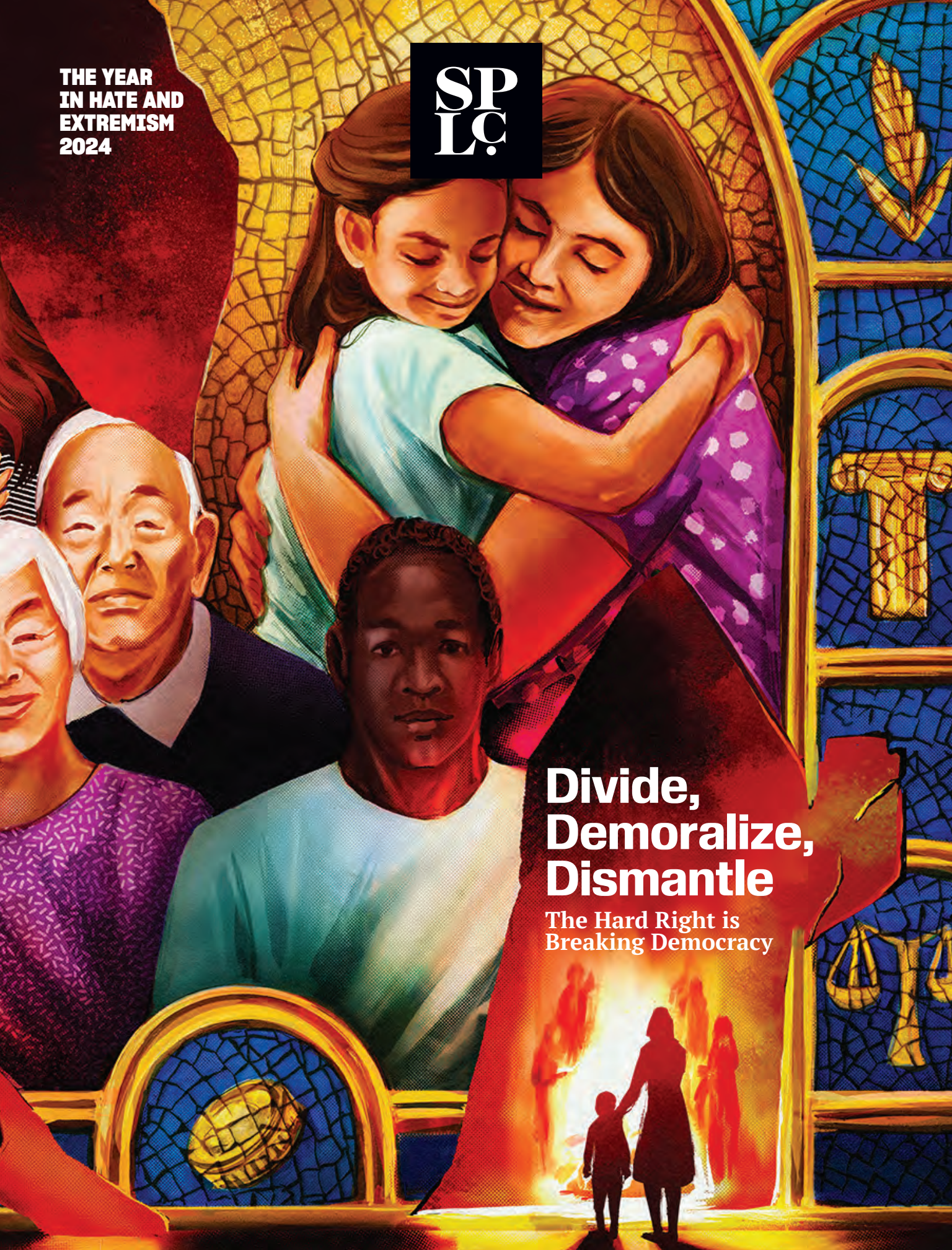


**THE YEAR
IN HATE AND
EXTREMISM
2024**

**SP
LC**

Divide, Demoralize, Dismantle

**The Hard Right is
Breaking Democracy**



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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Director's Note

Remember, Focus, Hope

In 2024, the Southern Poverty Law Center documented 1,371 hate and antigovernment extremist groups across the United States. These groups use a range of tactics. There are those that manipulate our political system, while others use violence and propaganda, and some take advantage of online platforms. All of these tactics are part of a larger effort to build strategies and training infrastructure to divide the country, demoralize people and dismantle democracy.

