse, a 17-year-old armed with an AR-15, shot three demonstrators, killing two, in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on Aug. 15. Within days, the New Jersey European Heritage Association was using the hashtag “#FreeKyleRittenhouse,” and first publicly posted such stickers on Sept. 4.

This year’s Ku Klux Klan flyering numbers were nearly identical to last year’s, with an estimated 42 incidents. Of those, roughly two-thirds can be attributed to the Pelham, North Carolina-based Loyal White Knights, who left flyers in driveways across several states in the Mid-Atlantic region. Other groups that dropped flyers in 2020 include the Honorable Sacred Knights, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Imperial Klans of America and Church of the National Knights.

While the climate across the country remains tempestuous, flyering will continue to be a staple of far-right recruitment and propagation. The impact of the Biden-Harris administration on flyering is unforeseeable, as is the impact the vaccine will have on its popularity as a tactic. Despite the increasing number of hateful flyering incidents in 2020 and the uncertainty of flyering in 2021, the resiliency of communities across the country has remained steadfast in the face of racism.





PATRIARCHAL VIOLENCE

# Misogyny from the Far Right to the Mainstream

By Lydia Bates

In both the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and the field of extremism research as a whole, analyses of the far right have often neglected to fully account for the innumerable ways gender, misogyny and gender-based violence manifest within and operate alongside other forms of racially and religiously motivated hate. Organizations like the Institute for Research on Male Supremacism have done pioneering work monitoring and defining misogynistic hate ideologies, but this area of extremism is still not widely recognized or accurately understood.

The SPLC has been adapting how we monitor hate and extremism to more accurately reflect ideological distinctions. Our efforts to better capture organized misogyny began in 2018, when we started monitoring male supremacist hate groups. Male supremacist groups vilify women along paradoxes: manipulative yet incompetent; genetically inferior, yet the progenitors of the white race; and deserving

of violent punishment both for having sex and denying sex to men. Many of these narratives about the inferiority and subjugation of women underpin the beliefs of nearly all extremist groups. The manifestations and rhetoric can be different across ideologies, however the resultant verbal, psychological and physical violence that such views motivate against women and trans people remains steadfast.

## **Dangerous manifestations: Extremism and domestic violence**

In order to effectively and thoroughly research gender in extremism, we must examine each intersection of these issues. While the ubiquity of misogyny and gender-based violence is hard to overstate in the far right, and our broader society, we began this research by examining domestic violence – an issue that surfaces regularly in the lives, actions and discussions of far-right adherents – and extremism.

Anecdotes of abuse abound, from white nationalist Richard Spencer being accused of emotional and physical abuse in 2018 divorce filings<sup>1</sup> to allegations that Stewart Rhodes – founder of the anti-government Oath Keepers – engaged in emotional and manipulative abuse aimed at limiting his family’s freedoms,<sup>2</sup> a type of behavior Dr. Evan Stark calls coercive control.<sup>3</sup> These harmful acts, if true, are the physical embodiment of violent rhetoric and narratives from groups like the Proud Boys, who claim, “leftist women are more third-wave feminist and less feminine than ever and now, you’re not even women anymore... either your [sic] women, and if you are, please stop fighting men, or you’re not women and your face is now punchable.”<sup>4</sup>

Domestic violence has been reported and alleged across a spectrum of hate and antigovernment groups. However, misogyny and rigid gender roles are a common ideological pillar for most groups, and harm not only cisgender women, but trans people as well, along with LGBTQ identified people more broadly.

to violent extremism and domestic violence. Consistent throughout these discussions was a need to move away from criminal justice solutions to build upon victim-centered approaches grounded in education and in restorative and transformative justice.

### **Patriarchal violence: An apt descriptor for pervasive oppressions**

As the SPLC seeks to increase its efficacy at rooting out hate and extremism in all its forms, we must also practice humility and flexibility. During our few years fully considering gender-based violence, and the handful of times our department has published articles on the subject, we have used the term “domestic violence.” While this term, as well as “intimate partner violence,” accurately define the specific type of relational harm that is being enacted, these terms largely fail to capture the roots of this cyclical violence at the intersections of race, class, religion and gender.



**Patriarchal Violence (PV) is an interconnected system of institutions, practices, policies, beliefs, and behaviors that harm, undervalue, and terrorize girls, women, femme, intersex, gender non-conforming, LGBTQ, and other gender-oppressed people in our communities. PV is a widespread, [normalized] epidemic based on the domination, control, and colonizing of bodies, genders, and sexualities, happening in every community globally. PV is a global power structure and manifests on the systemic, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized level. It is rooted in interlocking systems of oppression.**

— ABOLISHING PATRIARCHAL VIOLENCE INNOVATION LAB

To better understand these issues with an eye towards more effectively confronting and interrupting violence, the SPLC convened a group of researchers, practitioners, academics and activists in far-right extremism, male supremacy, domestic violence, grassroots organizing and journalism earlier this fall. Across the six 90-minute panel discussions, speakers addressed the intersection of issues including gun violence, anti-LGBTQ bigotry, the continuing impact of colonization, discriminatory immigration policy and comprehensive interventions as they pertain

While the term “patriarchal violence” has existed to describe structural inequities for decades, Black Feminist Future, Collective Action for Safe Spaces, Freedom Inc. and Stand with Black Women recently convened the Abolishing Patriarchal Violence Innovation Lab to resituate patriarchal violence within a comprehensive context. Their definition reads, “Patriarchal Violence (PV) is an interconnected system of institutions, practices, policies, beliefs, and behaviors that harm, undervalue, and terrorize girls, women, femme, intersex, gender non-conforming, LGBTQ, and other

gender-oppressed people in our communities. PV is a widespread, [normalized] epidemic based on the domination, control, and colonizing of bodies, genders, and sexualities, happening in every community globally. PV is a global power structure and manifests on the systemic, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized level. It is rooted in interlocking systems of oppression.”<sup>5</sup>

The Abolishing Patriarchal Violence Innovation Lab’s definition provides continuity from the genocide of Indigenous populations, forced removal and lack of tribal jurisdiction to the high rates of missing and murdered Indigenous women today. It contextualizes the gravity of the Supreme Court’s recent *McGirt v. Oklahoma*<sup>6</sup> ruling in the history of allotment policies,<sup>7</sup> like the Dawes Act, and cases limiting tribal sovereignty, such as *Oliphant v. Suquamish*.<sup>8</sup> This understanding of patriarchal violence shines a light on the through-lines from an increase in militia members working at the North Dakota Bakken oil fields and the subsequent uptick in violence perpetrated against local Indigenous women and girls.<sup>9</sup>

Patriarchal violence recognizes the centuries of oppression on the same land that connects the forced sterilization of Indigenous women, through James Marion Sims’ unanesthetized gynecological surgeries performed on enslaved Black women, to allegations of mass hysterectomies in ICE detention centers.<sup>10</sup> It subsequently accounts for the injustice of memorializing Sims as the “father of gynecology”<sup>11</sup> when the maternal mortality rate for Black women in America is two to three times that of their white counterparts.<sup>12</sup> It draws upon iterations of misogyny, racism and homophobia across generations to contextualize and bring visibility to the on average 30- to 35-year lifespan of trans women of color in the Americas.<sup>13</sup>

This definition of patriarchal violence also helps explain the dichotomous role of white women in hate groups that bolster a racist, self-serving

ideology while simultaneously subjecting them to rigid gender roles, sexual assault and physical violence. It undergirds the precarious bargain that many white women have made in upholding institutions of white supremacy while forfeiting safety from misogyny and gender-based violence. The intersectional framing of patriarchal violence also opens a space for domestic violence intervention to be an impetus for deradicalization processes.

### The Trump administration and coronavirus pandemic, a confluence of patriarchal violence

The weight of patriarchal violence in this year of upheaval provided a particularly motivating catalyst to evolve our department’s framing of extremism. Four years of the Trump administration have proven exceedingly difficult for many women, particularly women of color and trans women. The innumerable assaults on fundamental human rights include decimating medical protections for LGBTQ people;<sup>14</sup> appointing anti-choice,<sup>15</sup> homophobic federal judges,<sup>16</sup> quietly gutting the Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women’s definition of domestic violence<sup>17</sup> and a concerted effort to block asylum-seekers fleeing gender-based violence.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the obvious concerns around illness and death during a pandemic that has further exposed structural inequities, domestic violence rates have also increased due to necessary stay-at-home measures. During the first two months of the pandemic, the National Domestic Violence Hotline reported a 9% increase in calls and said that 10% of all callers “cited COVID-19 as a condition of their experience.”<sup>19</sup>

Contributing to this increase in domestic violence calls is an exponential increase in financial instability. This financial crisis has had a much worse impact on women than men, with roughly

NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO LEFT THE WORKFORCE, SEPTEMBER 2020



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, NOVEMBER 2020



865,000 women leaving the workforce in September alone, compared to 216,000 men.<sup>20</sup> In November, the overall unemployment rate for women was 6.1%, with a 9% unemployment rate for Black women and 8.2% for Latinas.<sup>21</sup> Financial uncertainty and unemployment impacts rates and severity of domestic violence.<sup>22</sup> An increased financial dependency on an abusive partner can also greatly limit a survivor's ability to leave a dangerous relationship.

Hate groups are taking advantage of this unprecedented moment; an increased amount of time online, compounded by feelings of uncertainty, a lack of meaningful social engagement and decreased supervision has increased young people's susceptibility to radicalization.<sup>23</sup> Deeply entrenched in the predation and propaganda of hate groups is misogyny and ideations of gender-based violence. As a driver to radicalization, misogyny works alongside racism, antisemitism and perceptions of waning civil rights in the face of increasing equality.

To further complicate these issues in the United States, "access to a gun makes it five times more likely that the abusive partner will kill his female victim."<sup>24</sup> With the incoming Democratic presidency, some experts predict that gun sales will spike due to fears of increased gun control measures that may accompany a liberal administration.<sup>25</sup> With a pandemic continuing to spread out of control, domestic violence concerns become all the more dire.

#### **Moving forward under the Biden-Harris administration**

As our framing of extremism expands to better encompass these understandings of misogyny, so too do our efforts to confront and build resilience against radicalization. The newly elected Biden-Harris administration offers a step towards progress with policy proposals to bolster culturally specific domestic violence services and plans to increase the safety of survivors through housing initiatives and sensible gun laws.<sup>26</sup> A coordinated effort to disseminate the COVID-19 vaccines and provide financial assistance to all those suffering under the economic burden of a pandemic will also help. However, all of these steps must be taken with an antiracism and victim-centered approach to uplift those who are most vulnerable.

The criminal justice system is particularly ill-suited to handle both domestic violence and radicalization. As Dr. Leigh Goodmark writes in

*Decriminalizing Domestic Violence: A Balanced Policy Approach to Intimate Partner Violence*, "the traumatic effects of the inhumane conditions and exposure to violence within prisons feed a destructive cycle of violence when those who abuse are released into the community and resume their intimate relationships."<sup>27</sup> While this line is written specifically about domestic abusers leaving prison, the same could be said about those who have been radicalized while incarcerated. A system built on violence and control will only breed the same.

To root out extremism and build resilience to radicalization at its source, significant investment needs to be made in education around digital literacy,<sup>28</sup> critical assessment of online sources and online security for young people. Parents, teachers and caregivers also need to be equipped with the tools to recognize and confront online radicalization. Key to this education is the eradication of harmful constructions of masculinities in boys and young men, to move away from violence as a substitute for emotional literacy.

The United Nations has begun making a concerted effort to integrate the "agendas on women, peace, and security, counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism."<sup>29</sup> In contrast, reflective of the convergence of oppressions described under patriarchal violence, the U.S. has long maintained an America First militarism couched in misogyny, colonization and racism. Over the past 20 years, this foreign policy has resulted in the killing of 801,000 people and displacement of 37 million globally and bigoted policies blocking refugees fleeing conflicts and asylum seekers fleeing gang violence in Central America, escaping domestic violence, and "fleeing persecution on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity."<sup>30</sup> To move forward with meaningful policy to prevent patriarchal violence, the Biden-Harris administration will first have to radically reassess the country's past approach.

For intimate partner violence support and resources, please contact The National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-SAFE (7233)** or **thehotline.org**.



CHANGES TO OUR HATE MAP

# Equity Through Accuracy

By Raven Hodges

In pursuit of a more accurate and more just hate map, the Intelligence Project (IP) has committed to collapsing the Black Separatist listing. We will still monitor these groups, but we will be transferring them to hate ideologies, including antisemitism, that better describe the harm their rhetoric inflicts.

This decision comes after many internal and external conversations. A change in the way the map is structured will better capture the power dynamics endemic to white supremacy. Black separatist groups land on the SPLC's hate map because they propagate antisemitic, anti-LGBTQ and male supremacist views, not because they oppose a white supremacist power structure.

It is important to acknowledge the moment we are in and the incredible efforts of groups such as the Movement for Black Lives and the power of

protest, despite the militarization of our police<sup>31</sup> departments nationally. The continued police violence directed against Black communities and lack of justice for their victims shows plainly the struggle for Black lives is not over.

The SPLC, and IP more specifically, recognizes the common language shared by our Black Separatist listing and federal attempts to criminalize Black activism. We reject federal law enforcement's false and misleading contention regarding threats from Black separatists. We believe this contention is used to justify the over-policing and surveillance of communities of color. Contributing to a false dichotomy does not serve SPLC's mission of racial equity.

## Why are we making the change?

### Black activism and over-criminalization

The new listings will help address the demographic reality of the groups currently categorized as Black Separatist. In fact, these groups are not made up of only Black individuals. Furthermore, highlighting only these groups' separatist intentions does

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan has espoused virulently antisemitic beliefs. His group will now be listed as an Antisemitic hate group following the dissolution of the Black Separatist category.



not examine their overall impact on marginalized groups within and outside of the Black community.

These groups are very much part of activist spaces. While they should be exposed for their harmful rhetoric and held accountable within the activist spaces they inhabit, the SPLC does not believe criminalizing and over-policing is an acceptable solution. Unfortunately, the FBI has a “Black Identity Extremist” label<sup>32</sup> for monitoring domestic terrorism. This label is unfounded, and is in itself a form of suppressing Black activism and organizing. In March 2018, former FBI agent Michael German gave testimony before the Congressional Black Caucus challenging the listing. German, who was at the time a Fellow at the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University, told the caucus, “What is

Black separatism is a response to white supremacy and white nationalism; it has not, however, received the same mainstream attention as white nationalism. Nor do Black separatists have the overwhelming share of racially motivated violence attributed to their overall goals of separation. Yes, some Black nationalists have committed violence against Jewish communities, but those are fueled by antisemitism, not separatism. Additionally, Black separatism is rooted in valid concerns about how federal and state institutions treat Black people.

Even as white supremacist violence is named as a national threat, law enforcement instead disproportionately polices and surveils<sup>33</sup> Black and Indigenous activists, along with other activists of color.



**What is most troubling about the [Black Identity Extremist] assessment is its potential to incite irrational police fear of black political activists. Irrational fear, unfortunately, too often in the past translated into unnecessary police violence against unarmed and unthreatening black men and women.**

— MICHAEL GERMAN, FORMER FBI AGENT

most troubling about the [Black Identity Extremist] assessment is its potential to incite irrational police fear of black political activists. Irrational fear, unfortunately, too often in the past translated into unnecessary police violence against unarmed and unthreatening black men and women.”

The SPLC hopes by dropping this listing we can lead by example and be able to contribute to a more accurate understanding of violent extremism, one that foregrounds white supremacist extremism as the most dangerous threat to national security.

The Black Separatist listing created a color line bias, separating hate and extremism by race and granting the appearance of a false equivalency of equal hate on both sides. But the hate is not equal. Black separatism was born out of valid anger against very real historical and systemic oppression. Black people in the U.S. have rarely experienced having a power structure that represents them. However, white nationalism has held historical, systemic and institutional power for hundreds of years in this country.

Wanting separation from a society that has historically and systemically oppressed Black communities isn’t extremism. Black dissent isn’t black violence, and equivocating the two enables this over-policing of Black activism.

Due to the current manner of listing, many assume that Black Separatist groups are more numerous than White Nationalist groups, which are not grouped under one listing but categorized based on the specific nature of their varied ideologies. When all the white supremacist groups are totaled up, they far surpass the number of Black Separatist groups.

And while Black separatism is the connecting thread of these groups, it doesn’t illustrate the hate of their collective ideologies. Black separatism on its own does not necessarily meet our criteria for a hate listing, so placing these groups on our hate map next to a laundry list of violent white supremacist ideologies gives the appearance of an equivalency that does not exist.



### Racism and power dynamics

The SPLC was founded to fight against institutionalized racism. Part of that fight is doing the internal work of anti-racism. While these groups can be virulently anti-white, this prejudice does not represent the same threat as white supremacy in America. By making this distinction, IP is hoping to help dispel any misinterpretations of our understanding of how racism functions in American society. In our endeavor for racial justice and equity, it is imperative that we adopt an understanding of racism grounded in nuance and the realities of racial power dynamics. Racism in America is historical, systemic and structural.

### More accurate descriptions

Black separatist groups earn their place among our hate listings not for their calls for separation, but rather for how entrenched these groups are in antisemitic, anti-LGBTQ, misogynistic and xenophobic rhetoric.

We aim to expose these groups without helping the FBI in its definition of Black identity extremists, and this requires a change in how we talk about these groups. Going forward, groups formerly designated as Black Separatist will be characterized by antisemitism, anti-LGBTQ, male supremacy and whatever additional ideological categories most accurately describe their offending beliefs. While these groups are not as great a threat as white nationalist groups, they are still hateful, use divisive rhetoric and often have authoritarian leadership that encourages anti-LGBTQ, antisemitic and misogynistic beliefs. This

Violence against trans people disproportionately affects people of color. Many of the hate groups formerly categorized as Black Separatist espouse homophobic, transphobic and misogynistic views that further harm these communities.

has harmful effects on other marginalized groups, such as queer and trans people.

So far this year, 30 trans and gender non-conforming individuals have been brutally murdered. Most of them were people of color. While their deaths are a product of both racism and transphobia, many Black separatist groups express homophobic and transphobic views. Black trans women are being murdered at astounding rates, and Black separatist groups, particularly those on our list, are contributing to a wider anti-trans narrative.

### New antisemitism listing

The harmful effects of antisemitic rhetoric from these formerly Black separatist groups is not as direct, but no less insidious or painfully ironic considering the historical partnership between Black and Jewish activists during the civil rights movement. IP has concluded that adding an antisemitism listing will help address this, as many of the groups under the former listing express extreme antisemitic beliefs.

The Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan<sup>34</sup> tweeted in late 2018: “I’m not an anti-Semite. I’m anti-Termite.” The Nation of Islam has also published a book called “The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews,” which claims that Jews created slavery in America. This listing is overdue and will help to monitor this form of hate more specifically, focusing not only on Black separatism but also on other groups, such as Holocaust deniers, that perpetuate, traffic in and spread antisemitic propaganda.

### Moving forward

As IP continues to carry on our work of exposing hate and extremism, we hope to do so in partnership and coalition with community organizers on the ground to help them expose and push hate out of their communities. We can rise to the occasion and demonstrate our commitment to adding a lens of anti-racism to our work. As we move forward in our mission of exposing hate in America, our commitment must be coupled with specificity and fairness. We are resolved to hold these groups accountable for their divisive rhetoric equitably and accurately.

# Has Accountability for Big Tech Come Too Late?

By Hannah Gais

As the turmoil of the Trump era drew to a close with an attack on the U.S. Capitol, planned on both mainstream and fringe digital platforms, tech companies found their policies governing extremism tested like never before.

Former President Trump's efforts to discredit the 2020 presidential election put our democracy under tremendous strain, using technology as a cudgel. In so doing, he followed in the footsteps of authoritarians throughout the world who use technology, including social media platforms, as a weapon. These efforts were on full display before and during the presidential transition, when Trump and his allies weaponized social media to spread lies and conspiracy theories about the election being rigged. His baseless allegations of fraud culminated in an attack on the U.S. Capitol that left five people dead, and 140 law enforcement officers injured. The supporters who coordinated the insurrection did so using a combination of

mainstream social media platforms and fringe apps catering to and favored by the far right.

Rather than come as a surprise to tech companies, the events of 2020 and early 2021 ought to serve as stark reminders that major tech platforms have, time and time again, chosen profit over progress. Their intransigence on robust content moderation allowed for hate speech, conspiracy theories, and disinformation to flourish in the first place.

While the havoc at the U.S. Capitol tested the will of tech companies to tackle extremism, it has also inevitably become a crucial component of an ongoing discussion regarding regulating these platforms as well. In particular, it has shored up additional support for a conversation about the revision or abandonment of a key piece of legislation regulating tech companies. This provision, known as Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, has long shielded companies from liability for users' content on their platforms. In the past few years, Section 230 has been challenged by a number of figures across the political spectrum. Trump, in particular, railed against Section 230 as his grip on power weakened, despite having sailed to victory in 2016 partially on the strength of social media. This, in addition to antitrust lawsuits levelled at Facebook and Google in particular, means that the very ground beneath these social networks could be changing – and, along with it, the management of hate speech online.

Expecting and encouraging companies to embrace better enforcement practices when it comes to hate speech online, whether through Section 230 reform or otherwise, is only one part of the solution. “Deplatforming” – a term used to refer to the actions that tech companies take to prevent an individual or a group, often extremists, from using their products – can limit the spread of hate speech effectively across popular social media sites while pushing them



Supporters of former-President Donald Trump hold up their phones with messages referring to the QAnon conspiracy theory at a campaign rally at Las Vegas Convention Center on Feb. 21, 2020, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

to more niche communities. However, when it comes to curbing the threat posed by extremism, these efforts are, on their own, insufficient and temporary fixes.

Without a sustained campaign to promote media literacy and a commitment to dismantling structural and systemic white supremacy, deplatforming efforts could be insufficient at fully stopping the spread of hate online.

### Moderating content came too little, too late

Social media platforms and tech giants, such as Google, wrestled with their policies governing hate speech and disinformation throughout 2020, often while struggling to adapt to and keep pace with the ever-changing landscape of online extremism. Representatives from Facebook, Google and Twitter found themselves having to answer for many of their content moderation decisions in House and Senate hearings throughout the year. While all three platforms continued to develop their hate speech policy throughout the year, there was progress on other platforms as well. The discussion site Reddit, for instance, has booted nearly 7,000 communities, known as subreddits, that it deemed in violation of its new policy on hate speech and harassment since June 2020. Among these were a pro-Trump forum, r/The\_Donald, that has been a haven for far-right extremists since 2016.

Other changes included Facebook's October 2020 pronouncement that it would prohibit content that "denies or distorts the Holocaust." The move came two years after Facebook founder and chief executive Mark Zuckerberg came under fire for implying that Holocaust deniers may have held their beliefs unintentionally.<sup>35</sup> Platforms also took on the antisemitic, anti-LGBTQ QAnon conspiracy theory.<sup>36</sup> Facebook's first purge of QAnon groups in August 2020

**1 in 50**

Tweets about voting in the 2020 election came from QAnon-affiliated accounts.

—NBC INVESTIGATION

**270**

The number of times Trump's own Twitter account boosted accounts promoting QAnon content, as of Oct. 30, 2020.

**91**

The number of candidates running for office in the 2020 election who have shared QAnon content. Two were elected to Congress.



MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE (R-GA)



LAUREN BOEBERT (R-CO)

resulted in the removal or restriction of roughly 3,290 groups and pages on the platform and of another 10,000 accounts on its subsidiary, Instagram. Twitter and YouTube implemented similar restrictions in the latter half of the year.

But these efforts, coming nearly three years after QAnon originated on 8chan, fell short in large part because the conspiracy theory had already taken root in the mainstream. By the time Facebook and other major tech platforms rolled out their policies on QAnon, proponents of the conspiracy theory were campaigning for – and even winning – positions in elected office. Indeed, the SPLC Action Fund counted roughly 90 candidates running for office in the 2020 election cycle who have either shared QAnon content or expressed an openness to the conspiracy theory.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, an NBC investigation found that 1 in 50 tweets about voting in the 2020 elections came from QAnon-affiliated accounts.<sup>38</sup> Trump praised QAnon supporters during an Aug. 19, 2020, press briefing, calling them "people that love our country" who are "against pedophilia" – a wink and a nod to the baseless conspiracy theory at the core of QAnon that Democrats in power run a global child sex trafficking ring.<sup>39</sup> Trump's own Twitter account had boosted accounts promoting QAnon content on Twitter nearly 270 times by Oct. 30, 2020.<sup>40</sup> These issues came to a head in November, when two vocal proponents of the conspiracy theory – Marjorie Taylor Greene, of Georgia, and Lauren Boebert, of Colorado – won seats in Congress.

Then, on Jan. 6, some of the conspiracy theory's supporters participated in an insurrection at the U.S. Capitol in an effort to prevent the certification of President Biden's electoral victory.

These platforms' struggles with QAnon reflected an even larger problem – specifically one stemming from the executive branch.



Throughout the year, Trump used his caustic social media presence to encourage violence against racial justice demonstrators;<sup>41</sup> target activists and lawmakers;<sup>42</sup> and call for designating antifascist organizers as members of a terrorist organization.<sup>43</sup> Though Twitter flagged and restricted some of the president’s tweets that it said were “glorifying violence” or promoting electoral disinformation, the president continued to operate otherwise unabated on the platform, thanks to an exception in Twitter’s terms of service that allows the site to preserve access to tweets of individuals they deem in the “public interest.” Trump’s account was finally banned on Jan. 8, 2021, following the U.S. Capitol siege.<sup>44</sup>

In response, Trump and his supporters cried censorship. Bolstered by the myth of conservative censorship online, they launched an attack on a piece of legislation that has been credited with creating the internet as we know it.

### The Section 230 controversy

The Trump administration’s war with tech companies, combined with mounting frustration over sites’ inability to police hate speech, has ignited a discussion about the legal protections granted to digital platforms through Section 230 of the 1996 Communications Decency Act. These debates came

Douglas Austen Jensen of Iowa confronts police wearing a QAnon shirt at the U.S. Capitol insurrection on Jan. 6, 2021.



to a head following the attack on the Capitol, with a wide range of observers predicting that changes to the law were now inevitable.

Sometimes referred to as “the 26 words that created the internet,” Section 230 provides broad protections to tech companies by shielding them from liability for user-generated content. Proponents of retaining Section 230 have claimed revising or repealing it would have a chilling effect on free speech online. Others have criticized tech companies for not doing nearly enough to uphold their end of the deal.

The former Trump administration and its allies’ efforts to strike down the law dealt with neither of these issues. Instead, it is based on the erroneous and disingenuous belief that Silicon Valley is “censoring” conservative voices. These endeavors have often aligned with Trump’s own violations of Twitter’s terms of service in particular.

In his last attempt to quash Section 230, Trump vetoed the National Defense Authorization Act in late December 2020 because it did not include language repealing the provision. Congress overrode the veto, but his failed attempt to challenge the tech industry should not stand in the way of real reform.

Informed proposals for Section 230 – excluding those based on ill-informed protestations about censorship – focus on either careful revision or complete reinvention. Biden, for his part, called for eliminating Section 230 at numerous points throughout his campaign – a point that he reiterated in the aftermath of the Capitol siege.<sup>45</sup>

Other Democrats have advocated for a “change, but don’t repeal” strategy. Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA) told Reuters in an October 2020 interview that she’d prefer to use “a scalpel instead of a jackhammer to reform the critical statute,” noting that a complete repeal “is not viable.”<sup>46</sup> Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR), who helped create Section 230 in the 1990s, has advocated for the same care.

“He isn’t saying no one can ever change a word of Section 230, but that politicians need to be very careful when it comes to tinkering with foundational laws around speech and the internet,” an aide to Sen. Wyden told Reuters in the same piece.

Both Democrats and Republicans brought forward several challenges to Section 230 in 2020 and going into early 2021. In March, Sen. Lindsey





Graham (R-SC) introduced a measure that would require tech companies to “earn” Section 230 protections. Another measure, brought forward by Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI), focused on increasing the transparency and accountability requirements for companies. Lastly, on Feb. 5, 2021, Senate Democrats Mark Warner (D-VA), Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) offered another vision of reform, known as the SAFE TECH Act, which would limit Section 230 protections in cases where payments were involved.

As events such as the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol make clear, the ties between online speech and offline action should be part of any discussion of the future of Section 230. Such changes could provide lawmakers the tools to hold tech companies accountable for their own inaction on managing threats. It would also bring U.S. law on content moderation closer to our European counterparts, who launched their own concerted effort to tackle online harm in late 2019.

### **Combating hate through media literacy**

None of the challenges posed by the years of insufficient and ineffective moderation of online platforms that helped drive the movement that stormed the U.S. Capitol will disappear in the early Biden era. However, as tech platforms grapple with navigating the role they played in the insurrection, as well as the looming possibility of Section 230 reform, it is time to move past simplistic explanations of how extremism online can produce radicalization. Among these assumptions are the idea that deplatforming extremists from tech platforms is, in and of itself, sufficient. Reducing the presence of extremists on platforms can limit their ability to recruit, promote, and fund hate activity. But as the Trump era ought to have demonstrated, it does nothing to address the very aspects of society that make white extremism possible.

Stronger hate speech policies have given rise to a crop of niche, unregulated social media sites that cater to right-wing extremists who have either been booted off or are concerned about being booted off of mainstream social media sites. Some of these, such as Gab and Parler, market to

**Tech platforms have, time and time again, chosen profit over progress.**

the right wing. But their loose content moderation policies can pose a threat to these platforms’ ability to operate effectively, if at all. The impact these decisions to let hate speech flow freely on a platform was evidenced most recently by Parler’s exclusion from the Apple Store and Google Play – plus the subsequent loss of its host, Amazon Web Services – after it was used to plan, promote and coordinate the Jan. 6 insurrection.<sup>47</sup> Others, like Telegram, have a libertarian approach to content moderation that

allows hate to fester. All of these, as J.M. Berger observed in *The Atlantic* in 2019, can encourage a “pressure-cooker environment where radicalization to violence can take place very quickly.”<sup>48</sup> This is an important phenomenon to track but at present there is no research to prove this. For instance, while many have cited the migration of Trump supporters from mainstream social media sites to Telegram and elsewhere after the 2021 siege on the U.S. Capitol as a possible means of further radicalizing them, researchers have noted that there is no casual evidence to support the argument that these users will be pushed to even more extreme views on these platforms.<sup>49</sup>

Deplatforming cannot fix this problem. However, expanded deradicalization tools can provide an off-ramp for those looking to leave extremism, while preventative measures can build the support structures needed to prevent radicalization from taking root. Programs that utilize one or both of these strategies have already achieved some success in parts of Europe but also offer a large body of lessons learned and evolving best practices.

In June 2020, the SPLC, in conjunction with America University’s Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL), released a joint report on building resilience against radicalization in the COVID-19 era.<sup>50</sup> When paired with a robust digital literacy program, such as the one developed by SPLC’s Learning for Justice staff, as well as exit programs like Life After Hate, these programs can work hand-in-hand to inoculate or rescue those who are at risk of radicalization or have been radicalized themselves.



A CONVERSATION WITH CYNTHIA MILLER-IDRISS

# Preventing Radicalization into Violent White Nationalist Movements

In June 2020, the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Laboratory (PERIL) at American University partnered to release “Building Resilience & Confronting Risk in the COVID-19 Era: A Parents & Caregivers Guide to Online Radicalization.” The guide illustrates tangible steps to counter the threat of online radicalization, how to recognize warning signs, and how to get help and engage a child or young adult who you suspect has had contact with or is immersed in extremism. In December, we interviewed Cynthia Miller-Idriss, PERIL’s director and a professor at American University, about her new book, *Hate in the Homeland*, and how parents, caregivers and educators are the frontline of reducing harm and inoculating young people against extremism.

**You distinguish PERIL’s mission as rooted in a “prevention” approach. How does this approach make the lab’s work different? Why was it so important for our organizations to collaborate on this guide and through this approach?**

Once we acknowledge that the problem of radicalization and extremism is not only something on the subcultural fringe, but also is plainly in the mainstream, it becomes clear that what we need are

mainstream-targeted approaches. The field of intervention work related to extremism has long been focused on countering violent extremism (CVE) through deradicalization and disengagement programs. Of course, when people are ready to disengage from violent extremist movements, they need access to counseling and a wide range of reintegration support. But there is thin evidence that disengagement processes can be effectively initiated,



especially at scale. PERIL believes it is essential to instead work to prevent people from entering radicalization pathways to begin with, and to create early off-ramps for those who are initially exposed to extremist propaganda, disinformation, manipulative rhetorical strategies and techniques like scapegoating. We are empirically field-testing interventions based on lessons from public health research, aiming for inoculation of the whole population so that we reduce vulnerability to extremist propaganda when people encounter it – much like a vaccine.

Part of pre-preventative work includes equipping the entire public with better information about how extremist propaganda, conspiracy theories and persuasive rhetoric works. And this is where PERIL's foundational partnership with SPLC comes in. With SPLC's support and substantive partnership, we are developing a series of tools, including this guide, that will help parents, caregivers, educators, school counselors, mental health professionals, and other adults who work with youth – like coaches and youth group counselors – better recognize warning signs, understand how exposure to extremist propaganda can work, know where to go for further resources, and ensure responses to hate are victim-centered.

In academia, we refer to this kind of work as “translational” – work that translates academic expertise and empirical evidence into actionable knowledge for practitioners and communities. It's hard to think of anything more important for academic experts to be doing. But equally incredible is that this partnership with SPLC does not only translate existing research, but produces new research through focus groups with practitioners to create and refine content; impact studies to trace the effectiveness of the guides; and evaluations that study whether and how our efforts to reach out to practitioners in these ways are working and what we could do better.

This means the entire approach is empirically guided, aimed at developing nationally scalable, empirically tested interventions that link rigorous and ethically-supervised research with local communities. And through partnerships with international funders and organizations, we are connecting this work with efforts in Germany and elsewhere to ensure that we can share lessons learned and stay focused on the global dimensions of white supremacist extremism.

**PERIL believes it is essential to instead work to prevent people from entering radicalization pathways to begin with, and to create early off-ramps for those who are initially exposed to extremist propaganda, disinformation, manipulative rhetorical strategies and techniques like scapegoating, by violent extremists of any ideology.**

– CYNTHIA MILLER-IDRISS, PERIL'S DIRECTOR  
AND AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR

**You dedicate your new book, *Hate in the Homeland*, “to all the victims of hate and their families, along with the broader communities who suffer with and support them.” Why is it important for prevention and intervention work take a victim-centered approach?**

A lot of work on extremism and terrorism focuses primarily or exclusively on the actors who perpetrate violence and spread hate without sufficiently rooting that work in the experience of victims. A victim-centered lens is critical to ensuring that an approach focused on understanding perpetrators' histories of trauma through a lens of empathy, for example, stays at least equally focused on those who have suffered (or would suffer) at their hands.

Such an approach requires that antiracist practice be a foundational part of work to combat white supremacist extremism. By understanding the experiences of women, the LGBTQ community, and nonbinary victims specifically, it calls on us to recognize the role that misogynist views and gender-based violence play in all extremist movements. Those are just two examples, but overall, a victim-based approach is essential to developing interventions that don't just direct resources to communities that already hold more privilege and power, but work instead to ensure healing and support for the most marginalized among us.

**In the book, you illustrate the complicated, contested concept of a “homeland.” Can you explain the concept, and discuss how it has been manipulated by political actors and members of hate groups in ways that prime young people for radicalization online and offline?**

Homeland – a concept that links race or ethnicity with a sense of entitlement to territory – is central to almost all forms of extremism. In the case of white supremacist and other far right extremists, the idea of white homelands or ethnostates is a key mobilizing force, rooted in a sense of existential threat about demographic change and the “replacement” of white civilizations with multi-ethnic ones. The “Great Replacement” is a global conspiracy theory that unites conspiracies about Europe turning into “EurAbia” at the orchestrated hands of Muslims or “white genocide” in the U.S., which suggests that whites are dying out. These conspiracy theories motivated the murder of dozens of people over the past decade, in terrorist attacks in Norway, New Zealand, and in El Paso and Pittsburgh in the U.S., among others.

**We have heard you discuss readers’ reactions to the exclusion of a chapter dedicated solely to gender and, more specifically, the role of women in organized white power. Can you expand upon your decision-making process?**

I decided not to include a dedicated chapter on gender, misogyny and the role of women because I wanted to make the point that practically everything I analyze in the book is gendered. I didn’t want to bound the idea of gendered aspects to a single chapter and have readers think “ok, here’s where we learn about gender” but then approach the other chapters without a gendered lens. Rather, I hope that readers will see – as I point out in the introduction – that each chapter is foundationally gendered.

For example, I discuss misogynistic sexual harassment, antifeminism, and anti-gender studies in the chapter on higher education, and in the chapter about online spaces, I look at the roots of online trolling in attacks on women in Gamergate. In fact, making those arguments about the foundational nature of gender and misogyny has convinced me that this should be the topic of my next book. So, I thank the readers and reviewers who helped me articulate why a single chapter is insufficient!

**Why must parents and caregivers, particularly those who are white, educate themselves and speak about racism and our country’s history of systemic white supremacy with young people, in their homes, in**

**schools, and elsewhere? Additionally, acknowledging that this work must continue no matter what administration is in the White House, how might this work be different under the Biden presidency?**

Parents whose children<sup>51</sup> have perpetrated racist or extremist acts often respond to those acts by asserting that their child didn’t learn that at home, or that those aren’t their family’s values. But white families’ approach to instilling “good values” about race often rely on a colorblind approach, using statements like “everybody is equal” but failing to have explicit conversations with children about race. This leaves white children to draw their own conclusions about what they observe in the world, or worse – let what they encounter online explain it for them.

Given the amount of misinformation, extremist propaganda, and hateful content circulating online, this approach is simply inadequate. Parents often have no idea that nearly a quarter of online gamers will encounter white supremacist extremist propaganda while gaming, for example. Teenagers are likely to encounter racist memes, jokes that minimize or deny the Holocaust, and other dehumanizing and misogynistic content on a regular basis. The extreme right has weaponized youth culture by using irony, wit, and satire to present extremist and hateful ideas as edgy humor, allowing youth [who] get the joke to feel like powerful insiders, [and] frame anyone who “can’t take the joke” as a “triggered” snowflake. Parents need to be alert to warning signs that their kids have been exposed to this kind of content online and need to be aware of the range of toxic sites, encrypted apps and radicalizing chat rooms where youth encounter it.

A Biden administration can and likely will help change the course of the kinds of normalization and mainstreaming of racist and incendiary rhetoric we’ve seen through President Trump’s campaign and rally speeches. But it’s critical to remember that the biggest spike in hate groups we’ve seen in recent years happened after President Obama was elected, and that the past five years have seen a 320% increase in right-wing terrorism globally. It would be a mistake to think the problem of extremism and hate came about because of the current administration or that it will go away [now that] President Biden is in place. The problems are deeper, more systemic, and decidedly global.



# How an Encrypted Messaging Platform is Changing Extremist Movements

By Hannah Gais and Megan Squire

Far-right extremists and white supremacist terrorists have embraced Telegram as their platform of choice, signaling a shift away from these groups' traditional methods of organizing and toward a dangerous future defined by leaderless resistance<sup>52</sup> and “lone actor” terrorism.

Telegram, a messaging app, is a haven for neo-Nazis, white nationalists and antigovernment extremists locked out of traditional social media sites, as Hatewatch first reported<sup>53</sup> in mid-2019.

But 2020 presented a year full of new hurdles for in-person organizing for the movement, ranging from legal quagmires to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, extremists have come to rely less on in-person groups, such as those recorded in the Southern Poverty Law Center's annual hate count, and more on diffuse, leaderless digital networks, such as those facilitated by Telegram. While this shift does indicate that extremists are using new strategies for organizing, it does not signal a decrease in the threat those extremists pose in the United States and around the world.

“If [a group has] got a logo, a name, and an online presence, that's three strikes, run for your life,” wrote one moderator of a prominent white supremacist accelerationist channel in a guide, distributed on Telegram, for organizing white supremacist terror cells.

## Telegram offers a one-stop shop for extremists

Pavel Durov, considered by some to be “Russia's Mark Zuckerberg,”<sup>54</sup> founded Telegram in 2014. Its appeal to extremists<sup>55</sup> is twofold. First, the platform's technical features make it especially effective for spreading propaganda. As on Twitter or Facebook, an individual user or group can start an account – known as a “channel” on Telegram – that allows them to

post messages, pictures, videos, customizable “stickers” and other files for their followers. Messages and digital media can also be “forwarded” or shared between channels on Telegram, increasing the audience for hate content.

The file storage feature in particular is leveraged on Telegram to store and share massive libraries of multimedia propaganda. These may include images and videos dedicated to white supremacist terrorism and encouraging violence against religious and ethnic minorities, guides for 3D printed weaponry, white supremacist literature, hate music and more. These same channels have also provided a space for livestreams of white supremacist terrorists, including the perpetrators of the 2019 terrorist attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, and Halle, Germany, engaged in acts of mass murder. Telegram's lax enforcement policies have allowed these videos to proliferate long after they were purged from other parts of the internet.