Equipped with comprehensive data and research, the SPLC's preeminent *Year in Hate and Extremism* report once again provides a clear analysis of the groups upholding white supremacy in the United States: who they are, where they are, and the tactics and strategies they're using. This report also covers the anti-democracy trends to monitor on the ground in communities and the formulas for prevention that can shape our collective future.

The groups and leaders featured in the report make up the hard-right movement that has long been behind rhetoric and actions that target Black people, women, immigrants, Jewish people, Muslims, and low-income, Indigenous and LGBTQ+ people.

In 2024, many hate and antigovernment groups attacked bedrock anti-discrimination efforts by railing against diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, or DEI. Some actors used threats of violence, creating chaos that opened the door for political strongmen and authoritarian measures. Local communities faced militia organizing and the use of the internet to spread hate and conspiracies. Highly financed national right-wing advocacy organizations courted politicians and championed male supremacist thinking. And the fear of "white genocide" made its way into broader swaths of the right.

Their power comes from the use of force, the capture of political parties and government, and infesting the mainstream discourse with conspiracy theories. We hope this report not only exposes the responsible parties and people but helps reverse the momentum of the hard right by empowering our readers and inspiring you to action. When the problem is overwhelming, it can seem like there's no clear path forward. But by breaking down the players, tactics and code words, our own strategy can emerge.

SPLC President and CEO Margaret Huang recently offered hope and encouragement to people involved in the civil and human rights movement as we deal with the consequences of a year of hate and extremism. It is a perfect counter to the hard right's effort to divide, demoralize and dismantle democracy. Margaret's advice is that we must remember, focus and hope. If we can remember who we fight for — disenfranchised, exploited and scapegoated communities — it will be worth the fight. If we focus on the long term, justice and democracy will prevail. And if we find hope and joy with each other in the everyday, we will survive and thrive. ●

Remember, Focus, Hope.

In Solidarity,



Rachel Carroll Rivas

Interim Director, Intelligence Project
Southern Poverty Law Center

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The False Fear of 'White Genocide'

By **Caleb Kieffer,**
R.G. Cravens, Hannah Gais
and **Rachel Carroll Rivas**



In 2024, one of the most influential anti-LGBTQ+ hate groups, the Family Research Council (FRC), focused its animus on immigrants, pushing what were once considered fringe, racist beliefs into mainstream political narratives. Not surprisingly, much of the rhetoric and conspiracy theories about immigrants mirrored what was said during the 2024 elections by candidates, social media provocateurs and other hate groups, and veered directly into white supremacist ideology.

The focus on immigration is hardly off-message for an anti-LGBTQ+ hate group. The anti-LGBTQ+ movement has a long political history of association with the white supremacist movement, including FRC leader Tony Perkins. He was the campaign manager for a 1996 U.S. Senate campaign that contracted with a company that David Duke had a financial interest in at Duke's suggestion to the campaign; the campaign later tried to hide that it had hired the company, according to an FEC investigation, and denied contemporaneously knowing about Duke's financial interest. Perkins also spoke to a Louisiana chapter of the Council of Conservative Citizens. Like people who make up the LGBTQ+ community, immigrants are a threat to FRC's vision for an America that is Christian, white and patriarchal.

FRC's 2024 immigration focus

Researchers at the Southern Poverty Law Center reviewed archives for The Washington Stand, an online publication associated with FRC, and found that the site published nearly 150 articles on immigration topics throughout 2024, including an article arguing that Democrats "import" non-white immigrants. Speakers at FRC's annual summit, Pray Vote Stand, said that the time may come to "breed them out" when discussing immigrants.

"Actually, immigration is not compassionate. Do you know that the immigration services have lost between 30,000 and 300,000 unaccompanied migrant children that are probably somewhere in the seedy underbellies of the trafficking world of this country?" Katy Faust, head of the anti-

Figures to Know



Tony Perkins
President of Family Research Council. FRC often makes false claims about the LGBTQ+ community based on discredited research and junk science.



Katy Faust
Head of the anti-LGBTQ+ hate group "Them Before Us"

LGBTQ+ hate group Them Before Us, told attendees at Pray Vote Stand in early October 2024.