In addition to enabling the spread of propaganda, Telegram's built-in



**By signing up for Telegram, you accept their Privacy Policy and agree not to promote violence on publicly viewable Telegram channels, bots, etc.**

– TELEGRAM'S  
TERMS OF SERVICE

features also facilitate recruitment by making it easy for extremists to set up public or private encrypted discussion groups. (Encryption refers to the process of scrambling data so that messages cannot be read by anyone other than the sender and recipient.) In these chat groups, potential recruits can mingle with organizers of a group, talk with other members, learn the culture of the group and gain access to media deemed too sensitive for the public-facing propaganda channels. Many channel administrators have also leveraged Telegram “bots” to support vetting requirements and to automatically erase content from the channel, thus reducing the likelihood that a channel is infiltrated or that its contents are copied. Telegram’s “secret chat” feature allows for a private conversation between two users.

Increasingly, Telegram chats consist of individual extremists who are not members of any group sharing hate content and discussing plans with one another.

### Hate content flourishes on Telegram with minimal restrictions

In late 2019, Telegram, in partnership with European law enforcement, launched a systematic

**28,000**

Telegram channels

**489**

restricted in some capacity for terms of service violations

**58**

quarantined due to violent content

— 2020 REVIEW OF TELEGRAM CHANNELS

effort to boot the international terrorist organization that calls itself the Islamic State (also known as ISIS or Daesh), and related networks from its platform.

As a Europol press release announced<sup>56</sup> in November 2019, this move took place alongside an expanded reporting mechanism that would allow users to “refer and classify the content they find inappropriate and violent” for the app’s moderators to review. From there, channels could be removed or banned from the platform entirely, or simply quarantined. In the latter case, they would be inaccessible to users accessing the app on particular devices, such as iPhones, while still available on others, such as desktop computers.

However, a 2020 review conducted by a handful of academics of nearly 28,000 channels<sup>57</sup> reveals that these enforcement mechanisms have done

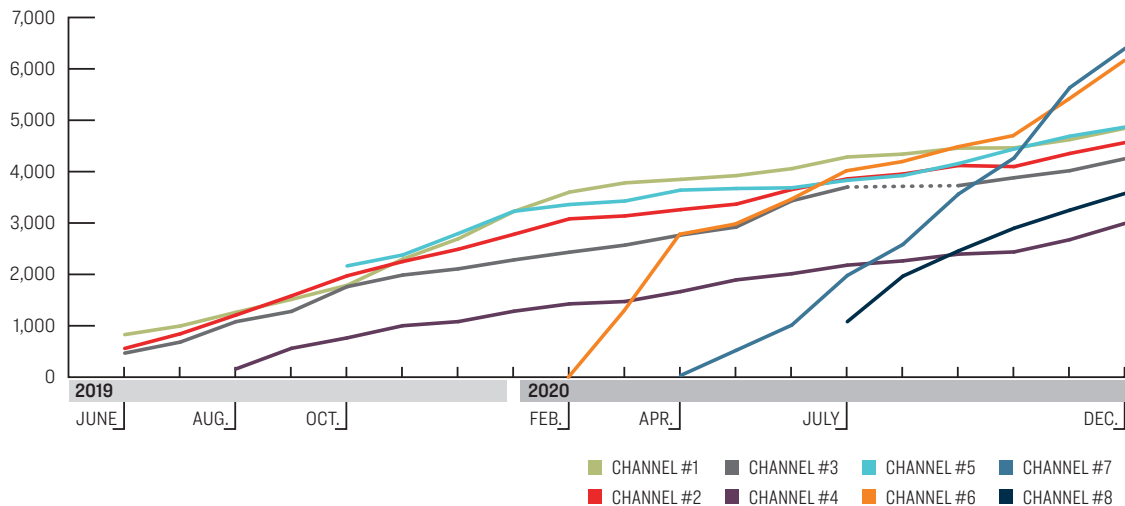
little to prevent the spread of violent content. Rather, according to an analysis of 498 channels that had been restricted in some capacity for terms of service violations, a mere 58 were quarantined due to violent content. Instead, channels were more frequently limited on iOS, Android and Microsoft devices because they showed pornographic content (344 channels) and engaged in copyright infringement (96 channels).



Makeshift memorials appeared at the sites of two mass shootings in 2019 – one in Christchurch, New Zealand and another in Halle, Germany. Despite terms of use that forbid promoting violence, attacks such as these are commonly celebrated in some spaces of Telegram, with little moderation or oversight.

## TERRORGRAM CHANNEL GROWTH

JUNE 2019 - DEC. 2020



The chart above illustrates the exponential growth of Terrorgram-affiliated channels since 2019.

To limit access to channels on specific devices, platforms such as the Apple Store – where users would download the Telegram app for devices such as an iPhone or iPad – look for flags that label an individual channel as “restricted.” This snippet of code would make a channel and its content that had been forwarded elsewhere on Telegram not visible to a user on that particular device. Users of Apple’s iOS, for example, who try to view a restricted channel would instead be presented with an error message telling them that the material violated the Apple Store’s prohibition on “objectionable content,” which includes a section on “defamatory, discriminatory, or mean-spirited content.”

Among many of the channels restricted in this manner for violent content are an array of networks associated with white supremacist accelerationism – an increasingly popular strategy on the extreme right<sup>58</sup> that contends modern society is irredeemable and offers up an apocalyptic race war as a solution. At least one channel had been restricted just a few months before its moderator, 21-year-old Luke Hunter, was charged in the United Kingdom for allegedly supporting Feuerkrieg Division, an international neo-Nazi terror group. Hunter’s association with the group was far from subtle; on Oct. 1, 2019, he reposted a Feuerkrieg Division propaganda video to his Telegram channel with the caption: “Edited by yours truly.”

**2,031%**  
rate of growth for  
one Terrorgram  
channel after being  
“restricted”  
by Telegram

But these device-based restrictions had little to no effect on the membership of many channels. In fact, an analysis conducted by the Southern Poverty Law Center of 36 far-right channels that had been restricted for violence revealed that 21 of them continued to attract followers at a median growth rate of 43.63% between 2019 and the end of 2020. Most of them continued to promote white supremacist terrorism and accelerationism even after being “quarantined” by Telegram and the app stores. One channel associated with the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei International – a nod to the official title of Hitler’s Nazi Party – grew at a rate of 2,031.87% after being “restricted” by Telegram, boosting their followers from 775 in 2019 to 16,522 in 2020.

In other cases, administrators chose to abandon their prior restricted channels and simply create a new, unrestricted channel using a new name. One such channel, run by former Republican congressional candidate and white supremacist accelerationist Paul Nehlen, grew over 150% between 2019 and 2020 after being rebooted under a similar name.

Telegram could ban these channels, as it did to those operated by ISIS and its supporters. Indeed, the Telegram terms of service, as of December 2020, states that in registering an account you agree not to

“promote violence on publicly viewable Telegram channels, bots, etc.” It simply, for whatever reason, chooses not to enforce this clause when it comes to right-wing terrorism.

### **How Telegram’s popularity has reshaped the white power movement**

Telegram’s favorability among right-wing extremists has gone hand-in-hand with the growth of accelerationism. As the “alt-right” seized the spotlight in the early Trump era, accelerationism flourished in niche internet communities and forums, such as Iron March. Today, Telegram has enabled this accelerationist influence to reach the mainstream white power movement.

Nowhere is this fact more evident than a network of neo-Nazi accelerationist channels known as “Terrorgram.”

This network, which fuses the glorification of political violence with a distinctive hyper-stylized visual aesthetic, consists of a small network of channels that share memes glorifying an apocalyptic race war, instructions for 3D-printing weapons, extremist literature and manifestos, and video recordings of white supremacist terror attacks that have been removed from other platforms. Many of these channels came into existence in 2019, and by 2020 all of them had grown their subscriber counts from the double- or triple-digits into the thousands. The data was collected from Telegram’s own internal systems by accessing its application programming interface (API), which provides a window into the application’s data layer and is designed for developers to access.

Three channels identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center as part of the Terrorgram network were created as late as spring and summer of 2020, and by the end of the year had collectively acquired over 16,100 followers. One of these three channels, which originated in February 2020, focused specifically on tying extremist messaging to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many of the Terrorgram channels experienced triple-digit growth throughout 2020 despite previously being banned from the platform or being restricted on some devices. One channel at the heart of the network, which is one of the few neo-Nazi channels that been banned from Telegram on a few occasions, has garnered nearly 3,000 followers since it was newly created on Oct. 9, 2020.

These Terrorgram channels epitomize what the U.K.-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) has referred to<sup>59</sup> as a “post-organisational paradigm.” ISD researchers Jakob Guhl and Jacob Davey describe a new way of organizing in which an “online connection to extremist culture and ideology could be equally important for inspiring violence as connections to ‘on the ground’ groups.”

We already are seeing this paradigm play out on the ground. Both reporters and antifascist activists observed a handful of extremists tied to neo-Nazi Telegram channels appearing at racial justice demonstrations throughout the country. One Ohio National Guardsman took to Telegram chats to express his enthusiasm about being deployed to Washington, D.C., in early June, according to reporting from Right Wing Watch<sup>60</sup> and Unicorn Riot.<sup>61</sup> Extremists on the platform have also used it to organize other real-world activities once traditionally considered the domain of groups, such as distributing downloadable propaganda and instructions for how and when to post flyers and banners.

Telegram presents other challenges to the white power movement’s traditional mode of organizing. The platform makes promoting visual propaganda simple, and users are bombarded with an almost endless wall of neo-Nazi imagery when they log on. There are no requirements for membership to public channels, as well as many chats, which makes joining easy. Additionally, anyone with access to image editing software can create and broadcast their own extremist propaganda. As the white power movement increasingly shifts to organizing online, these aspects of the platform will prove to be crucial.

Durov, Telegram’s founder, was once asked<sup>62</sup> by *WIRED* about his plans for finding a new headquarters for the company after his self-imposed exile from his native Russia. Durov explained that he was searching for “a country that will allow us to develop our projects with privacy and freedom of speech in mind.” He went on to add, “We like freedoms, strong judicial systems, small governments, free markets, neutrality and civil rights.”

With Telegram still the leading platform for fomenting terroristic violence, albeit now on the far right, it is worth pondering whose civil rights Durov is aiming to protect.



# At the End of the Trump Era, White Nationalists Increasingly Embrace Political Violence

Cassie Miller & IP Staff

If anything has defined the white power movement over the latter part of the Trump administration, it's the adoption of “accelerationism” – a term with a complicated academic lineage, but a simple meaning within the far right.

The entire economic and political system, accelerationists contend, must be dismantled through apocalyptic race war. In their conception, politics as it's often waged – where power is exercised through elections, campaigns, policy, and mass movements – has no utility. They choose instead a “cleansing fire” of violence, as one of the strategy's more prominent proponents put it. Accelerationism is an anti-politics born of this particular moment, defined by widespread financial and political uncertainty, a pessimistic view of the future, and declining faith in democracy.

Accelerationism operated at the fringes of the far right at the beginning of the Trump era. Its small community of adherents, who assembled mainly in the hyper-vetted Iron March forum, were crowded out by the “movementarians” of the so-called alt-right who wanted to build broad-based support for their white nationalist agenda. For the far right, it was a moment of intense optimism: Trump was the conduit through which they could access mainstream political power,

and the internet was where they would build a movement using the forces of youthful energy and transgressive humor.

But for all of the cruelty resulting from his administration's policies, Trump failed to satisfy all of his white supremacist supporters. “We are wondering if Trump trotted out ending birthright citizenship and other populist red meat merely to save himself and his worthless party for another round of tax cuts, foreign policy distractions, and fundamental betrayals of white America,” the white nationalist Greg Johnson wrote only days after Trump was elected. To many within the white power movement, Trump simply perpetuated “the system” and acted more like a traditional conservative than the kind of fascist leader they hoped he would be.

White power accelerationists argue in favor of political violence to overthrow democratic government. Once occupying the fringes of the white power movement, they gained momentum during the latter years of the Trump administration.



The accelerationist label refers to a strategy and not a particular system of beliefs. The members of these communities want to bring about “system collapse” through acts of violence, and much of their online chatter focuses on how to prepare for the apocalyptic end that they assume is inevitable in a multicultural, democratic society. For some, that means seeking out paramilitary training by joining groups like The Base. Before it was severely hampered by a series of arrests, The Base held training camps around the country, with the goal of eventually having a formalized training program complete with designated instructors and a curriculum. Others advocate for moving off-grid. “Stop throwing away money on politicians or movementarian grifters selling false hopes[.] Retreat to rural White areas, improve yourself, and organize locally and privately in silence,” one accelerationist wrote in an online forum.

Accelerationists aren’t part of a new racist movement. The orientation toward apocalyptic race war and advocacy of political and racist violence have long been hallmarks of the white power movement, but these accelerationist ideas are today at the forefront of the far right. And the question we should be asking ourselves is, why now?

Trump, of course, acts as a partial explanation. He undoubtedly emboldened the far right and, importantly, created heightened expectations. In the aftermath of the 2017 Unite the Right rally – which left most of the movement’s high-profile leaders bogged down in ongoing lawsuits – many came to believe that mass mobilization and fealty to figures like Trump were not enough to build an ethnonationalist state.

“There is no political solution,” members of the white power movement endlessly repeated. As we approached the 2020 election, their mantra shifted to “Voting will not remove them,” meaning people of color, Jews, immigrants, leftists and others who stand in the way of building a fascist state.

Accelerationists were also helped immeasurably by the decentralization of tech. Over the last several years, they have increasingly flooded to alternative social media platforms and sites that offer

encrypted peer-to-peer communication. They converse secretly on highly encrypted apps as they propagandize and build their networks on platforms like Telegram, where accelerationists have created a fascistic echo chamber they call “Terrorgram.” Deplatforming racists from mainstream social media sites helps to break up their networks and hinders their ability to spread propaganda, but there is no shortage of spaces for them to regroup and openly make calls for violence.

Accelerationists can’t be viewed apart from a larger shift toward cultural and political pessimism, especially among young people. According to a poll conducted<sup>63</sup> by the Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics in spring 2020, only eight percent of 18- to 29-year-olds believe the country is working as it should be. They expressed particular concern about how student debt and housing costs will impact their future.

**8%**  
of 18- to 29-year-olds believe the country is working as it should be

**71%**  
of Americans do not believe elected officials care about ordinary citizens

These kinds of feelings are not confined to the United States: the UK-based Varkey Foundation found in a 2017 report<sup>64</sup> that, in 16 of the 20 countries surveyed, more people in Generation Z believed the world was becoming a worse place than believed it was improving. That lack of faith in the future is entangled with the belief held by many that the political system is unresponsive to people’s needs. According to a Pew survey from 2020,<sup>65</sup> 71% of Americans do not believe elected officials care about ordinary citizens. Those who took this view were more likely to say they were

dissatisfied with the way democracy is working.

Feelings of uncertainty and political pessimism don’t necessarily translate into apathy and disengagement – it can also mean searching for new levers to exercise power or trying to rebuild existing structures. This can find expression in the growth of social movements like Black Lives Matter. But it can also take sinister forms in which people try to overcome uncertainty by retreating to a defined in-group and, with sometimes violent results, casting outsiders as an existential threat. As extremist expert J.M. Berger reminded in a recent article,<sup>66</sup> factors like “Unemployment and poverty do not drive extremism directly,” but “When uncertainty overtakes the



**When uncertainty overtakes the system itself, when the system is the source of uncertainty, things can really fall apart, and it becomes difficult to know which way society will turn.**

— J.M. BERGER, AUTHOR AND EXTREMISM ANALYST

system itself, when the system is the *source* of uncertainty, things can really fall apart, and it becomes difficult to know which way society will turn.”

Members of the far right have taken a hardened turn against those they consider their enemies during the Trump era, to the point where many are no longer satisfied with letting the state maintain a monopoly on violence. Hence the embrace of vigilantism evidence in their defense of accused murderer Kyle Rittenhouse, as well as the spread of accelerationist language into the broader fabric of the far right. In a Telegram channel associated with the Trump-loyalist Proud Boys, an administrator recently wrote that “No amount of capitulation, good optics, or virtue signaling will get us out of this war. There are no political solutions.” They hope those they consider their adversaries will yield to intimidation, something they punctuated at a Washington, D.C. pro-Trump rally in December when members of the group destroyed two Black Lives Matter banners<sup>67</sup> that had hung at historic Black churches. One was burned by a number of Proud Boys who wore “Right Wing Death Squad” patches.

The disillusionment and disbelief that has gripped part of the Trump-supporting rightwing could have dangerous results. Trump often told his supporters that he alone represented them within a “swamp” of uncaring political elites – with Trump no longer in power, but telling them Biden is illegitimate, why should they have faith in the political system at all? One white supremacist podcaster recently noted witnessing what he called “Sudden Acceleration Syndrome” in which Trump supporters began espousing accelerationist ideas after his loss. “It’s called waking up to the truth and embracing extremism,” the administrator of a popular accelerationist Telegram channel responded. “The system is too rotten and corrupt. It must be torn down completely.” If the slew of threats<sup>68</sup> made against elected officials in the aftermath of the presidential election is any indication,

it seems that more people have come to believe that intimidation and violence are appropriate tools for pursuing political aims.

A recent wave of arrests has dealt a blow to white power groups, including The Base and Atomwaffen Division, but they haven’t stopped the spread of accelerationist ideas. Those are not maintained and spread solely by organized groups, but by a larger white power movement that operates before a backdrop of systemic white supremacy. Indeed, the movement as a whole is becoming more decentralized, where adherents can become a part of a social network, or “radical milieu,” without necessarily joining a group. And if they do, they tend to be smaller, localized cells that might not even have a name.

Intervening in the lives of young people who are radicalizing toward racist, violent extremism involves all those who interact with them. Our communities need preventative and intervention-based models for social programs and processes that steer young people away from lives embroiled in hate. These models must be rooted in empirical guidance and involve academics, mental health professionals and others who can collaborate to build models for intervening as early as possible when a young person encounters extremist ideas. This work will require experts to collaborate with parents and caregivers, schools and local government, and community hubs like churches and sports leagues. The Polarization and Extremism Research Innovation Lab (PERIL) at American University, which brings academic research to bear on the problem of youth radicalization, is one example of a promising path forward.

Extremist ideas don’t exist separately from our larger culture – including our political economy, media landscape and education models. It’s only by addressing all of these arenas, together, that we can stall the mobilization of a far-right movement that has spent the last four years turning toward an increasingly apocalyptic vision of the future.







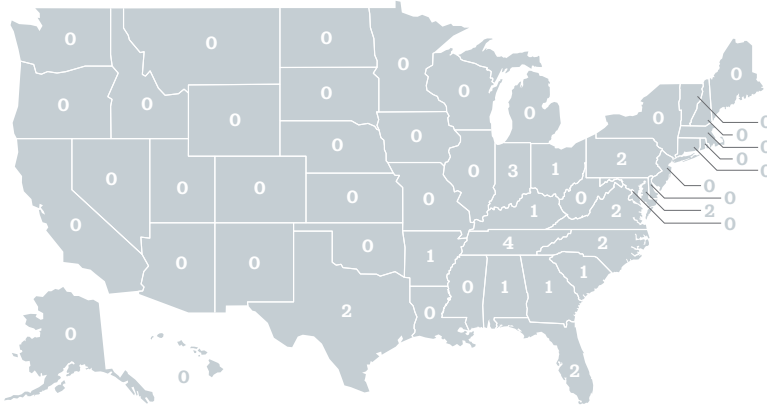
# 838

ACTIVE HATE GROUPS

- 25 △ KU KLUX KLAN
- 63 ☠ NEO-NAZI
- 128 ⚙ WHITE NATIONALIST
- 36 ✖ RACIST SKINHEAD
- 11 👑 CHRISTIAN IDENTITY
- 31 ✖ NEO-CONFEDERATE
- 33 △ NEO-VÖLKISCH
- 19 ||| ANTI-IMMIGRANT
- 65 ⊕ ANTI-LGBTQ
- 72 ◆ ANTI-MUSLIM
- 355 ● GENERAL HATE

# 25 KU KLUX KLAN

The Ku Klux Klan, with its long history of violence, is the oldest and most infamous of American hate groups. Although Black Americans have typically been the Klan's primary target, it also has attacked Jews, immigrants, members of the LGBTQ community and, until recently, Catholics.