In her comments, she echoed an assertion that President Donald Trump and others have made regarding missing migrant children; experts told CBS News that the assertion distorts facts.

"We need to shut the border for the sake of children. You need to know more about this than everyone else. And then finally, if all else fails, we need to breed them out. Have more babies and raise them up," Faust continued.

Faust's final point is a transparent nod to white-extinction conspiracy theories such as the "great replacement" or "white genocide" that have long animated white nationalist, neo-Nazi and other white supremacist groups. These paranoid narratives are explicitly white supremacist and present white-majority countries as under attack from a cadre of elites, often Jewish people, who are "replacing" or "genociding" whites through encouraging immigration and declining birth rates.

Different wings of the right have used various terms to expound on their belief that white Christian culture is under threat, including "great replacement," "birth dearth" and/or "demographic crisis."

Some in the anti-LGBTQ+ movement have long framed their arguments for institutionalized homophobia and transphobia around anxieties related to perceived demographic displacement. They argue that immigrants, as well as the LGBTQ+ community, pose a potent threat to what they believe to be the real America — that is, one that is Christian, white, patriarchal and sustained through reproduction. The movement's focus on stoking fears around immigration also mirrors broader trends among the American right. And for the FRC especially, it feeds into the culture war and a decline in what they perceive as heteronormative values.

Merging of anti-immigration and anti-LGBTQ+ activism with fear of demographic displacement

"We've lost the culture war ... and we are a post-Christian country now," Andrew Brunson, a pastor, said while on stage with FRC President Tony Perkins during Pray Vote Stand. "And I think we're going to have to have a shift in our perspective to where we learn how to live as a despised minority [in the United States]."

Changing birth rates is among the cultural shifts that FRC and other related right-wing

organizations have pointed to as indicative of this "culture war" loss.

"The crisis in fertility for virtually every developed nation is a kind of condensation or a distillation of other cultural indicators," Jay W. Richards, a senior research fellow and director at the Heritage Foundation, said during a May 2024 panel on religious beliefs and fertility rates.

"Why is this a threat? Well, it's a threat primarily because it reflects a decline in the stable married families that are the fundamental cell of civilization," Richards continued. At the same time, he criticized seeing fertility as a "mere abstraction" and stated that "we want children born in a particular context," seeming to refer to heteronormative families.

FRC, which was one of more than 100 organizations to partner with the Heritage Foundation in shaping Project 2025, and its affiliates have leveled similar criticisms related to birth rates and the decline in Christian culture.

Faust, of Them Before Us, appeared on an episode of FRC's "Washington Watch" in September and took aim at surrogacy and in vitro fertilization. She said, "The vast majority of those children ... are going to lose their life in the baby-making process of big fertility." In the same segment, she described these practices as "eugenics."

In July, the Heritage Foundation published an article called "The Birth Dearth Gives Rise to Pro-Natalism" about demographic decline in the U.S., critiquing "girl-boss feminism" and advocating for marriage and children as a Christian calling. The following month, white nationalist Jared Taylor notably echoed similar talking points. In a post for American Renaissance, he decried declining birth rates, writing, "Birthrates decline for many reasons: abortion, feminism, working women, delayed marriage, more individualism and materialism." He wrote, "People want to marry within their race, and

100+

Organizations partnered with the Heritage Foundation to shape Project 2025, including the Family Research Council.



there are fewer potential mates in ‘diverse’ neighborhoods.” Taylor finished his article with a direct reference to the Heritage Foundation piece: “And, yes, it’s a white movement. It may take years, but we’ll be back.”

Immigration and the fear of a plan to ‘erase us’

Perkins and some FRC contributors to The Washington Stand presented mass migration as a deliberate strategy by left-leaning politicians to undermine American sovereignty. In multiple articles and comments throughout 2024, FRC affiliates presented migrant children as a strain on America’s school system, repeated Trump’s claims around “Biden migrant crimes” and wrongly depicted migrants as more prone to crime than U.S.-born citizens.

Throughout 2024, The Washington Stand also published multiple articles promoting misinfor-

These paranoid narratives are explicitly white supremacist and present white-majority countries as under attack from a cadre of elites, often Jewish people, who are “replacing” or “genociding” whites through encouraging immigration and declining birth rates.