**American Christian  
Dixie Knights of the  
Ku Klux Klan**  
Tennessee\*  
Florida  
**Church of the Ku  
Klux Klan**  
DeKalb, TX\*  
**Church of the National**

**Knights of the Ku  
Klux Klan**  
South Bend, IN\*  
**East Coast Knights of  
the True Invisible Empire**  
Pennsylvania\*  
**Exalted Knights of the  
Ku Klux Klan**  
Tennessee\*

**Honorable Sacred  
Knights of the Ku  
Klux Klan**  
Madison, IN\*  
**Imperial Klans  
of America of  
the Ku Klux Klan**  
Dawson Springs, KY\*  
**International Keystone**

**Knights of the Ku  
Klux Klan**  
Florida  
**Knights of the Ku  
Klux Klan**  
Harrison, Arkansas\*  
**Loyal White Knights  
of the Ku Klux Klan**  
Pelham, NC\*  
Maryland  
Pennsylvania  
Virginia  
**Noble Klans of America**  
Maryland\*  
**Nordic Order Knights  
of the Ku Klux Klan**  
Indiana\*  
**Order of the Ku Klux  
Klan / White Christian  
Brotherhood**  
Cookeville, TN\*  
Dayton, OH  
**Patriotic Brigade Knights  
of the Ku Klux Klan**  
Gladewater, TX\*

South Carolina  
**Rebel Brigade Knights  
True Invisible Empire**  
Martinsville, VA\*  
**United Klan Nation**  
Thurmond, NC\*  
Tazewell, TN  
**United Klans of America**  
Alabama\*  
**United Northern and  
Southern Knights of the  
Ku Klux Klan**  
Ellijay, GA\*

**TOP TAKEAWAYS** In the past few years, the Ku Klux Klan experienced a drop in the number of active chapters. Unlike years past, however, this downward trajectory was partially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A purge of VK (a Russian social media network popular with the Klan) earlier this year severely limited the visibility of many Klansmen, while constant infighting and an inability to resolve conflict had the largest impact, making the Klan increasingly insular.

Few new members are being recruited to the remaining Klan organizations.

**KEY MOMENTS** Most Klan interactions and activations came from online activity on VK, Stormfront and Facebook. An increase of online interaction as opposed to in-person may have contributed to more infighting between Klansmen, causing the creation of more splinter groups.

Roughly two-thirds of Klan-related hate flyers incidents can be attributed to the Loyal White Knights across several states in the Mid-Atlantic region. Other groups that dropped flyers in 2020 include the Honorable Sacred Knights, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Imperial Klans of America and Church of the National Knights.

**WHAT'S AHEAD** Several Klan groups cancelled events as a result of the pandemic. Klan activity may pick up a bit in 2021 once a vaccine becomes available, but a notable rise in Klan activity is not expected.

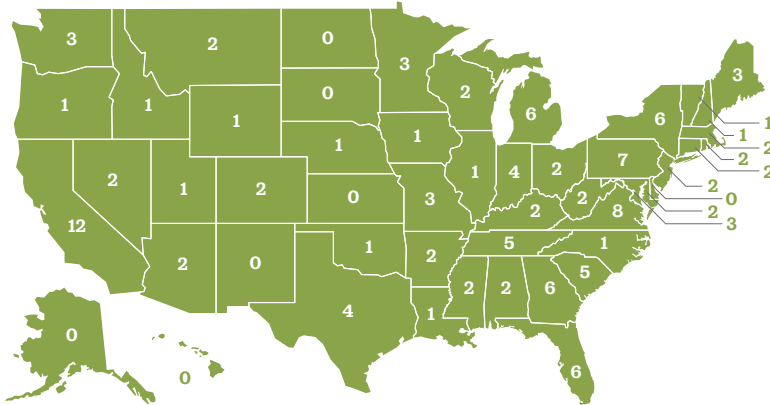
## THE COURSE OF THE MODERN KU KLUX KLAN





# 128 WHITE NATIONALIST

White nationalist groups espouse white supremacist or white separatist ideologies, often focusing on the alleged inferiority of nonwhites. Groups listed in a variety of other categories – Ku Klux Klan, neo-Confederate, neo-Nazi, racist skinhead and Christian Identity – could also be fairly described as white nationalist.



## Affirmative Right

Atlanta, GA\*  
**American Freedom Party**  
 Los Angeles, CA\*  
 Bradenton, FL  
 Granbury, TX  
 Indiana  
 Montana  
 New York  
 New York, NY  
**American Freedom Union**  
 Hampton Township, PA\*  
**American Identity Movement**  
 Harpers Ferry, WV\*  
 Alabama  
 Connecticut  
 Kentucky  
 Minnesota

Missouri  
 Nevada  
 Ohio  
 Rhode Island  
 Sacramento, CA  
 Washington, DC  
**American Patriots USA**  
 Dahlongega, GA\*  
**American Renaissance/  
 New Century Foundation**  
 Oakton, VA\*  
**Antelope Hill Publishing**  
 Quakertown, PA\*  
**Arktos Media**  
 New York, NY\*  
**Blood River Radio**  
 Bartlett, TN\*  
**Christ the King Reformed Church**

Charlotte, MI\*  
**Colchester Collection, The**  
 Machias, ME\*  
**Council of Conservative Citizens**  
 Blackwell, MO\*  
**Counter-Currents Publishing**  
 San Francisco, CA\*  
**Cursus Honorum Foundation**  
 Austin, TX  
**Exodus/Americanus**  
 Floyds Knobs, IN\*  
**Fight White Genocide**  
 Cayce, SC\*  
**Fitzgerald Griffin Foundation, The**  
 Vienna, VA\*

## H.L. Mencken Club

Elizabethtown, PA\*  
**International Conservative Community**  
 California  
 Colorado  
 Montana  
 Pennsylvania  
**Koschertified?**  
 San Marcos, CA\*  
**Legion of St. Ambrose**  
 Knoxville, TN\*  
**National Justice Party**  
 Butler, PA\*  
**National Policy Institute**  
 Alexandria, VA\*  
**National Reformation Party**  
 California\*  
 Arizona  
 Michigan  
 Minnesota  
 Mississippi  
 South Carolina  
 Tennessee  
 Texas  
**New Albion**  
 Jackman, ME\*  
**New Jersey European Heritage Association**  
 New Jersey\*  
**Northwest Front**  
 Seattle, WA\*  
**Occidental Dissent**  
 Eufaula, AL\*  
**Occidental Observer**  
 Laguna Hills, CA\*  
**Occidental Quarterly/  
 Charles Martel Society**  
 Atlanta, GA  
**Our Fight Clothing**

California\*  
**Patriot Front**  
 Texas\*  
 Arizona  
 Arkansas  
 California  
 Colorado  
 Connecticut  
 District of Columbia  
 Florida  
 Georgia  
 Idaho  
 Illinois  
 Indiana  
 Iowa  
 Kentucky  
 Louisiana  
 Maine  
 Maryland  
 Massachusetts  
 Michigan  
 Minnesota  
 Mississippi  
 Missouri  
 Nebraska  
 Nevada  
 New Hampshire  
 New Jersey  
 New York  
 North Carolina  
 Ohio  
 Oklahoma  
 Oregon  
 Pennsylvania  
 Rhode Island  
 South Carolina  
 Tennessee  
 Utah  
 Vermont  
 Virginia  
 Washington

**TOP TAKEAWAYS** The number of white nationalist groups dipped in 2020, down 27 groups from 2019. While COVID-19 partially explains the change, most of the decline was due to the disbanding of American Identity Movement, one of the largest and mostly active white nationalist groups in the country in recent years.

**KEY MOMENTS** In January, police arrested seven members of The Base, an accelerationist white nationalist group.

Since 2017, the accelerationist wing has been rising to the forefront of the white nationalist movement. In recent months, though, the “mainstream” part of the movement has regained some momentum. Their success comes in large part from the so-called Groyper movement, led by Nick Fuentes and Patrick Casey.

One of the most notable trends within the far right this year has been the emergence of the Boogaloo boys, an amorphous group of far-right actors who believe the U.S. is headed toward a second civil war. While some of the subculture’s adherents describe themselves as hardcore libertarians, others hold overtly white nationalist ideas.

**WHAT’S AHEAD** The white nationalist movement is on two different tracks. One is focused on harnessing populist anger and frustration at Trump’s loss to channel people into their movement. Figures like Nick Fuentes are attacking mainstream conservatives while painting themselves as the future of the right in America.

The other part of the movement believes in accelerationism. While some join groups like The Base, the movement is increasingly decentralized. There is an increasing overlap in violent rhetoric among both groups.

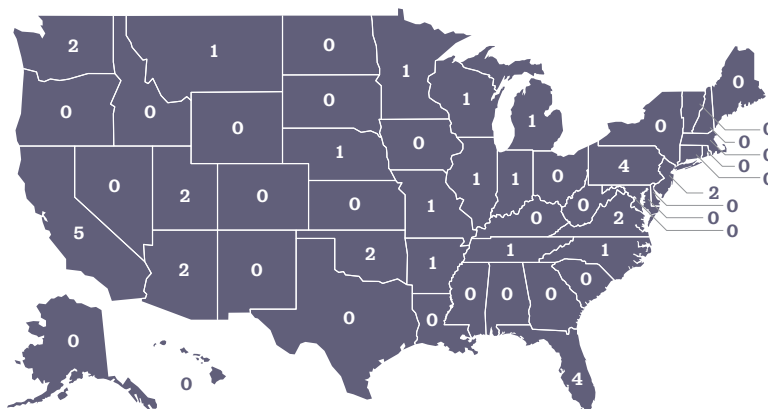


# 36 RACIST SKINHEAD

West Virginia  
 Wisconsin  
 Wyoming  
**Patriots Flags**  
 Summerville, SC\*  
**Political Cesspool, The**  
 Bartlett, TN\*  
**Racial Nationalist Party of America**  
 Lockport, NY\*  
**Radix Journal**  
 Alexandria, VA\*  
**Real Republic of Florida**  
 Tallahassee, FL\*  
**Red Ice**  
 Harrisonburg, VA\*  
**Renaissance Horizon**  
 Summerville, SC\*  
**Revolt Through Tradition**  
 Florida  
 Georgia  
 Indiana  
 Massachusetts  
**Right Brand Clothing**  
 Anaheim, CA\*  
**Rise Above Movement**  
 Huntington Beach, CA\*  
**Scott-Townsend Publishers**  
 Washington, DC\*  
**Shieldwall Network**  
 Mountain View, AR\*  
**Social Contract Press**  
 Petoskey, MI\*  
**Stormfront**  
 West Palm Beach, FL\*  
**The Base**  
 California  
 Georgia  
 Maryland  
 Michigan  
 Washington  
 Wisconsin  
**The Right Stuff**  
 Hopewell Junction, NY\*  
 Pennsylvania  
 Virginia Beach, VA  
**VDARE Foundation**  
 Warrenton, VA\*  
**White Rabbit Radio**  
 Dearborn Heights, MI\*  
**Will2Rise**  
 Saint Lucie County, FL\*

Racist skinheads form a particularly violent element of the white supremacist movement and have often been referred to as the “shock troops” of the hoped-for revolution. The classic skinhead look is a shaved head, black Doc Martens boots, jeans with suspenders and an array of typically racist tattoos.

|                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>AC Skins</b><br>Atlantic City, NJ* | Virginia<br><b>Crew 38</b><br>Florida<br><b>Die Auserwahlten</b><br>Utah<br><b>Firm 22</b><br>Arizona<br>Florida<br>Oklahoma<br>Pennsylvania<br>Montana<br><b>Blood and Honour Social Club</b><br>Michigan<br>Missouri<br>Pennsylvania<br>Virginia<br><b>Confederate Hammerskins</b> | <b>Northwest Hammerskins</b><br>Washington<br><b>United Skinhead Nation</b><br>Florida*<br>Tennessee<br><b>Vinlanders Social Club</b><br>Florida<br>Indiana<br>Minnesota<br>New Jersey<br>North Carolina<br>Oklahoma<br>Washington<br>Wisconsin<br><b>W.A.R./P.F.R.</b><br>Arkansas*<br><b>Western Hammerskins</b><br>California* |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|



**TOP TAKEAWAYS** With almost no young recruits, the racist skinhead movement’s prominence within this country’s far right has been diminishing steadily for years. The SPLC recorded another decline in 2020.

**KEY MOMENTS** The Hammerskin Nation, among the nation’s most established and most violent hate groups, remains in decline but not out of the headlines. This movement, while losing momentum, continues to pose a public safety threat. In December 2018, a group of racist skinheads were arrested in Washington for allegedly assaulting a Black DJ at a bar. Local and federal law enforcement have been reviewing the case and investigating it as a hate crime. A federal grand jury indicted four individuals in late 2020. Three were members of Crew 38, the supporters group for the Hammerskins.

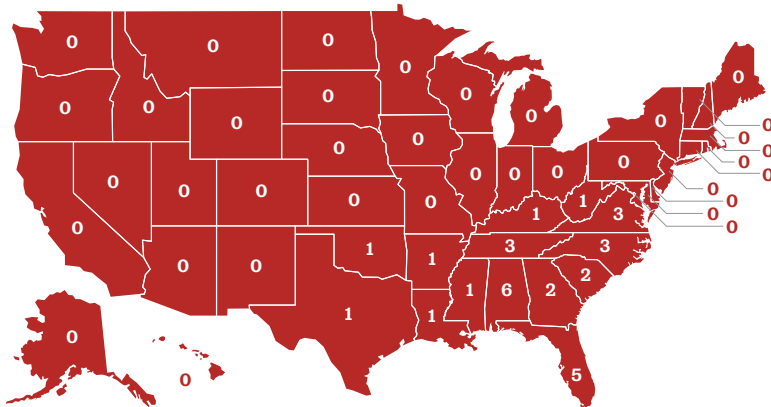
**WHAT’S AHEAD** As racist skinheads age and fail to replenish their numbers, the movement will continue to lose relevance in this country. White nationalist groups like Rise Above Movement, which has maintained connections to the Hammerskins in the past, and milieus like that of white power accelerationism have emerged to replace the racist skinhead movement among younger recruits, both in posture and intent. Danger related to the movement is still tragically present, as the enclosed reports underscore.



# 31 NEO-CONFEDERATE

Neo-Confederacy is a reactionary, revisionist branch of American white nationalism typified by its predilection for symbols of the Confederate States of America, typically paired with a strong belief in the validity of the failed doctrines of nullification and secession – in the specific context of the antebellum South – that rose to prominence in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

|                                 |                            |                                 |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>ACTBAC NC</b>                | Virginia                   | McKee, KY                       |
| Snow Camp, NC*                  | <b>League of the South</b> | Ocala, FL                       |
| <b>Confederate 901</b>          | Killen, AL*                | Panama City, FL                 |
| Memphis, TN*                    | Aragon, GA                 | Shreveport, LA                  |
| <b>Dixie Republic</b>           | Bunker Hill, WV            | Travelers Rest, SC              |
| Travelers Rest, SC              | Cartersville, GA           | Wewoka, OK                      |
| <b>Heirs to the Confederacy</b> | Danville, VA               | <b>Southern Cultural Center</b> |
| Asheboro, NC*                   | Edinburg, VA               | Wetumpka, AL*                   |
| <b>Identity Dixie</b>           | Gallatin, TN               | Dothan, AL                      |
| Cookeville, TN*                 | Harrison, AR               | Northport, AL                   |
| Florida                         | Holly Springs, MS          | Oxford, AL                      |
| North Carolina                  | Jacksonville, FL           | Weogufka, AL                    |
| Texas                           | Lake City, FL              |                                 |



**TOP TAKEAWAYS** Neo-Confederate group numbers declined between 2018 and 2019 when the largest neo-Confederate hate group, the League of the South, lost several chapters. Neo-Confederate propaganda group Identity Dixie has also faltered, in part, from revelations in SPLC’s 2019 expose about the group’s leaders and history. In 2020, SPLC’s analysts documented a minor increase with the Neo-Confederate category.

**KEY MOMENTS** On December 28, 2020, a senior U.S. district judge dismissed Michael Hill and Michael Tubbs, both leaders within the League of the South, from a federal lawsuit brought by DeAndre Harris over the pair’s alleged role in the deadly riot that occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017. The pair, along with the League of the South itself, are still named as defendants in a lawsuit related to Charlottesville brought by Integrity First for America.

**WHAT’S AHEAD** In recent years, ongoing debates around public memorials to the Lost Cause galvanized small groups that have promoted neo-Confederate ideology and spawned pro-monument groups relatively new to the neo-Confederate hate movement. Energized online and among its ranks, these groups have failed to organize and mobilize widely across the South. But while neo-Confederates have failed to gain a noticeable uptick in recruits across 2020, flashpoints around Lost Cause memorials and Army bases named for Confederate military officers may provide opportunities for neo-Confederates to engage in violence during 2021.

## HATE BY STATE

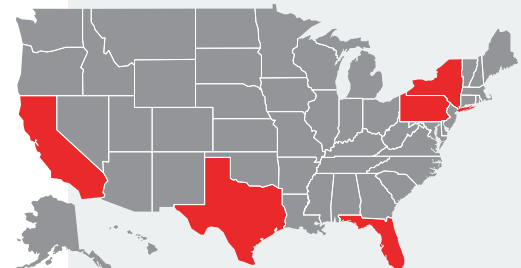
The arrows at right indicate whether the number of hate groups in each state rose or fell in the last year. The four highlighted states saw the steepest decreases.

|             |      |             |
|-------------|------|-------------|
| AK ↓        | KY ↓ | NY ↓        |
| AL ↑        | LA ↓ | <b>OH ↓</b> |
| AR ↓        | MA ↓ | OK ↑        |
| AZ ↑        | MD ↓ | OR ↓        |
| <b>CA ↓</b> | ME ↑ | PA -        |
| CO ↓        | MI ↓ | RI ↑        |
| CT ↓        | MN ↓ | SC ↑        |
| DC -        | MO ↓ | SD ↓        |
| DE -        | MS ↓ | TN ↓        |
| FL ↑        | MT - | <b>TX ↓</b> |
| <b>GA ↓</b> | NC ↓ | UT ↓        |
| HI -        | ND ↓ | VA ↓        |
| IA -        | NE ↑ | VT ↓        |
| ID -        | NH ↑ | WA ↓        |
| IL ↓        | NJ ↓ | WI ↓        |
| IN ↓        | NM - | WV -        |
| KS ↓        | NV ↑ | WY -        |

## TOP FIVE 2020 HATE GROUPS

Though the number of hate groups fluctuates each year, states with large populations like Texas, California and Florida regularly have the most.

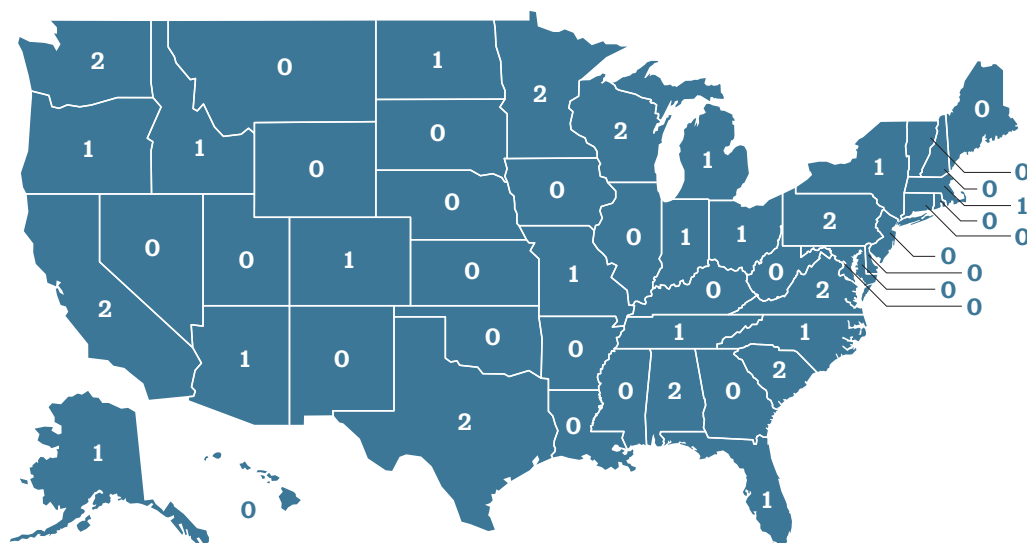
1. CALIFORNIA
2. FLORIDA
3. TEXAS
4. NEW YORK
5. PENNSYLVANIA



# 33 NEO-VÖLKISCH

Neo-Völkisch followers base their movement on the falsehood that white European people and cultures are dying and thus in need of preservation. Neo-Völkisch hate groups romanticize pre-Christian Viking culture and espouse regressive notions of gender. The foundations of the ideology emerged in the mid-19th century racist movements in what is now present day Austria and Germany.

|                             |                        |                               |                             |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Asatru Folk Assembly</b> | North Dakota           | Princeton, MN*                | <b>Viking Brotherhood</b>   |
| California*                 | Ohio                   | <b>CarolynEmerick.com/</b>    | California*                 |
| Alabama                     | Oregon                 | <b>Oakwise Becoming</b>       | <b>Woden's Folk Kindred</b> |
| Alaska                      | Pennsylvania           | Rochester, NY*                | Waxahachie, TX*             |
| Colorado                    | South Carolina         | <b>Gallows Tree</b>           | <b>Wolves of Vinland</b>    |
| Florida                     | Tennessee              | <b>Wotansvolk Alliance</b>    | Lynchburg, VA*              |
| Idaho                       | Texas                  | Grand Rapids, MI*             | Alabama                     |
| Indiana                     | Virginia               | <b>Heathen Coalition, The</b> | Pennsylvania                |
| Massachusetts               | Washington             | Milwaukee, WI*                | South Carolina              |
| Minnesota                   | Wisconsin              | <b>Order of the Black</b>     | Washington                  |
| Missouri                    | <b>Black Sun Tribe</b> | <b>Sun, The</b>               |                             |
| North Carolina              | <b>Project, The</b>    | Mesa, AZ*                     |                             |



**TOP TAKEAWAYS** The number of neo-Völkisch hate groups is lower in 2020 than 2019. The downturn in numbers comes mainly from the inactivity of Wotan's Nation in 2020 and the use of statewide chapter listings rather than individual chapter listings.

The Ásatrú Folk Assembly (AFA), the largest neo-Völkisch hate group in the United States, had another very active year the pandemic.

AFA's original hof, or meeting hall, located in Brownsville, California, was paid off in January 2019. The group purchased a second hof this year in Linden, North Carolina and a third in Murdock, Minnesota.

**KEY MOMENTS** The Ásatrú Folk Assembly had numerous events at each of their three hofs throughout the year. Similar to years past, the group's largest event was Midsummer, held at Odinhof in Brownsville, California in June.

Other large events that the Asatru Folk Assembly hosted this year included Fallfest in Minnesota in September.

Outside of the AFA, Woden's Folk Kindred, based in Texas, was also quite active in 2020. The group hosted several events, erected a memorial runestone and published a book about runes.

**WHAT'S AHEAD** Neo-Völkisch groups' reliance on imagery and myths of a bygone, romanticized Viking Era seeks to transcend nationalism and wield whiteness as it suits their ill-conceived ends. The aesthetic these groups offer and the malleability of their messaging has continued to attract new members.

With the Ásatrú Folk Assembly's expansive year they have reaffirmed their lasting presence in the neo-Völkisch hate scene.







# 72 ANTI-MUSLIM

Anti-Muslim hate groups are a relatively new phenomenon in the U.S., with many appearing after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. They frequently traffic in conspiracy theories involving the infiltration of the government by Islamist extremists, warn that the U.S. legal system is being subverted by Shariah law and portray Muslims in general as potential terrorist threats.

## ACT for America

Washington, DC\*  
 Austin, TX  
 Baton Rouge, LA  
 Bear, DE  
 Cheshire, CT  
 Connecticut  
 Corona, CA  
 Des Plaines, IL  
 Hauppauge, NY  
 Heathrow, FL  
 Hollis, NH  
 Hopkinton, MA  
 Houston, TX  
 Jacksonville, FL  
 Jonesboro, AR  
 Kansas City, MO  
 Lafayette, IN  
 Laguna Woods, CA  
 Los Angeles, CA  
 Metairie, LA  
 Mission Viejo, CA  
 Oostburg, WI  
 Pittsburgh, PA  
 San Fernando Valley, CA  
 San Gabriel Valley, CA  
 Spokane Valley, WA  
 Tucson, AZ  
 Vancouver, WA  
 Viera, FL  
 Walsenburg, CO  
 Whitehall, MT  
**American Freedom Alliance**  
 Encino, CA\*  
**American Freedom Defense Initiative**  
 New York, NY\*  
**American Freedom Law Center**  
 Ann Arbor, MI\*  
**American Public Policy Alliance**  
 Washington, DC\*  
**Bomb Islam**  
 Phoenix, AZ\*  
**Bureau on American Islamic Relations**  
 Irving, TX\*  
**Center for Security Policy**  
 Washington, DC\*  
**Christian Action Network**

Forest, VA\*  
**Citizens for National Security**  
 Boca Raton, FL\*  
**Counter Jihad Coalition**  
 Santa Monica, CA\*  
**Cultures in Context Incorporated/Turning Point Project**  
 Immokalee, FL\*  
**David Horowitz Freedom Center**  
 Sherman Oaks, CA  
**Florida Family Association**  
 Tampa, FL\*  
**Fortress of Faith Foundation**  
 Bellingham, WA\*  
**Foundation for Advocating Christian Truth**  
 Bronx, NY\*  
**G416 Patriots**  
 Meridian, Idaho  
**Glasov Gang Productions**  
 Los Angeles, CA\*  
**Global Faith Institute**  
 Omaha, NE\*  
**Jihad Watch**  
 Manchester, NH\*  
**Last Chance Patriots**  
 Dayton, MT\*  
**Political Islam**  
 Nashville, TN\*  
**Radio Jihad/Global Patriot Radio**

New York County, NY\*  
**Red-Green Axis Exposed**  
 Brecksville, OH\*  
**Refugee Resettlement Watch**  
 Fairplay, MD\*  
**Rise Align Ignite Reclaim**  
 Fishkill, NY\*  
**Sea Jay Foundation**  
 Highlands Ranch, CO\*  
**Sharia Crime Stoppers**  
 Mount Clemens, MI\*  
**Shoebat Foundation, The**  
 Newtown, PA\*  
**Soldiers of Odin**  
 Illinois  
 Nevada  
 North Carolina  
 Pennsylvania  
 Virginia  
 Idaho  
 Ventura County, CA  
**Straight Way and More, The**  
 Marble Hill, MO\*  
**Thomas More Law Center**  
 Ann Arbor, MI\*  
**Truth in Love Project**  
 Maryville, TN\*  
**Truth in Textbooks**  
 Boerne, TX\*  
**Understanding the Threat**  
 Dallas, TX\*  
**United West, The**  
 Palm Beach County, FL\*

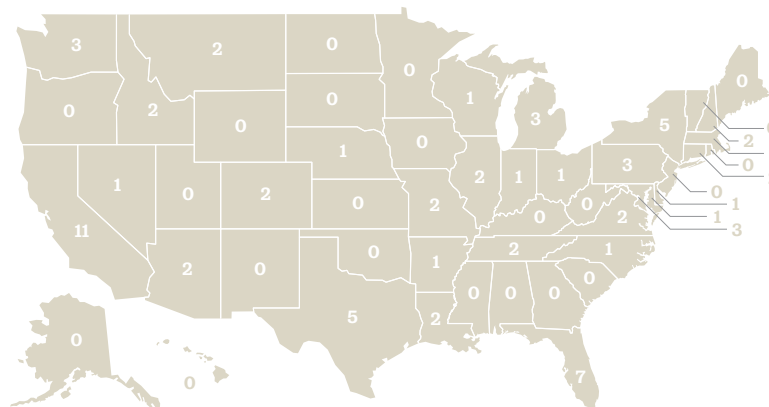
**TOP TAKEAWAYS** Despite a drop in active groups, the anti-Muslim movement remains a force in the United States. Groups continue to be well-funded, with some enjoying mainstream political clout.

There was a decrease in activity from chapters of ACT for America, the largest anti-Muslim hate group in the country. The pandemic prevented chapters from meeting in person. Some ACT chapters have also folded after expressing discontent with the national office in Washington, D.C.

**KEY MOMENTS** Muslims were the second largest target of religious hate incidents after Jews, according to the FBI's 2019 hate crimes statistics. State-sponsored Islamophobia, like government surveillance of Muslim communities, still remains an issue. Anti-Muslim hate continues to run rampant and unchecked on social media platforms.

ACT for America stepped up its anti-China fearmongering amid the global pandemic. In March 2020, Gabriel co-signed a letter organized by the Media Research Center asking Trump to investigate China's alleged role in spreading the virus.

**WHAT'S AHEAD** Donald Trump's defeat left anti-Muslim groups without their top political ally. The Biden administration has signaled it will reverse Trump policies championed by these groups like the Muslim ban, the low caps on refugees resettled in the country and other nativist immigration practices. With Democrats in control of the White House, some anti-Muslim groups have signaled the importance of organizing at the state and local level.



# 355 GENERAL HATE

These groups espouse a variety of rather unique hateful doctrines and beliefs that are not easily categorized. Many of the groups are vendors that sell a miscellany of hate materials from several different sectors of the white supremacist movement.

## HATE MUSIC (11)

### BeaSSt Productions

Roanoke, VA\*

### Black Metal Cult Records

Phoenix, AZ\*

### DNVF Records

Shawnee on Delaware, PA\*

### ISD Records/NS88 Video

Denison, TX\*

### Micetrap Distribution

Maple Shade Township, NJ\*

### MSR Productions

Gering, NE\*

### Tightrope Records

Arkansas\*

### United Riot Records

New York\*

### Vanguard Productions

New Jersey\*

### Vinlandic Werwolf

### Distribution

California\*

### Winter Solace

## Productions

Wausau, WI\*

## ANTISEMITISM (75)

### Barnes Review/

### Foundation for

### Economic Liberty, Inc.

White Plains, MD\*

### Carolynyeager.net

Kerrville, TX\*

### Committee for Open

### Debate on the Holocaust

Mill Valley, CA\*

York, PA

### Independent History

### & Research

Coeur d'Alene, ID\*

### Institute for Historical

### Review

Newport Beach, CA\*

### Nation of Islam

Chicago, IL\*

Akron, OH

Atlanta, GA

Austin, TX

Birmingham, AL

Brooklyn, NY

Camden, NJ

Charlotte, NC

Chattanooga, TN

Cleveland, OH

Columbia, SC

Compton, CA

Dallas, TX

Dayton, OH

Denver, CO

Detroit, MI

Dorchester, MA

Durham, NC

Fort Lauderdale, FL

Fort Worth, TX

Grand Rapids, MI

Greensboro, NC

Greenville, SC

Houston, TX

Indianapolis, IN

Jacksonville, FL

Kansas City, MO

Lexington, KY

Los Angeles, CA

Louisville, KY

Memphis, TN

Miami, FL

Milwaukee, WI

Mobile, AL

Monroe, LA

Montgomery, AL

New Orleans, LA

New York, NY

Newark, NJ

Norfolk, VA

North Charleston, SC

North Little Rock, AR

Oakland, CA

Oklahoma City, OK

Pensacola, FL

Philadelphia, PA

Phoenix, AZ

Pittsburgh, PA

Plainfield, NJ

Richmond, VA

Rochester, NY

Rock Hill, SC

San Antonio, TX

San Diego, CA

Shreveport, LA

Springfield, MO

St. Louis, MO

St. Petersburg, FL

Tampa, FL

Toledo, OH

Trenton, NJ

Tulsa, OK

Washington, DC

Willingboro, NJ

Wilmington, DE

Wilmington, NC

Winston-Salem, NC

### Realist Report, The

Long Beach, CA\*

## MALE SUPREMACY (1)

### A Voice for Men

Roanoke, VA

## RADICAL TRADITIONALIST

## CATHOLIC (9)

### Catholic Apologetics

### International

Greencastle, PA\*

### Catholic Family News/

### Catholic Family

### Ministries, Inc.

Niagara Falls, NY\*

### Christ or Chaos

West Chester, OH\*

### Culture Wars/

### Fidelity Press

South Bend, IN\*

### Fatima Crusader, The/

### International Fatima

### Rosary Crusade

Buffalo, NY\*

### IHS Press

Norfolk, VA\*

### In the Spirit of

### Chartres Committee

Glenelg, MD\*

### Remnant, The/The

### Remnant Press

Forest Lake, MN\*

### Slaves of the Immaculate

### Heart of Mary

Town of Richmond, NH\*

### Tradition in Action

Los Angeles, CA\*

## OTHER (258)

### A2Z Publications

Parrish, FL

### Ambassadors of Christ

Brooklyn, NY\*

Chicago, IL

Houston, TX

### American Free Press

Upper Marlboro, MD\*

### Army of Israel

Missouri\*

### Bill Keller Ministries

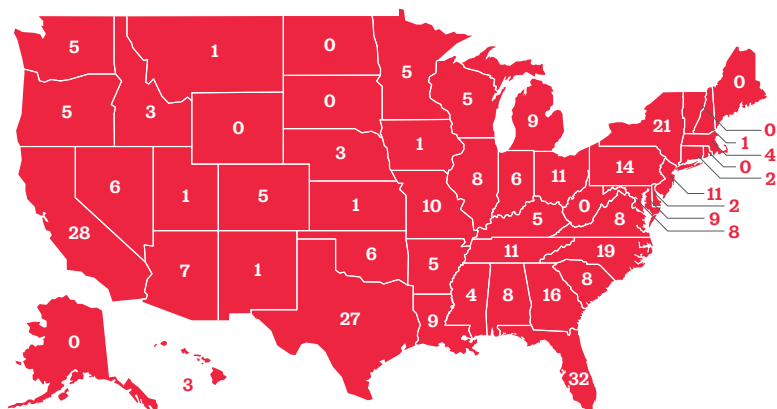
St. Petersburg, FL

### Black Riders

### Liberation Party

Los Angeles, CA\*

Las Vegas, NV



**TOP TAKEAWAYS** As SPLC seeks to better understand the ideological drivers of hate groups, we have developed the antisemitism categorization, which is now listed under “General Hate.” The bulk of the groups listed under this ideology were formerly categorized as Black Separatist and Holocaust Denial.

Another group listed in General Hate is the Proud Boys, the “Western chauvinist” men’s club that espouses rabidly anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant beliefs, demonizes trans people, and clings to archaic and misogynistic notions of gender.

**KEY MOMENTS** After a downturn in activity in 2019, the Proud Boys capitalized on the instability and conflict that the COVID-19 pandemic and divisive Trump administration sowed in 2020. Early on in the pandemic, members of the Proud Boys began attending anti-lockdown protests, claiming these gatherings would be “where the battle for the 2020 election starts.”

In December, amidst Trump’s false accusations of election fraud, Proud Boys gathered in Washington, D.C. to support the president’s unfounded claims. One Proud Boy who attended was photographed wearing a shirt emblazoned with, “6MWE,” an antisemitic slogan that stands for, “six million wasn’t enough.” Enrique Tarrío, the group’s leader, was arrested after his involvement in burning a church’s Black Lives Matter sign at this protest.

**WHAT’S AHEAD** Though the Biden-Harris administration and Trump’s impending impeachment trial mean the Proud Boys have lost their ally in the White House, they remain highly organized. Street mobilization will continue to be an important political tool for the group, as will their alliances with more radical segments of the Republican Party.



Portland, OR  
**Brother Nathanael Foundation, The**  
 Priest River, ID  
**Chick Publications**  
 Ontario, CA  
**Dixie Giftshop**  
 Tennessee  
**European-American Evangelistic Crusade**  
 Sheridan, CA  
**Great Millstone**  
 New York, NY\*  
 Valdosta, GA  
 Kansas City, MO  
 West Palm Beach, FL  
 Nashville, TN  
 Denver, CO  
 Little Rock, AR  
 Honolulu, HI  
 St. Louis, MO  
 Indianapolis, IN  
 Louisiana  
 Milwaukee, WI  
 Los Angeles, CA  
 Miami, FL  
 San Antonio, TX  
 Des Moines, IA  
 Birmingham, AL  
 Dallas, TX  
 Baltimore, MD  
 Chicago, IL  
 Cleveland, OH  
 Tampa, FL  
 Memphis, TN  
 Mississippi  
 Las Vegas, NV  
 Omaha, NE  
 Houston, TX  
 Detroit, MI  
 Charlottesville, NC  
 Atlanta, GA  
**House of David**  
 Brooklyn, NY\*  
**House of Israel**  
 New York, NY\*  
 Philadelphia, PA  
 Detroit, MI  
 Inglewood, CA  
 Washington, DC  
 Atlanta, GA  
**Insight USA**  
 Longwood, FL  
**International Society of Indigenous Sovereigns**  
 Atlanta, GA\*  
**Israel United in Christ**  
 Mount Vernon, NY\*  
 Raleigh, NC  
 Minneapolis, MN  
 Bakersfield, CA  
 Grand Rapids, MI

Lubbock, TX  
 Rochester, NY  
 Sacramento, CA  
 Jacksonville, FL  
 Columbia, SC  
 Lafayette, LA  
 Philadelphia, PA  
 Jackson, MS  
 Little Rock, AR  
 Nashville, TN  
 Tulsa, OK  
 Honolulu, HI  
 Seattle, WA  
 Mobile, AL  
 Concord, NC  
 Oklahoma City, OK  
 Detroit, MI  
 Brockton, MA  
 St. Louis, MO  
 Las Vegas, NV  
 Newark, NJ  
 Heath, OH  
 Turtle Creek, PA  
 Memphis, TN  
 Dallas, TX  
 Houston, TX  
 Austin, TX  
 Corpus Christi, TX  
 San Antonio, TX  
 Newport News, VA  
 Upper Marlboro, MD  
 Birmingham, AL  
 Phoenix, AZ  
 Los Angeles, CA  
 Denver, CO  
 Orlando, FL  
 Miami, FL  
 Tallahassee, FL  
 Atlanta, GA  
 Savannah, GA  
 Chicago, IL  
 Kansas City, KS  
 Louisville, KY  
 New Orleans, LA  
**Israelite Church of God in Jesus Christ, The**  
 Baltimore, MD  
 Pittsburgh, PA  
**Israelite School of Universal Practical Knowledge**  
 Upper Darby, PA\*  
 Atlanta, GA  
 Austin, TX  
 Baltimore, MD  
 Boston, MA  
 Charleston, SC  
 Charlotte, NC  
 Chicago, IL  
 Cincinnati, OH  
 Dallas, TX  
 Detroit, MI

Durham, NC  
 Fayetteville, NC  
 Fort Wayne, IN  
 Greensboro, NC  
 Greenville, NC  
 Greenville, SC  
 Hartford, CT  
 Houston, TX  
 Indianapolis, IN  
 Jacksonville, FL  
 Kansas City, MO  
 Las Vegas, NV  
 Los Angeles, CA  
 Louisiana  
 Louisville, KY  
 Memphis, TN  
 Milwaukee, WI  
 Minneapolis, MN  
 Mississippi  
 Nashville, TN  
 New York, NY  
 Newark, NJ  
 Oakland, CA  
 Oklahoma, OK  
 Phoenix, AZ  
 Pittsburgh, PA  
 Richmond, VA  
 Rochester, NY  
 St. Louis, MO  
 Syracuse, NY  
 Tampa, FL  
 Washington, DC  
 Wilmington, DE  
 Winston-Salem, NC  
**Israelite the Branches**  
 Baltimore, MD\*  
**Israelites Saints of Christ**  
 Richmond, VA\*  
 New Jersey  
 North Carolina  
 Huntsville, AL  
**Jewish Task Force**  
 Fresh Meadows, NY  
**Last Frontier Evangelism – Repent Alaska**  
 Amarillo, TX  
**Lion of Judah – Jeshurun Lions**  
 Chicago, IL\*  
**Lions of Israel**  
 Mount Vernon, NY\*  
**Lordship Church**  
 Bonners Ferry, ID  
**Luxor Couture**  
 Atlanta, GA\*  
**Masharah Yasharahla – Government of Israel**  
 Raleigh, NC\*  
**Masjid al Islam – As Sabiqun**  
 Washington, DC  
**Mountains of Israel**

Houston, TX\*  
**Nation of Kings and Priests**  
 Orlando, FL\*  
**New Black Panther Party**  
 Houston, TX\*  
 Atlanta, GA  
 Baton Rouge, LA  
 New Orleans, LA  
**New Black Panther Party for Self Defense**  
 Charlotte, NC  
 Memphis, TN  
 Seattle, WA  
 St. Louis, MO  
 Tupelo, MS  
 Tampa, FL  
 Jacksonville, FL  
 Washington, DC  
**Northern Kingdom Prophets**  
 Pueblo, CO\*  
**Official Street Preachers**  
 Los Angeles, CA  
**OneBody in Yashawashi**  
 Dallas, TX\*  
**Patriot Movement AZ**  
 Litchfield Park, AZ  
**Power of Prophecy**  
 Spicewood, TX  
**Proud Boys**  
 New York, NY\*  
 Saint James, NY  
 Montana  
 Milton, FL  
 Ithaca, NY  
 Carson City, NV  
 Wallowa County, OR  
 Modesto, CA  
 Wisconsin  
 New Jersey  
 Washington, DC  
 Canton, OH  
 Lansing, MI  
 Anaheim, CA  
 North Carolina  
 New Mexico  
 Columbus, OH  
 Salem, OR  
 Sarasota, FL  
 Richmond, VA  
 Orlando, FL  
 Nebraska  
 Austin, TX  
 Tennessee  
 Oklahoma  
 Tampa, FL  
 Las Vegas, NV  
 DeLand, FL  
 Spokane, WA  
 Colorado  
 Alabama  
 St. Louis, MO

Minnesota  
 Arkansas  
 Arizona  
 Miami, FL  
 Philadelphia, PA  
 Portland, OR  
 Utah  
 Seattle, WA  
 Sacramento, CA  
 Hawaii  
 Indiana  
**Rense Radio Network**  
 Ashland, OR  
**Revolutionary Black Panther Party**  
 Valdosta, GA\*  
 Louisville, KY  
 Philadelphia, PA  
**Sharkhunters International**  
 Hernando, FL  
**Sicarii 1715**  
 San Diego, CA\*  
 Phoenix, AZ  
 San Francisco, CA  
 Tampa, FL  
 Miami, FL  
 Long Beach, CA  
 Chicago, IL  
 Dallas, TX  
 Orlando, FL  
 Atlanta, GA  
 Seattle, WA  
**Sons of Liberty Media**  
 Annandale, MN  
**Tony Alamo Christian Ministries**  
 Canyon Country, CA  
**TruNews**  
 Vero Beach, FL\*  
**True National Israelite Congregation**  
 Los Angeles, CA\*  
 Augusta, GA  
**United Nuwapians Worldwide, The/All Eyes on Egypt**  
 Brooklyn, NY\*  
 Charleston, SC  
 Athens, GA  
 Philadelphia, PA  
 Charlotte, NC  
 Washington, DC  
 Lithonia, GA  
 Detroit, MI  
 Cleveland, OH  
 Chicago, IL  
 Hartford, CT  
**War on the Horizon**  
 Washington, DC  
**Watchmen for Israel**  
 Baltimore, MD\*

# The Year in Antigovernment Extremism

By Rachel Goldwasser, Freddy Cruz and IP Staff

2020 was pivotal in the spread of the antigovernment movement, galvanized by the coronavirus pandemic, Black Lives Matter demonstrations against police violence and the 2020 presidential elections. The perfect storm of events not only fueled the movement, but also increased the potential for violence as disinformation spread mostly unchecked across social media platforms. In this report, we will explore in three parts the events that fueled the feverish antigovernment activity of 2020.