Chaya Raichik
Founder of the social media account @LibsofTikTok (LOT). She spreads the anti-LGBTQ+ conspiracy theory that “groomers” have infiltrated every social institution with the intent of “sexualizing” children.

Unfounded fears of Black incivility, criminality and sexual immorality in the past were used to justify enslavement and white Christian control over Black bodies and relationships, and the same ideologies were adapted to justify draconian immigration laws.

mation around noncitizen voting in U.S. elections, including accusing Democrats of registering undocumented migrants to vote.

“I was accused when I started saying this a couple of years ago of engaging in some sort of conspiracy theory — but very clearly, they want illegal immigrants to be turned into voters. That’s patently clear,” Suzanne Bowdey wrote, quoting House Speaker Mike Johnson, in an article published May 28, 2024. In September 2024, Bowdey cited Rep. Keith Self’s false claim that Democrats “importing voters” went to the “heart of the [party’s] open border scheme.”

Perkins wrote in another Oct. 21, 2024, Washington Stand article, “The crisis has nothing to do with the dream of a better future for migrant children.” He then went on, “It is about creating an environment of political and cultural chaos — one that benefits those seeking political power and control.”

According to U.S. law, only citizens can vote in federal elections. Data collected on the issue shows that noncitizen voting is very rare and that reported incidents do not add up enough to have an impact on elections. And as National Public Radio reported, claims of noncitizens voting appeared to

evaporate after Trump won the election, despite months of the right-wing ecosystem drumming up fears around this issue.

The Washington Stand also ran multiple articles targeting Haitian migrants in Ohio and Pennsylvania after right-wing media outlets and politicians, including then-presidential and vice presidential candidates Donald Trump and JD Vance, spread lies about Haitian migrants eating pets.

In one article on bomb threats targeting Springfield, Ohio-area schools, The Washington Stand authors S.A. McCarthy and Suzanne Bowdey cited Douglass Mackey, a radical-right activist who was convicted of interfering in the 2016 election through posts he made under the pseudonym “Ricky Vaughn.” The article includes a link to one of Mackey’s posts on X, the website formerly known as Twitter, which McCarthy and Bowdey describe as evidence “that struggling businesses in the area may be giving immigrants preference for jobs over Americans.”

The authors do not mention Mackey’s history with the racist white nationalist movement and instead describe him as someone “who had been targeted and jailed by the Biden-Harris administration for sharing political memes.”

Some neo-Nazis took the opportunity presented by the elevated role of white nationalism in the broader far right and of anti-immigrant messaging in the political campaigns to be even more explicitly racist. Goyim Defense League founder Jon Minadeo II said in a 2024 appearance on Red Ice TV: “It’s an invasion disguised as immigration. All this stuff with economics, politics — it’s all a distraction to keep us away from being racially conscious. That’s what it boils down to. Everything just goes back to race.”

In the same segment, he described immigration as part of a broader “plan to erase us,” referring to white, U.S.-born citizens.

As 2024 grinded forward, FRC’s rhetoric reached levels of hyperbolic misinformation and disinformation more often associated with right-wing social media personalities who foment outrage to drive clicks.

For example, anti-LGBTQ+ extremist Chaya Raichik, who founded the popular social media account Libs of TikTok, was a prominent voice pushing great replacement-style conspiracy theories during the year. In January 2024, Libs of TikTok tweeted about levels of migrants encountered at the border in September 2023 versus the levels of births that month, which was lower, claiming,

“More illegals entered our country than children being born. They’re quite literally replacing us. This is a feature, not a bug.”

Raichik doubled down on this rhetoric a month later during an interview with journalist Taylor Lorenz. When asked about subscribing to “great replacement” ideas, Raichik responded, “I just look at the facts and the numbers.” She added elsewhere in the interview: “They’re importing people who want to destroy America and who want to — who come here and do not stand for what America stands for. I think, and we see it, there’s time after time after time after time, they come in, they’re destroying our cities, they bring crime with them, and they are bringing them in to replace us.”

Similarly, failed congressional candidate Laura Loomer took to X to promote an episode of her docuseries *The Great Replacement*. She opined that “Western European Christian culture defined the American ethos for over two centuries. ... The politicians and the media have told us that mass migration and diversity would enrich our country and make us stronger. But, it was all a lie. Unfettered third-world immigration has brought nothing but chaos, violence, and despair into our once great nation, and it has ushered in the end of America as we know it.”