Late summer's crackdowns on Facebook and Twitter drove many in the antigovernment universe to more permissive platforms where participants continued to spread unchecked conspiracy theories, planned events and shared violent threats against public officials. So though there may be a slight drop in the numbers of organized antigovernment groups this year, shared beliefs created larger, looser movements such as the Boogaloo and QAnon movements, whose supporters often appeared side-by-side with more organized groups. The antigovernment movement thus became more flexible and more metastatic.

Public health lockdowns and restrictions on gatherings and mask mandates drove antigovernment groups to massive protests at state capitols in 2020, and led to a plot in Michigan to kidnap the governor. (The militia group also plotted to do the same to the Virginia governor.) BLM demonstrations also drove antigovernment groups to counter-protest, as they painted BLM and supporters across social media with racist dog whistles such as “thugs” and blamed violence on leftists. The 2020 presidential elections also provided fertile ground for dangerous conspiracy theories about voter fraud, which evolved into mass movements of right-wing activists upset about the legitimate election of Joe Biden.

After the election, another movement galvanized antigovernment forces that wanted to “stop

the steal” as they pushed the conspiracy theory that Joe Biden and Democrats had somehow stolen the election from outgoing President Donald Trump. The falsehood was spread by Trump himself and Republican lawmakers<sup>69</sup> such as Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who challenged the Electoral College certification on Jan. 6.

The waves of disinformation across the antigovernment movement culminated in horrific violence as thousands of Trump supporters converged on the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 6, egged on by President Trump at a rally near the building. Hundreds forced their way into the Capitol in a domestic terror assault that security and law enforcement were clearly unprepared for, while Congress met to confirm electoral ballots for President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris.

The attack included groups and individuals from across the right-wing extremist spectrum, including antigovernment groups such as Oath Keepers, white nationalists such as Nick Fuentes and Tim “Baked Alaska” Gionet, QAnon adherents and members of the hate group the Proud Boys. Those who broke into the Capitol ransacked offices, vandalized and stole furniture, and allegedly stole documents and electronic devices.<sup>70</sup> At least one individual dressed in paramilitary garb was photographed carrying zip ties<sup>71</sup> into the Senate and House chambers. Dozens were injured and five people died, including a Capitol police officer who was beaten by protesters, and a QAnon supporter who was shot by law enforcement.

Against this backdrop, the movement enters a new year, and with Trump no longer president, the movement could continue to grow, feeding off conspiracies and resentment against President Biden and enabled by platforms that allow such rhetoric to flourish.

## THE YEAR IN ANTIGOVERNMENT EXTREMISM



# The Coronavirus Pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic ignited activity by anti-government groups in 2020 as many resisted stay-at-home orders and requests to wear masks. This included militias, constitutional sheriffs, conspiracy theorists, antigovernment secessionists and members of Boogaloo and QAnon movements.

Many groups have denied the virus's existence or severity, reacting by spreading baseless conspiracy theories,<sup>72</sup> claiming government health guidelines were tyrannical and calling lawmakers who implemented them tyrants. Constitutional sheriffs across the country refused to enforce stay-at-home orders, claiming they were “unconstitutional” mandates while antigovernment groups cheered them on.

As stay-at-home orders were implemented to slow the spread of the virus, antigovernment groups took to the streets to protest, claiming their liberties were being infringed upon. Law enforcement has arrested members of at least two<sup>73</sup> groups<sup>74</sup> on various charges including bombing and kidnapping, based on actions they took in opposition to the state's coronavirus response.

Paramilitary groups came out in force to oppose public health regulations during the coronavirus pandemic. Members of the Wolverine Watchmen militia were arrested in 2020 and charged in relation to a plot to kidnap Michigan's governor, Gretchen Whitmer.

On April 12, Ammon Bundy, known for coordinating standoffs against the U.S. government in Nevada in 2014 and Oregon in 2016, hosted an Easter Service on his property in Emmett, Idaho, that protested and defied the state's stay-at-home orders. A makeshift sign stood in front of the pulpit that read, “Defy martial law.”

Bundy's group, People's Rights, has hosted dozens of events to protest coronavirus restrictions,<sup>75</sup> including events at government buildings in Idaho, at government workers' homes in Washington state, and in Montana, where they threatened citizen's arrest of those enforcing coronavirus policy.

The Nevada Caravan Protest of Government Overreach was also held April 12 in Las Vegas and was promoted by Eagle Forum Nevada. This was the first of many reopen protests held in Carson City, Reno and Las Vegas, Nevada.

Other extremists at protests include the Proud Boys at an April 18 protest in Las Vegas,<sup>76</sup> the Lightfoot Militia at a May 2 protest in Carson City,<sup>77</sup> a crew of armed Boogaloo boys at an event in early April and Boogaloo boy Cody Cunningham hosting a May reopen rally in Las Vegas.<sup>78</sup> The same group would later be arrested and charged for plotting to firebomb a power substation during a May 30 Black Lives Matter demonstration.<sup>79</sup> According to



the criminal complaint, they wanted to see a violent overthrow of the government and their goal was to induce confrontation between police and protesters to provoke it. They intended to execute the first phase at a May 16 reopen protest, setting off fireworks, smoke bombs or noise makers to create a public panic, but called it off on May 13.

Another protest was Operation Gridlock, on April 15, in Lansing, Michigan. Cars jammed the roads around the state Capitol to oppose stay-at-home orders. According to police estimates, 3,000 to 4,000 people attended. Proud Boys and the Michigan Liberty Militia were present.

One day later, a protest was held at the Texas Governor's Mansion in Austin. The event's Facebook page stated, "We want to reopen Texas businesses and we want to hold our government officials accountable for infringing upon our rights as American citizens." The Texas Freedom Force militia was present, along with Owen Shroyer of Infowars, a conspiracy propagandist site. A day prior, Shroyer questioned the severity of the pandemic<sup>80</sup> and alleged that the death toll from the coronavirus was Chinese propaganda.

Shroyer held his own rally in Austin on April 18, defying the state's coronavirus restrictions. On June 28, the day Travis County had its largest spike in coronavirus cases up till that time, Infowars founder Alex Jones hosted an Austin anti-mask rally with Shroyer. At the event, they claimed mask mandates were illegal orders and equated them with slavery.<sup>81</sup> "We're going to tell the globalists, 'We're not your slaves, we're not in your cult, and if you want war, you better believe you got war,'" Alex Jones yelled from a bullhorn.

Oath Keepers also were active in opposing and defying coronavirus guidelines in Texas. Leader Stewart Rhodes spoke at a rally in Palestine, Texas on May 16, and Texas Oath Keepers hosted a rally in Austin, Texas on May 23. They were involved in one of six incidents in Texas<sup>82</sup> where armed individuals sought to "protect" businesses that reopened during the lockdown. On May 30, their Texan Spartan group put out a call to action, saying Dallas salon owner Shelley Luther had authorized them

to provide security for her property. They invited members, encouraging them to open carry rifles.

On the same day, Oath Keepers hosted a rally in Newburgh, New York, for a member's business that was reopening against state guidelines. They invited "Oath Keepers, three percenters and patriots" to come to the tattoo shop of Robert Minuta. The invite, signed by Rhodes, claimed Minuta was the first business owner to defy the New York governor, and called the event "a display of defiance against a tyrannical dictator."

Across the country, protesters referred to their governors as dictators, kings and tyrants for imposing coronavirus restrictions. Arguably, no one was more villainized than Michigan's governor, Gretchen Whitmer, for whom, as CNN noted, Trump reserved his harshest rhetoric.<sup>83</sup> On April 17, Trump tweeted, in all caps, the words "LIBERATE MICHIGAN."

On April 30, American Patriot Council leader Ryan Kelley hosted a protest, and the Michigan Liberty Militia provided security. Kelley claimed he invited the militia "to keep things orderly and help protect the First Amendment." The Michigan Civil Defense Force, Michigan Home Guard and the Southeast Michigan Volunteer Militia, along with "constitutional sheriff" movement member David Clarke and Stop the Steal's Brandon Straka, also attended.

On the same day, armed protesters stormed the statehouse<sup>84</sup> where legislators were meeting to discuss extending the state's stay-at-home

Antigovernment extremist Ammon Bundy, known for clashing with law enforcement, defied Idaho's stay-at-home order in April 2020 to host an Easter service.



REUTERS/JIM URQUHART





Above: Conspiracy theorist Alex Jones spoke at an Austin, Texas rally opposing public health measures to combat COVID-19. Right: Antigovernment protests opposing coronavirus-related restrictions were fierce in Michigan. Heavily armed protesters stormed the state house on April 30, 2020.



orders, intimidating lawmakers. State Sen. Dayna Polehanki, a Democrat who represents the 7th District, posted a tweet from the Michigan State House with a photo, writing: “Directly above me, men with rifles yelling at us. Some of my colleagues who own bullet proof vests are wearing them.”

Two of the men in Polehanki’s photo were Michael and William Null, members of the Wolverine Watchmen militia<sup>85</sup> who were charged on Oct. 8 with providing material support for terrorism. Enraged with Michigan’s coronavirus restrictions, the group and additional individuals conspired to kidnap Gov. Whitmer. Some also discussed kidnapping Virginia’s governor Ralph Northam and burning down the Michigan State House or invading it to “take hostages, execute tyrants, and have it televised.”<sup>86</sup>

The day the men were charged, Sen. Polehanki spoke on the floor of the Michigan State Senate, telling her colleagues:

*Men armed to the teeth stormed our chambers to intimidate us. Today we found out that these threats were real. There was a plan in place to not only scare us, but to kidnap us and kill us.*

*We literally dodged death this time. But what about next time? We may not get a second chance like we have today.*

Although not all antigovernment activity related to the coronavirus has been violent, Polehanki’s words speak to the potential for violence when these groups become angry and agitated. Unfortunately, the lesson learned in Lansing did not prevent an insurrection from unfolding at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 of this year.

Groups who did not plot acts of terrorism still took part in activities dangerous to themselves and others by spreading conspiracies and misinformation about the virus and its transmission, downplaying the pandemic’s severity and disregarding public health guidelines designed to keep people safe. Many antigovernment extremists attended large events, maskless, including stay-at-home protests where they often created an atmosphere of fear by carrying weapons, rallying outside homes and forcing their way into government buildings, all in an attempt to defy the government and its policies.

## THE YEAR IN ANTIGOVERNMENT EXTREMISM



# Opposing Nationwide Protests Against Police Brutality

Fewer antigovernment groups were active in 2020, but we witnessed the mobilization of extremist groups against the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM).

BLM, a nationwide movement aimed at challenging and dismantling the structures of systemic racism, protested the killing of 46-year-old George Floyd, a Minneapolis man who was killed in May by a police officer while being detained on suspicion of buying cigarettes with a fake \$20 bill.

In response to demonstrations in more than 150 cities, antigovernment groups that have historically been at odds with government agencies experienced division when some factions initially came out in support of the demonstrations.

### Early signs of support

In Virginia, the Boogaloo group and militia organization Virginia Knights initially defended the rights of demonstrators to rally for justice. In a Facebook post shared in June, the 20-year-old leader of the group,

A member of the Boogaloo boys marches in Charlotte, North Carolina in May 2020 next to protesters opposing police violence after the murder of George Floyd. Some far right groups initially supported calls for police accountability.

Mike Dunn, shared an image of members taking on the role of security for a Black Lives Matter event in South Boston, Virginia. Dunn expanded on his post by saying: “Protest was a success and wonderfully peaceful! We stood in support of the protest and were blessed many times by the words from the speakers.”

These calls for police accountability also spilled over into the larger Boogaloo movement,<sup>87</sup> a community of far-right antigovernment libertarians who openly call for a second civil war. In an article published by Bellingcat, reporters Robert Evans and Jason Wilson documented<sup>88</sup> the internal struggle within the movement.

In Boise, Idaho, antigovernment activist Ammon Bundy voiced support for BLM rallies, saying in a Facebook live video, “You must have a problem in your mind if you think somehow the Black Lives Matter is more dangerous than the police.” The Bundy family is best known for their ongoing disputes with the Bureau of Land Management that have resulted in high-profile standoffs between federal officers and Bundy family supporters.

The initial outrage over the killing of George Floyd was even evident in some on the far right, but early signs of support quickly turned into disdain





**The heavily armed individuals who flaunted themselves at the protest, calling themselves a ‘civil guard,’ were there for one reason: to menace protesters, to present an unsanctioned show of unregulated force.**

— NEW MEXICO GOVERNOR MICHELLE GRISHAM

as antigovernment paramilitary organizations and others likened BLM – including through conspiracies and disinformation – to the anti-fascist movement, or antifa, a loosely organized network of leftwing activists.

Then-President Trump also weighed in on the ongoing demonstrations, but he focused much of his attention on a handful of violent incidents that occurred near peaceful events. The White House’s response to the social unrest<sup>89</sup> helped shift the antigovernment movement’s posture toward BLM from one of uneasy support to open antagonism. In late May, Trump exacerbated tensions when he published a tweet describing demonstrators in Minneapolis as “thugs” and saying, “When the looting starts, the shooting starts.”

Shortly thereafter, the Oath Keepers militia, a far-right national vigilante group, took to Facebook to issue a statement reading:

*I see some of you conflicted about how to handle what’s going on in the streets of this country. I too was conflicted but let me say this. Maybe you better read that Oath again it said protect the constitution from all enemies foreign and or here’s the part you better read slowly... Domestic ... Once these thugs turned to burning, killing and looting, they became domestic enemies.*

#### **‘An unsanctioned show of unregulated force’**

The Trump administration’s role in portraying BLM demonstrators as “thugs” only encouraged the mobilization of far-right wing extremists. These actors quickly claimed to their supporters that armed citizens were needed in the streets to protect communities from vandalism and destruction. These groups capitalized on the domestic terrorist narrative to justify vigilantism, a role right-wing militias have historically embraced<sup>90</sup> in their attempts to circumvent the law.

This vigilante narrative served as a rallying cry. The Southern Poverty Law Center has noted at least 50 instances where far-right wing extremists showed up to BLM rallies during the summer. One of the most notable encounters occurred in Kenosha, Wisconsin on Aug. 25, when Kyle Rittenhouse, then 17, traveled from Antioch, Illinois to “patrol” the streets, firearm in hand. Police say Rittenhouse shot three people, killing two,<sup>91</sup> after a heated confrontation with BLM demonstrators.

The event in Kenosha wasn’t the only incident involving right-wing militants trying to act as ad hoc law enforcement. In June, members of a group calling itself the New Mexico Civil Guard were arrested after they tried to intervene in a shooting incident in Albuquerque. The group, which claimed they weren’t familiar with the victim or the shooter, were present at the scene brandishing firearms and donning paramilitary attire.

New Mexico Governor Michelle Grisham quickly condemned their actions. She said, “The heavily armed individuals who flaunted themselves at the protest, calling themselves a ‘civil guard,’ were there for one reason: to menace protesters, to present an unsanctioned show of unregulated force.”

On Facebook, antigovernment groups praised the militia activity. After the shooting in Kenosha, Dunn, who had backed the initial BLM cause with his group Virginia Knights, flipped his stance and posted to his page: “No Kyle shouldn’t have been there. Yes he acted in self-defense. No he shouldn’t be a statist (sic). Yes people can change. Kudos to him for not lying down for a beating.”

Chris Hill, leader of the III% Security Force militia, decried the arrests of the New Mexico Civil Guard members and instead tried to push the notion that antigovernment extremists were unjustly being targeted: “You see this shit?...random dude gets beat with skateboard, mob moves in to knock him out, stab him, and he shot the assailant. So, armed militants are the terrorists! This is a coup guys. Think big picture.”

Over the course of 2020, the right wing increasingly turned their ire toward the Black Lives Matter movement as a perceived counterpoint to antifa. Armed militants will likely continue to make their presence felt at future public demonstrations.



## Opposing the Election Results

Antigovernment extremist groups mobilized around the general election in 2020. The antigovernment movement's response mirrored Trump's rhetoric falsely claiming that the election was "stolen."

Many antigovernment groups supported Trump throughout his presidency and continued to do so during the 2020 election and beyond. Many antigovernment groups, including the Oath Keepers, were present at the Capitol insurrection. Some who broke through into the Capitol Building were photographed wearing Oath Keepers merchandise.

The antigovernment movement as a whole tends to oppose the federal government only during Democratic presidencies, with few exceptions. The movement views Trump as a government outsider cleaning up from the inside, shepherding the government back to its "intended" form and purpose. In response, groups have redirected most of their ire toward state and local government officials.

In 2020 specifically, antigovernment groups targeted governors and local public health officials by objecting to coronavirus restrictions and were critical of state and local election officials.

Members of the Oath Keepers were some of the most visible participants in the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol Building on Jan. 6.

In addition to opposing government from the outside, many antigovernment figures now are attempting to run for public office. According to a report by the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights,<sup>92</sup> several leaders from Ammon Bundy's new People's Rights network aim to run for office in an attempt to "become" the government. This group started forming in March 2020, and its membership consists of militia groups, conspiracists, anti-maskers, anti-vaxxers and others from the far right who have united around protesting COVID-19 restrictions. The antigovernment militia group the Oath Keepers also appear to be using this strategy at the local level. In the 2020 election cycle, large numbers and types of extremist-tied candidates ran for office.<sup>93</sup> Marjorie Taylor Greene and Lauren Boebert, both with known affiliations to the antigovernment conspiracy theory QAnon, were elected to U.S. Congress.

Constitutional sheriffs, who form another movement within antigovernment extremism, believe sheriffs are the highest law enforcement authority in the country and have the ability to use their elected positions to defy federal laws they deem unconstitutional. The roots of this ideology stem from the Posse Comitatus and ideas around county supremacy. Evidence of this movement's





**The movement views Trump as a government outsider cleaning up from the inside, shepherding the government back to its “intended” form and purpose. In response, groups have redirected most of their ire toward state and local government officials.**

influence can be seen among county sheriffs who refused to enforce COVID-19 mandates.

A new strain of antigovernment ideology also emerged in 2020 with the Boogaloo movement. The self-identified Boogaloo boys consist mostly of young, white men, who unify around the issue of unrestrained gun rights – they oppose any and all firearm regulations. The Boogaloo movement is primarily defined by their anticipation of a coming civil war. Contrary to most antigovernment groups, the Boogaloo movement was much less supportive of the Trump administration. Many members of the group are explicitly Libertarian. Jo Jorgensen, the Libertarian Party’s presidential candidate, was invited and appeared on a Boogaloo-associated podcast to answer questions from “head admins for some of the most influential pages in the so-called Boogaloo movement.” As the Boogaloo movement continues to gain momentum, we expect it will continue to sway the entire antigovernment movement and its agenda.