These arguments of the U.S. being overrun with illegal immigrants who are engaged in deadly criminal activity was reflected in The Washington Stand’s coverage of Laken Riley, a 22-year-old student who was murdered in Athens, Georgia.

Much like how hate and extremist groups mischaracterize crime statistics and co-opt tragedies to claim Black and Brown people disproportionately commit violent crimes, many of which allegedly target white women, FRC leapt on Riley’s tragic death because the man responsible was an undocumented immigrant.

Discussing Riley’s death in FRC’s The Washington Stand, Suzanne Bowdey claimed that American communities are “overrun” with immigrants and that “crime by illegal immigrants is skyrocketing.” “We are absorbing all of the world’s violent and terror factions,” she said, suggesting that Riley would not have been killed if President Joe Biden had continued hardline anti-immigration policies that began under Trump.

Racist assumptions about criminality and immorality inform both anti-immigrant and anti-Black extremism. Unfounded fears of Black incivility, criminality and sexual immorality in the past were used to justify enslavement and white

Christian control over Black bodies and relationships, and the same ideologies were adapted to justify draconian immigration laws.

The explicit adoption of white nationalist, anti-Black talking points and narratives from various corners of the hard right in the form of stoking fear of “demographic replacement” or “white genocide” was illustrative of the extreme nature of the situation facing the country in 2024 and a potential harbinger of more to come if an organized and active civil rights movement does not respond boldly.

Anti-immigration may have won the day, but FRC came up short

Despite going all in on anti-immigrant rhetoric and conspiracy theories that permeated the 2024 election year, FRC may not have received the rewards it was seeking from Trump.

In July, after the Republican National Committee adopted a platform that omitted language calling for a nationwide abortion ban, Perkins lambasted the document as part of a “choreographed process” that was “unbecoming” of the party, then led a petition drive demanding changes to reflect anti-abortion and anti-LGBTQ+ policy preferences. ●



Anti-DEI Efforts and the Attempted Whitewashing of America

By **Maya Henson Carey** and **R.G. Cravens**



In 2024, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives became ground zero for hard-right mobilizations to whitewash American society and protect white supremacy. These efforts built a foundation in 2024 for nationwide policy actions to follow by President Donald Trump.

Black Americans have long described a reality different from white Americans, but the police killings in 2020 of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor exposed many of the inequalities at the center of American life. Since 2020, Black organizers, leaders and their allies have advocated for and won public policies and conversations about the history and effects of systemic racism and inequities. The hard right responded immediately with organized opposition, led by

some of the country's most active hate and anti-government groups and individuals.

Although more people now believe racism is a widespread problem — including six in 10 people who believe DEI policies are good for companies — the perniciousness of structural racism means that Black and Brown Americans are often forced to reside in liminal spaces where tragedy must seemingly be endured to achieve social progress. Exposing a racist system and experiencing tragedy frequently go together, as if the effects of racism become apparent only in the aftermath of public tragedy.

DEI initiatives aim to address systemic disparities and promote inclusivity in an equitable manner. They may promote teaching accurate histories of American inequalities as structural — or the result of how American social and political institutions were created — and attempt to ensure marginalized groups have equitable employment and educational opportunities. These initiatives are essential in ensuring pluralism, reducing inequities that spur division and promoting democracy.

The racist underpinnings of anti-diversity, equity and inclusion rhetoric

DEI principles recognize the lingering effects and continued reality of discrimination. DEI initiatives that promote an understanding of these effects are frequently mischaracterized as stand-ins for racial quotas, affirmative action, or a form of “reverse racism” that harms white people. Derived from white supremacist conspiracy theories and racist pseudoscience, the rhetoric anti-DEI activists use is consistent across hard-right ideologies.

Christian identity preacher Jason Robb, writing in his 2024 pamphlet *Dark Medicine*, said: “We have seen the scourge of DEI invade every aspect of our lives: from education, corporations, and the police, and even the military. We have seen the anti-white hatred reveal itself in our culture by tearing down statues throughout the South.” DEI, he claims, is “just another avenue used against us and our children.”