Early in the presidential election cycle, baseless claims and disinformation circulated about the inadequacies of vote-by-mail and allegations of voter fraud. As the election approached, these messages continued to spread in the online echo chambers of social media.

Throughout 2020, antigovernment groups engaged in and spread misinformation about then-candidates Joe Biden and Kamala Harris. Typical false narratives focused on unsupported and already disproven accusations of misconduct by both Biden and his son Hunter and the family’s ties to foreign countries. Antigovernment extremists consistently accused Harris of being a socialist and Marxist and predicted that she would take over as president soon after the election.

Oath Keepers claim to defend the Constitution, yet the entire organization is established on a set of baseless conspiracy theories about the federal government working to destroy the liberties of Americans.

The Constitution Party, an antigovernment group, posted a blog on their website that stated, “We may safely assume that she [Harris] is on board with the Democratic/Progressive/Marxist program that will replace our Constitution and make America a totalitarian state.” It went on to say: “If Biden wins the election a discovery will be made about his mental competence... If Biden steps down, the Vice-President-elect becomes President. Say hello to President Harris.”

At the first presidential debate on Sept. 29, Trump encouraged his supporters to watch the polls and called on the far-right group the Proud Boys to “stand back and stand by,” comments some antigovernment groups<sup>94</sup> heard as calls to action.

On Oct. 29, Stewart Rhodes, leader of the militia group the Oath Keepers, appeared on Infowars with Alex Jones, a conspiracy theorist and anti-government extremist, and touted that members of Rhodes’ organization would be at polling locations<sup>95</sup> to “stand up and protect people on Election Day” from anti-Trump left-wing groups.





Pro-Trump protestors gathered in Washington, D.C. in December 2020 to support Donald Trump and overthrow the legitimate results of the November election.

Despite reports and threats by militia groups<sup>96</sup> of showing up at polling locations, these promises largely went unfulfilled, but the effects of potential armed voter intimidation on voter behavior cannot be known fully.

In the days immediately following the election, concerns around ballot counting, calls to “stop the count” and claims of a “stolen” election started spreading throughout all segments of the antigovernment movement, echoing Trump’s accusations, and prompting several protests at ballot-counting locations.<sup>97</sup>

On Nov. 6, two Virginia men, Joshua Macias and Antonio Lamotta, were arrested on weapons charges<sup>98</sup> outside a Philadelphia convention center where votes were being counted. According to prosecutors, their plan was to deliver fake ballots to the location because they were concerned about the ballot-counting implementation. In their vehicle, which was decorated with QAnon decals, police found weapons and hundreds of rounds of ammunition.

On Nov. 10, Stewart Rhodes made another appearance on Infowars,<sup>99</sup> and stated that his group had “men already stationed outside D.C. as a nuclear option in case they attempt to remove the president illegally, we will step in and stop it.” He continued by saying, “We’ll be inside D.C., we’ll also be on the outside of D.C. armed, prepared to go in, if the president calls us up.”

QAnon followers and armed militia members also have attended “protect the vote” and “stop

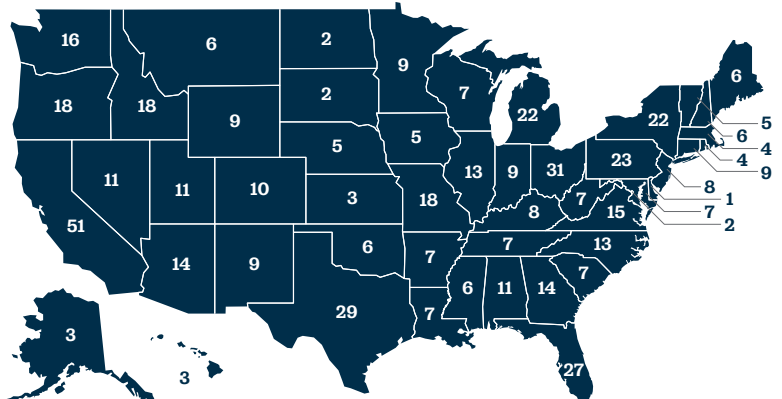
the steal” protests. They also went to the “Million MAGA March” (while law enforcement declined to put an exact number on attendance, it was well below 1 million, and the permit was for just 10,000) that took place in D.C. on Nov 14. Initially, these events largely were organized in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan and Pennsylvania, states where votes still were being counted or where Biden’s victory was narrow. Similar protests now have occurred in numerous states and cities around the country

Antigovernment movement extremists claimed the presidential election was stolen by the Democrats, and Trump’s refusal to concede the election only exacerbated these claims. Many in antigovernment groups suggested Trump should use the 1807 Insurrection Act<sup>100</sup> and refuse to leave office since the Democrats rigged the election.

Given the antigovernment movement’s previous and well-established pattern of undermining trust in public officials and institutions, and especially in light of its belief that the 2020 presidential election was “stolen” and the Biden presidency is illegitimate, the movement is expected to continue engaging in efforts to sow distrust in our democratic systems. Eliciting fears around the idea of a “corrupt” government, intimidating lawmakers and public officials whose policies they oppose and infiltrating political institutions by running for office all are strategies we likely will continue to see from the antigovernment movement.

# Antigovernment Groups in 2020

The Intelligence Project identified 566 extreme antigovernment groups that were active in 2020, down from 576 in 2019. Of these groups, 169 were militias, down from 181 in 2019. The remainder included “common-law” courts, publishers, ministries and citizens’ groups. Generally, such groups engage in conspiracy theorizing, or advocate or adhere to extreme antigovernment doctrines. Listing here does not imply that the groups themselves advocate or engage in violence or other criminal activities or are racist. The list was compiled from field reports, group publications, the internet, law enforcement sources and news reports. It does not document activities that take place only online by individuals or groups, whether on social media, online forums or websites. Groups are identified by the city, county or region where they are located and active. Militia groups are marked with an asterisk.



## ALABAMA (11)

- III% Security Force\***  
Statewide
- III% United Patriots\***  
Statewide
- American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
Statewide
- Constitution Party**  
Montgomery
- Eagle Forum**  
Birmingham
- Freedom Yell**  
Ozark
- John Birch Society**  
Mobile
- LewRockwell.com**  
Auburn
- Medical Kidnap**  
Huntsville
- Oath Keepers**  
Statewide
- United States of America**  
**Republic Government**  
Statewide
- ALASKA (3)**
- Constitution Party**  
Soldotna
- National Assembly**  
Fairbanks
- South Central Patriots**  
Wasilla

## ARIZONA (14)

- III% Arizona Minutemen**  
Phoenix
- III% United Patriots\***  
Statewide
- Arizona Freedom Militia\***  
Mohave County
- Arizona State Militia\***  
Statewide
- Constitution Party**  
Tempe
- Eagle Forum**  
Statewide
- Northern Arizona Militia\***  
Golden Valley
- Oath Keepers**  
Chino Valley
- Pima County  
Statewide
- Riders United for a**  
**Sovereign America, Corp.**  
Tempe
- Southern Arizona Militia\***  
Statewide
- Union of Three Percenter**  
**American Patriots**  
Phoenix
- Veterans on Patrol\***  
Pima County
- ARKANSAS (7)**
- III% United Patriots\***  
Statewide

- American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
Statewide
- Arkansas Defense Force\***  
Statewide
- Constitution Party**  
Fort Smith
- National Assembly**  
Statewide
- Oath Keepers**  
Statewide
- Secure Arkansas**  
Little Rock
- CALIFORNIA (51)**
- III% Defense Militia\***  
Statewide
- III% United Patriots\***  
Sacramento Valley  
Sunnyvale
- American Patriot**  
**Vanguard**  
Statewide
- American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
Statewide
- California State Militia\***  
Bay Area  
Central  
Northern  
Sacramento  
Southeast  
Southern

- California**
- Three Percenters**  
Sanger
- Constitution Club, The**  
Hemet
- Constitution Party**  
San Leandro
- DEMOCRATS AGAINST**  
**U.N. AGENDA 21**  
Santa Rosa
- Eagle Forum**  
Orange County  
Sacramento  
San Diego  
Santa Rosa
- Educate Yourself**  
Costa Mesa
- Foundation, The**  
Walnut
- HISAdvocates.org**  
Costa Mesa
- Jeremiah Films**  
Los Angeles
- Liberty Under Fire**  
Taft
- National Assembly**  
Statewide
- Oath Keepers**  
Anaheim  
Central  
Huntingdon Beach  
Northern

- Victorville
- Outpost of Freedom**  
Los Molinos
- People's Rights**  
Statewide
- Reign of the**  
**Heaven's Society**  
Ontario
- State of Jefferson**  
**Formation**  
Calaveras County  
El Dorado County  
Lassen County  
Mariposa  
Nevada County  
Placer County  
Siskiyou County  
Sonora  
Stanislaus County  
Sutter County  
Tehama County  
Trinity County  
Yuba County
- Tenth Amendment Center**  
Los Angeles
- Three Percenters-**  
**III%ers, The**  
Statewide
- United States**  
**Justice Foundation**  
Ramona
- We Are Change**



### THREE PERCENTERS

Three Percenterism is one of three core components within the antigovernment militia movement, along with the Oath Keepers and traditional militia groups. The movement is largely a loose national network, but does include some organized groups within it. Those involved champion gun rights and resistance to the federal government. The reference to 3% (III%) stems from the dubious historical claim that only 3% of American colonists fought against the British during the Revolutionary War.

### OATH KEEPERS

The Oath Keepers organization was founded in 2009 by Elmer Stewart Rhodes, a veteran army paratrooper, Yale Law School graduate and former Ron Paul congressional staffer. It primarily recruits current and former law enforcement, military and first-responder personnel, though it also accepts civilians. Unlike Three Percenters, Oath Keepers was conceived as an organization with hierarchical leadership at national, state and local levels, one committed to establishing a network of activists it hopes will lay the groundwork for the creation of state militias. Members of the Oath Keepers figured prominently in the Jan. 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol.

### CONSPIRACY PROPAGANDISTS

Organizations like the John Birch Society, World Net Daily and InfoWars are crucial to the antigovernment extremist movement in that they help craft and nurture the very conspiracy theories that animate the movement's activists. These conspiracy theories identify grievances, both real and imagined, and demonize groups they deem responsible for them. Conspiracy propagandists often stop just short of offering a solution to the threats, instead leaving action up to movement members while being careful to maintain plausible deniability. These conspiracy theories generate a sense of urgency in the antigovernment Patriot movement that can lead to criminal activity, including terrorism.

Fresno  
San Francisco  
**COLORADO (10)**  
**III% United Patriots\***  
Statewide  
**American Freedom Network**  
Johnstown  
**American Patriots Three Percent\***  
Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
Arvada  
**Faith Education Commerce (FEC United)**  
Colorado Springs  
Parker  
**Freedom First Society**  
Colorado Springs  
**Team Law**  
Grand Junction  
**We are Change**  
Denver  
Walsenburg  
**CONNECTICUT (9)**  
**American Patriots Three Percent**  
Statewide  
**American States Assembly, The**  
Hamden  
**Connecticut Militia Three Percent\***  
Statewide  
**Connecticut Minutemen\***  
Meriden  
**John Birch Society**  
Norwich  
**Oath Keepers\***  
Hartford  
**Post and Email, The**  
Canterbury  
**Three Percent-III%ers, The\***  
Hartford County  
**We Are Change**  
New Haven County  
**DELAWARE (1)**  
**First State Pathfinders\***  
Odessa  
**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (2)**  
**Renew America**  
Washington  
**WorldNetDaily**  
Washington  
**FLORIDA (27)**  
**III% United Patriots\***  
Statewide  
**American Patriots Three Percent**

Statewide  
**American States Assembly, The**  
Atlantic Beach  
**Constitution Party**  
The Villages  
**Florida Militia\***  
Central  
Northeast  
Northwest  
Southern  
**John Birch Society**  
Statewide  
**Freedom Law School**  
Spring Hill  
**KrisAnne Hall**  
Wellborn  
**Liberty First University**  
Wellborn  
**National Assembly**  
Statewide  
**Now the End Begins**  
Jacksonville  
**Oath Keepers**  
Gainesville  
Statewide  
**People's Rights**  
Statewide  
**Redpill Roadshow**  
Cape Coral  
**Reign of the Heavens Society**  
Statewide  
**Sarasota Patriots**  
Sarasota  
**Statewide Common Law Grand Jury**  
Arcadia  
**Uncle Sam's Misguided Children**  
Sarasota  
**We Are Change**  
Daytona Beach  
Orlando  
Tampa  
West Palm Beach  
**Wild Bill for America**  
South Daytona  
**GEORGIA (14)**  
**III% Security Force\***  
Statewide  
**III% United Patriots\***  
Statewide  
**American Patriots Three Percent**  
Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
Woodstock  
**Discount Book Distributors/The**

**Patriot Depot**  
Powder Springs  
**Freedom Fighter Radio**  
Evans  
**Georgia Three Percent Martyrs\***  
Bremen  
**John Birch Society**  
Lamar County  
Statewide  
**Moorish Science Temple of America 1928, The**  
Lithonia  
**Oath Keepers**  
Adairsville  
Bulloch County  
Statewide  
**Sovereign Filing Solutions**  
Lake City  
**HAWAII (3)**  
**American States Assembly, The**  
Statewide  
**Circle of Sovereigns**  
Statewide  
**Three Percenters-III%ers, The**  
Statewide  
**IDAHO (18)**  
**American Patriots Three Percent**  
Statewide  
**AVOW (Another Voice of Warning)**  
Rigby  
**Constitution Party**  
Coeur d'Alene  
**John Birch Society**  
Preston  
**Light Foot Militia**  
Canyon County  
Meridian\*  
Kootenai County\*  
**Micro Effect, The**  
Kamiah  
**Oath Keepers**  
Boundary County  
Kootenai County  
Statewide  
**People for Constitutional Freedom (P4CF)**  
Emmett  
**People's Rights**  
Coeur d'Alene  
Emmett  
**Political Prisoner Project**  
Boise  
**Real Three Percenters**  
**Idaho, The\***  
Statewide



**Redoubt News**  
 Priest River  
**Voice of Idaho, The**  
 Boise  
**ILLINOIS (13)**  
**III% United Patriots\***  
 Statewide  
**American Revolution 2.0**  
 Naperville  
**Connecting the Dots**  
 Chicago  
**Constitution Party**  
 DuPage County  
 Metropolis  
**Eagle Forum**  
 Alton  
**Illinois Sons of Liberty**  
 Statewide  
**Next News Network**  
 Northbrook  
**Oath Keepers**  
 Woodstock  
**Overpasses for America**  
 Statewide  
**United States of America**  
**Republic Government**  
 Chicago  
**We Are Change**  
 Chicago  
 Rockford

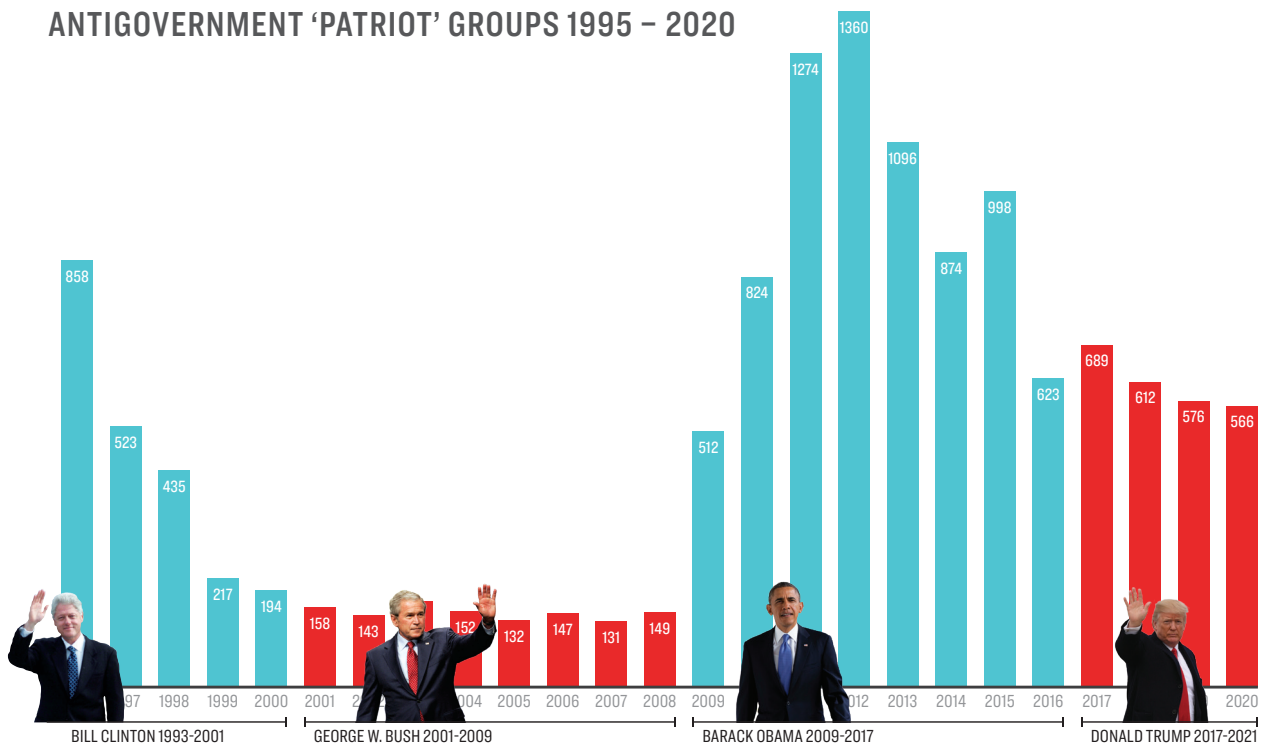
**INDIANA (9)**  
**III% United Patriots\***  
 Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
 Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
 Evansville  
**Indiana Citizens**  
**Volunteer Militia\***  
 Statewide  
**Oath Keepers**  
 Elkhart  
 Westfield\*  
**United States of America**  
**Republic Government**  
 Merrillville  
**We Are Change**  
 Charlestown  
**What Really Happened**  
 Santa Claus  
**IOWA (5)**  
**III% United Patriots\***  
 Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
 Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
 Pleasant Hill  
**Iowa Patriots III%\***

Des Moines  
**Oath Keepers**  
 Statewide  
**KANSAS (3)**  
**III% United Patriots\***  
 Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
 Statewide  
**Prophecy Club**  
**Resources, The**  
 Topeka  
**KENTUCKY (8)**  
**III% Security Force\***  
 Statewide  
**III% United Patriots\***  
 Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
 Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
 Lexington  
**National Patriot**  
**Defense Team\***  
 Statewide  
**Oath Keepers**  
 Statewide  
**Tea Party of Kentucky**  
 Louisville  
**Three Percenters-**

**III%ers, The**  
 Louisville  
**LOUISIANA (7)**  
**III% United Patriots**  
 Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
 Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
 Eunice  
**Empire Washitaw de**  
**Dugdahmoundyah**  
 Richwood  
**Oath Keepers**  
 Central  
 Statewide  
**Three Percenters-**  
**III%ers, The**  
 Avoyelles Parish  
**MAINE (6)**  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
 Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
 Kennebunk  
**Maine Militia\***  
 Belfast  
**Maine Volunteer**  
**Responders**  
 Gardiner

**Three Percenters-**  
**III%ers, The\***  
 Piscataquis County  
**We Are Change**  
 Bangor  
**MARYLAND (7)**  
**III% United Patriots\***  
 Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent\***  
 White Marsh  
**America's Survival, Inc**  
 Owings  
**Constitution Party**  
 Rockville  
**Institute on the**  
**Constitution (aka**  
**American View), The**  
 Pasadena  
**March to Exodus**  
 Elkton  
**My Brother's Threepeers\***  
 Smithsburg  
**MASSACHUSETTS (4)**  
**III% United Patriots\***  
 Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
 Statewide  
**Constitution Party**

## ANTIGOVERNMENT 'PATRIOT' GROUPS 1995 - 2020



|                                  |                                 |                               |                                |                                  |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Statewide                        | <b>Constitution Party</b>       | <b>Three Percent</b>          | <b>NEW JERSEY (8)</b>          | <b>National Liberty Alliance</b> |
| <b>Oath Keepers</b>              | Redwood Falls                   | Statewide                     | <b>American Patriots</b>       | Hyde Park                        |
| Ware                             | <b>John Birch Society</b>       | <b>John Birch Society</b>     | <b>Three Percent*</b>          | <b>New York Militia TM*</b>      |
| <b>MICHIGAN (22)</b>             | Lake Benton                     | Great Falls                   | Statewide                      | Albany County                    |
| <b>American Patriot Council</b>  | <b>Oath Keepers*</b>            | <b>Oath Keepers</b>           | <b>Constitution Party</b>      | Statewide                        |
| Statewide                        | Hennepin County                 | Statewide                     | Palmyra                        | <b>New York Watchmen*</b>        |
| <b>American Patriots</b>         | <b>Three Percenters-</b>        | <b>People's Rights</b>        | <b>John Birch Society</b>      | Buffalo                          |
| <b>Three Percent</b>             | <b>III%ers, The*</b>            | Kalispell                     | Statewide                      | <b>Oath Keepers</b>              |
| Statewide                        | Crow Wing County                | <b>Stand Up America</b>       | <b>National Assembly</b>       | Albany                           |
| <b>American States</b>           | <b>We Are Change</b>            | Bigfork                       | Jersey City                    | Columbia County*                 |
| <b>Assembly, The</b>             | Statewide                       | <b>NEBRASKA (5)</b>           | <b>Oath Keepers*</b>           | Herkimer                         |
| Grand Rapids                     | <b>MISSISSIPPI (6)</b>          | <b>III% United Patriots*</b>  | Bergen County                  | Long Island                      |
| <b>Constitution Party</b>        | <b>American Patriots</b>        | Comstock                      | Cape May County                | Orange County                    |
| Grand Rapids                     | <b>Three Percent</b>            | <b>American Patriots</b>      | Statewide                      | Statewide*                       |
| <b>American Constitutional</b>   | Statewide                       | <b>Three Percent</b>          | <b>R.V. Bey Publications</b>   | <b>Sisters of Liberty*</b>       |
| <b>Elites*</b>                   | <b>Citizens Militia</b>         | Statewide                     | Pleasantville                  | Norwich                          |
| Muskegon                         | <b>of Mississippi</b>           | <b>Constitution Party</b>     | <b>NEW MEXICO (9)</b>          | <b>Three Percenters-</b>         |
| <b>Capitol City Militia*</b>     | Statewide                       | Lincoln                       | <b>III% United Patriots*</b>   | <b>III%ers, The*</b>             |
| Statewide                        | <b>Constitution Party</b>       | <b>Free Inhabitant</b>        | Statewide                      | Herkimer County                  |
| <b>Genesee County</b>            | Newton County                   | Omaha                         | <b>American Patriots</b>       | <b>We Are Change</b>             |
| <b>Volunteer Militia*</b>        | Seminary                        | <b>Oath Keepers*</b>          | <b>of New Mexico</b>           | New York                         |
| Genesee County                   | <b>Oath Keepers*</b>            | Statewide                     | Statewide                      | <b>NORTH CAROLINA (13)</b>       |
| <b>III% United Patriots*</b>     | Statewide                       | <b>NEVADA (11)</b>            | <b>American Patriots</b>       | <b>III% United Patriots</b>      |
| Statewide                        | <b>Watchmen of America</b>      | <b>III% United Patriots*</b>  | <b>Three Percent</b>           | Guilford County                  |
| <b>Michigan Home Guard*</b>      | Statewide                       | Statewide                     | Statewide                      | Statewide                        |
| Statewide                        | <b>MISSOURI (18)</b>            | <b>American Patriots</b>      | <b>American States</b>         | <b>America's Remedy</b>          |
| <b>Michigan Liberty Militia*</b> | <b>III% United Patriots</b>     | <b>Three Percent</b>          | <b>Assembly, The</b>           | Charlotte                        |
| Barry County                     | Statewide                       | Statewide                     | Statewide                      | <b>American Patriots</b>         |
| <b>Michigan Militia</b>          | <b>2nd Amendment</b>            | <b>Constitution Party</b>     | <b>Constitution Party</b>      | <b>Three Percent</b>             |
| <b>Corps Wolverines*</b>         | <b>Patches.com</b>              | Las Vegas                     | Albuquerque                    | Statewide                        |
| Statewide                        | Halltown                        | <b>Eagle Forum</b>            | <b>New Mexico Civil Guard*</b> | <b>Camp Constitution</b>         |
| <b>Michigan People's</b>         | <b>American Patriots</b>        | Elko                          | Doña Ana County                | Charlotte                        |
| <b>Reactionary Force*</b>        | <b>Three Percent</b>            | <b>Oath Keepers</b>           | Bernalillo County              | <b>Constitution Party</b>        |
| Genesee County                   | Statewide                       | Las Vegas*                    | Curry County                   | Charlotte                        |
| <b>Northwest Lower</b>           | <b>Constitution Party</b>       | Statewide                     | <b>Three Percenters-</b>       | <b>Free North Carolina</b>       |
| <b>Michigan Civil Defense*</b>   | Cole County                     | <b>People's Rights</b>        | <b>III%ers, The</b>            | Cape Carteret                    |
| Statewide                        | Piedmont                        | Statewide                     | Statewide                      | <b>National Assembly</b>         |
| <b>Oath Keepers*</b>             | Pulaski County                  | <b>Three Percenters-</b>      | <b>NEW YORK (22)</b>           | Statewide                        |
| Statewide                        | Randolph County                 | <b>III%ers, The</b>           | <b>American Patriots</b>       | <b>North Carolina Light</b>      |
| <b>Southeast Michigan</b>        | St. Charles County              | Statewide                     | <b>Three Percenter*</b>        | <b>Foot Militia</b>              |
| <b>Volunteer Militia</b>         | <b>Eagle Forum</b>              | <b>We Are Change</b>          | Statewide                      | Statewide                        |
| Genesee County                   | Statewide                       | Las Vegas                     | <b>Constitution Party</b>      | <b>NORTH-CAROLINA</b>            |
| Lapeer County*                   | <b>Missouri Militia</b>         | Reno                          | Buffalo                        | <b>American Republic</b>         |
| Livingston*                      | Joplin*                         | <b>West Coast Patriots</b>    | <b>Corporate Freedom Group</b> | Charlotte                        |
| Macomb County*                   | Kansas City*                    | Statewide                     | Buffalo                        | <b>Oath Keepers</b>              |
| Oakland County*                  | Rolla                           | <b>NEW HAMPSHIRE (6)</b>      | <b>Creditors Debtors</b>       | Columbus County                  |
| St. Clair County*                | St. Joseph*                     | <b>III% United Patriots*</b>  | <b>Contracts in Commerce</b>   | Statewide                        |
| Statewide*                       | Springfield*                    | Statewide                     | <b>(CDCIC)</b>                 | <b>Stokes County Militia*</b>    |
| <b>Wolverine Watchmen*</b>       | <b>Oath Keepers</b>             | <b>American Patriots</b>      | Statewide                      | King                             |
| Statewide                        | St. Louis*                      | <b>Three Percent*</b>         | <b>Gun Owners of America</b>   | <b>NORTH DAKOTA (2)</b>          |
| <b>MINNESOTA (9)</b>             | Statewide                       | Statewide                     | Rochester                      | <b>Constitution Party</b>        |
| <b>III% United Patriots*</b>     | <b>People's Rights</b>          | <b>Constitution Party</b>     | <b>John Birch Society</b>      | Bismarck                         |
| Rice County                      | Statewide                       | Auburn                        | Saratoga Springs               | <b>We Are Change</b>             |
| Statewide                        | <b>United States of America</b> | <b>New England Minutemen*</b> | <b>Liberty State Militia*</b>  | Statewide                        |
| <b>American Patriots</b>         | <b>Republic Government</b>      | Statewide                     | Chenango County                | <b>OHIO (31)</b>                 |
| <b>Three Percent</b>             | St. Louis                       | <b>Oath Keepers</b>           | <b>Long Island Mutual</b>      | <b>III% United Patriots*</b>     |
| Statewide                        | <b>MONTANA (6)</b>              | Alstead                       | <b>Assistance Group</b>        | Statewide                        |
| <b>Central Minnesota</b>         | <b>III% United Patriots</b>     | <b>Patriot Mutual</b>         | Nassau County                  | <b>American</b>                  |
| <b>Tea Party</b>                 | Statewide                       | <b>Assistance Group*</b>      | <b>Madison's Militia</b>       | <b>Constitutional Elites*</b>    |
| Saint Cloud                      | <b>American Patriots</b>        | Rindge                        | New Lebanon                    | Marietta                         |

|                                |                                |                               |                                 |                              |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>American Patriots</b>       | <b>Patriot Shit Outfitters</b> | <b>Assembly, The</b>          | <b>Three Percent*</b>           | <b>Pennsylvania</b>          |
| <b>Three Percent*</b>          | Bethel                         | Statewide                     | Statewide                       | <b>State Militia*</b>        |
| Statewide                      | <b>Patriot Watch Media</b>     | <b>Constitution Party</b>     | <b>Berks County Patriots</b>    | Statewide                    |
| <b>Constitution Party</b>      | Louisville                     | Grants Pass                   | Blandon                         | <b>Three Percent</b>         |
| New Lebanon                    | <b>Reapers Constitutional</b>  | <b>Embassy of Heaven</b>      | <b>Carlisle Light Infantry*</b> | <b>Liberty Defenders*</b>    |
| <b>Frontiersmen, The*</b>      | <b>Militia of Ohio*</b>        | Stayton                       | Carlisle                        | Statewide                    |
| Ravenna                        | Cortland                       | <b>Freedom Bound</b>          | <b>Civilian Defense Force*</b>  | <b>Three Percenters</b>      |
| <b>Heartland Defenders</b>     | <b>Silver Shield Xchange</b>   | <b>International</b>          | Fayette County                  | <b>Original, The</b>         |
| Statewide                      | Cleveland                      | Klamath Falls                 | <b>Constitution Party</b>       | Northumberland County        |
| <b>Irregulars of Ohio</b>      | <b>Southern Ohio</b>           | <b>Freedom From</b>           | Lancaster                       | <b>We Are Change</b>         |
| <b>Reserve Militia*</b>        | <b>Outdoorsmen</b>             | <b>Government</b>             | Statewide                       | Statewide                    |
| Statewide                      | Peebles                        | Newberg                       | <b>Eastern Pennsylvania</b>     | <b>RHODE ISLAND (4)</b>      |
| <b>John Birch Society</b>      | <b>Threeper Tactical</b>       | <b>News With Views</b>        | <b>Regional Militia*</b>        | <b>Oath Keepers</b>          |
| Statewide                      | <b>Training, LLC</b>           | Merlin                        | Wyomissing                      | North Kingstown              |
| <b>Last Militia, The</b>       | Massillon                      | <b>Oath Keepers</b>           | <b>Emergency Non-Profit</b>     | <b>Rhode Island Patriots</b> |
| Allen County*                  | <b>West Ohio Minutemen*</b>    | Portland                      | <b>Assisting Communities</b>    | Statewide                    |
| Butler County*                 | Lima                           | <b>Oregon State</b>           | <b>Together (ENACT)*</b>        | <b>Rise of the Moors</b>     |
| Clark County*                  | <b>OKLAHOMA (6)</b>            | <b>Jural Assembly</b>         | Dauphin                         | Pawtucket                    |
| Hamilton County*               | <b>III% United Patriots*</b>   | Beaverton                     | <b>Freedom Patriot</b>          | <b>TruthRadioShow.com</b>    |
| Montgomery County*             | Statewide                      | <b>People's Rights</b>        | <b>Defenders*</b>               | Providence                   |
| Preble County                  | <b>American Patriots</b>       | Statewide                     | Statewide                       | <b>SOUTH CAROLINA (7)</b>    |
| Summit County*                 | <b>Three Percent*</b>          | <b>State of Jefferson</b>     | <b>Gun Owners of America</b>    | <b>III% United Patriots*</b> |
| <b>National Assembly</b>       | Statewide                      | <b>Formation</b>              | Harrisburg                      | Statewide                    |
| Loveland                       | <b>Constitution Party</b>      | Coos County                   | <b>Iron City CRU (Citizen</b>   | <b>American Patriots</b>     |
| <b>North East Ohio</b>         | Chandler                       | Curry County                  | <b>Response Unit)*</b>          | <b>Three Percent</b>         |
| <b>Woodsmen*</b>               | <b>Cowboys Motorcycle</b>      | Douglas County                | Pittsburgh                      | Statewide                    |
| East Rochester                 | <b>Club*</b>                   | Harney County                 | <b>Maulitia Bikers MC</b>       | <b>Christian Exodus</b>      |
| <b>Oath Keepers</b>            | Tulsa                          | Jackson County                | Dauphin                         | Fort Mill                    |
| Statewide                      | <b>New Sons of Liberty*</b>    | Klamath County                | <b>Oath Keepers*</b>            | <b>Constitution Party</b>    |
| <b>Ohio Defense Force</b>      | McCloud                        | <b>Timber Unity*</b>          | Statewide                       | Taylors                      |
| <b>Home Guard*</b>             | <b>Oath Keepers</b>            | Statewide                     | <b>Pennsylvania</b>             | <b>John Birch Society</b>    |
| Cleveland                      | Oklaohoma City                 | <b>PENNSYLVANIA (23)</b>      | <b>Homeland Shield*</b>         | Statewide                    |
| New Lexington                  | <b>OREGON (18)</b>             | <b>III% United Patriots*</b>  | Clarksburg                      | <b>Light Foot Militia*</b>   |
| Toledo                         | <b>American Patriot Party</b>  | Statewide                     | <b>Pennsylvania</b>             | Horry County                 |
| Zanesville                     | Ashland                        | <b>A.R.M.E.D. Riding Club</b> | <b>Oath Keepers*</b>            | <b>South Carolina Light</b>  |
| <b>Ohio Militiamen*</b>        | <b>American Patriots</b>       | Statewide                     | Statewide                       | <b>Foot Militia Special</b>  |
| Statewide                      | <b>Three Percent</b>           | <b>Alt-Market.com</b>         | <b>Pennsylvania</b>             | <b>Response Team*</b>        |
| <b>Ohio Minutemen Militia*</b> | Statewide                      | Pittsburgh                    | <b>Patriots United</b>          | Bishopville                  |
| Oak Harbor                     | <b>American States</b>         | <b>American Patriots</b>      | Oley                            | <b>SOUTH DAKOTA (2)</b>      |

**TOP TAKEAWAYS** COVID-19, Black Lives Matter demonstrations and the 2020 elections have contributed to increased activity of paramilitary groups, as well as growth in related movements like Boogaloo and the elaborate antigovernment conspiracy theory known as QAnon.

Protests against public safety measures in the pandemic created opportunities for crossover with a variety of right-wing extremist groups including militia, Boogaloo, QAnon, Proud Boys and Oath Keepers.

**KEY MOMENTS** An antigovernment rally in Richmond in January 2020 brought together extreme antigovernment militia groups alongside other 2nd Amendment absolutists.

On April 30, antigovernment protesters stormed the Michigan statehouse, many of them armed. Brothers William and Michael Null, members of the Wolverine Watchmen militia, were there. On Oct. 8, the brothers were charged with terrorist acts for their alleged participation in a plot to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, because of the guidelines enacted in response to the pandemic.

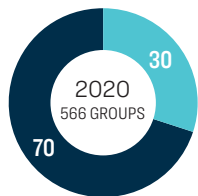
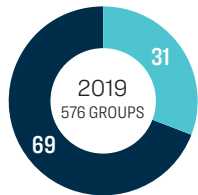
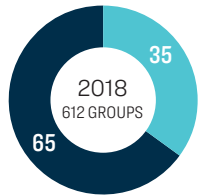
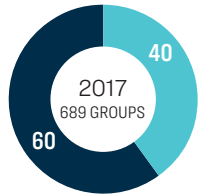
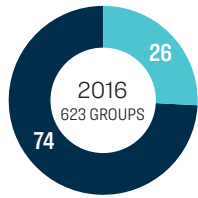
In late August, militias came out to counter Black Lives Matter demonstrations in Kenosha. On Aug. 25, police say 17-year-old Kyle Rittenhouse shot three people, killing two. He claimed he was there to keep the peace. He's received an outpouring of support from the far right.

After the presidential election, antigovernment groups rallied behind President Trump. Following his false claims of election fraud, they mobilized in places like Georgia and Washington D.C., with "Stop the Steal" events.

**WHAT'S AHEAD** After the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, antigovernment groups are facing increased scrutiny from law enforcement. Many of those who broke into the U.S. Capitol Building are facing criminal charges. Despite that, their opposition to the Biden administration and their false claims that the election was stolen are likely to continue.

The QAnon conspiracy theory, many followers of which participated in the insurrection, is continuing to spread.

# ANTIGOVERNMENT 'PATRIOT' GROUPS IN PERCENTAGES



■ MILITIA GROUPS  
■ OTHER PATRIOT GROUPS

The overall number of antigovernment "Patriot" groups has dropped by more than half since peaking in 2012 with 1,360 groups. Militias are Patriot groups that actively engage in military-style training. They are shown in the chart above as a percentage of the movement each year from 2016 to 2020.

**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
Sioux Falls  
**TENNESSEE (7)**  
**American Patriot Vanguard**  
Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
Statewide  
**Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association**  
Nashville  
**East Tennessee Mountain Militia\***  
Knoxville  
**John Birch Society**  
Statewide  
**Oath Keepers**  
Statewide  
**We Are Change**  
Knoxville  
**TEXAS (29)**  
**III% United Patriots**  
Statewide  
**Alamo Militia\***  
San Antonio  
**American Patriot Union, The**  
San Antonio  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent\***  
Statewide  
**Cold Dead Hands**  
**2nd Amendment Advocacy Group**  
Greenville  
**Constitution Party**  
Iredell  
**Constitution Society**  
Austin  
**Defense Distributed**  
Austin  
**Freedom School**  
Austin  
**Golden Triangle Militia\***  
Orange  
**InfoWars**  
Austin  
**John Birch Society**  
Houston  
Statewide  
**Oath Keepers**  
Afton  
Eastern  
Fort Worth  
Grayson County

Hood County  
Quitman  
Statewide\*  
Temple  
**Republic Broadcasting**  
Round Rock  
**Rule of Law Radio**  
Austin  
**Silver Bear Café**  
Garland  
**Texans4Truth**  
Georgetown  
**Texas Eagle Forum**  
Dallas  
**Texas State Militia\***  
Austin  
Houston  
**This is Texas Freedom Force\***  
Statewide  
**UTAH (11)**  
**III% United Patriots\***  
Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
Bountiful  
**Eagle Forum**  
South Jordan  
**Freedom Rising Son**  
Logan  
**Liberty RoundTable**  
American Fork  
**National Assembly**  
Statewide  
**Oath Keepers**  
Statewide  
**People's Rights**  
Statewide  
**Utah Constitutional Militia**  
Salt Lake City  
**We Are Change**  
Salt Lake City  
**VERMONT (5)**  
**Three Percenters-III%ers, The\***  
Orange County  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
Williston  
**Green Mountain Militia\***  
Statewide  
**Oath Keepers**  
Randolph  
**VIRGINIA (15)**  
**III% United Patriots\***

Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
Statewide  
**American Policy Center**  
Warrenton  
**Constitution Party**  
Newport News  
**Constitutional Rights PAC**  
McLean  
**Gun Owners of America**  
Springfield  
**New Virginia Militia\***  
Statewide  
**Oath Keepers**  
Bedford  
Northeast  
Northwest  
Southeast  
Southwest  
Statewide  
**Virginia Knights\***  
Statewide  
**We Are Change**  
Blacksburg  
**WASHINGTON (16)**  
**III% United Patriots**  
Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
Statewide  
**American States Assembly, The**  
Statewide  
**Black Horse Militia**  
Seattle  
**Center for Self Governance**  
Republic  
**Citizen Review Online**  
Sequim  
**Constitution Party**  
Spokane Valley  
**John Birch Society**  
Snohomish County  
**Light Foot Militia**  
Grant County  
Spokane County\*  
**North Western Research Institute**  
Statewide  
**Oath Keepers**  
Newport  
Statewide  
**People's Rights**  
Statewide  
**Three Percent of Washington\***  
Statewide  
**We Are Change**

Spokane  
**WEST VIRGINIA (7)**  
**III% United Patriots\***  
Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
Weston  
**National Constitutional Coalition of Patriotic Americans**  
Bridgeport  
**Oath Keepers**  
Statewide  
Eastern\*  
**Ohio Valley Minutemen Citizen's Volunteer Militia\***  
Charleston  
**WISCONSIN (7)**  
**III% United Patriots\***  
Statewide  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
Milwaukee  
**John Birch Society**  
Appleton  
**Oath Keepers\***  
Statewide  
**Republic for the united States of America**  
Statewide  
**United States of America Republic Government**  
Milwaukee  
**WYOMING (9)**  
**Natural News**  
Cody  
**American Patriots**  
**Three Percent**  
Statewide  
**Constitution Party**  
Riverton  
**III% United Patriots**  
Statewide  
**Oath Keepers**  
Cody\*  
Northeast  
Northwest  
Southeast  
Southwest

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