Similarly, in a 2024 blog post titled “DEI Is White Genocide,” Paul Craig Roberts, a former Reagan administration official and prominent conservative author, claimed DEI initiatives are “indoctrination programs” that threaten white, heterosexual and cisgender people. “White genocide” is an antisemitic, racist myth whose advocates falsely claim shadowy figures — often

Figures to Know

“DEI is White Genocide”
A 2024 blog post written by Paul Craig Roberts, a former Reagan administration official and prominent conservative author.

Figures to Know



Christopher Rufo
A prominent figure in the right-wing culture war against DEI and LGBTQ+ equality.



Do No Harm
An anti-LGBTQ+ hate group that led a campaign to challenge anti-racist and LGBTQ+-inclusive education policies in 2024.

MOMS *for* LIBERTY★

Emily Jones
Started the first Moms for Liberty chapter in Alabama.

In the past few years, Moms for Liberty, one of the most prominent names in the anti-student inclusion movement, has led the country in initiating book challenges and advocating for policies that suppress diverse students and inclusive curriculum.

Jewish people — use immigration and violence to replace or eliminate white people in majority-white countries with Brown, Black and mixed-race people.

DEI is “an anti-white, anti-heterosexual, and ‘gender by choice’ indoctrination program,” Roberts claims, that “is designed to marginalize normality and to replace it with abnormality, to destroy the confidence of normal white people, and to position them in law as second class [sic] citizens against whom discrimination is legal.”

Mimicking the language of white supremacist ideologues in 2023, Colin Wright, an anti-DEI activist and adviser to The Killarney Group project of the anti-LGBTQ+ hate group Genspect, wrote on X that DEI efforts “encompass a radical ecosystem of related ideologies that are divisive, intolerant, racist, anti-truth, and even genocidal.”

DEI is also frequently mischaracterized as undoing meritocracy. This falsehood relies on the racist assumption that people of color are less-intelligent and less-qualified job and academic applicants or do not work as hard to achieve success as white people. Opponents of DEI falsely suggest DEI initiatives give preferential treatment to unqualified Black and Brown applicants, which, they claim, results in poorer-performing professionals taking the place of better qualified peers.

In his book *America’s Cultural Revolution: How the Radical Left Conquered Everything*, far-right activist Christopher Rufo dismisses DEI programs in schools as existing only to embed ideologies and to create jobs for people with degrees in “race, gender, and identity.”

Before Kamala Harris became the first woman of color to accept a major party’s nomination for president in 2024, U.S. Rep. Harriet Hageman suggested the vice president was not intelligent and only achieved her position because of DEI, saying: “I think she’s one of the weakest candidates I’ve ever seen in the history of our country. I mean intellectually, just really kind of the bottom of the barrel,” and “I think that she was a DEI hire.”

In 2024, hate and antigovernment groups opportunistically used natural disasters and tragic accidents to bolster racist claims that DEI initiatives promote unqualified candidates. Following the devastation of Hurricane Helene, for example, the Cape Fear Proud Boys falsely linked the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s equity goals to ineffective management of the disaster response. The Family Research Council similarly blamed DEI initiatives for distracting the head of the U.S. Secret Service and

female agents in Butler, Pennsylvania, where Trump was targeted by a would-be assassin.

Comments from a former Utah state representative show how claims of Black and female inferiority are weaponized in the wake of disaster. In a post on X following the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, Rep. Phil Lyman suggested the collapse was the result of politicians who “prioritize diversity over the wellbeing and security of citizens.” According to NBC, he later posted but deleted, “DEI = DIE.” His original post was accompanied by a picture of one of the six Port of Baltimore commissioners, Karenthia Barber, who is the only Black woman on the commission.

Hate groups that focus on dismantling inclusive education have perpetuated similar language. In a 2022 *Newsweek* editorial, Stanley Goldfarb, founder of the anti-LGBTQ+ hate group Do No Harm, wrote about a “diversity delusion” in medical schools that he argued led to less-qualified doctors getting preferential treatment in admissions. Medical schools, he said, should “be concerned that more qualified students are likely being passed over, leaving patients with a less talented crop of doctors over the long run.”

In *The Wall Street Journal* in 2022, Do No Harm’s Laura Morgan said that DEI initiatives assume that “white people treat those who aren’t white worse than those who are,” and implied that systemic racism does not exist in medical care. Rather, Morgan claimed, DEI initiatives want to replace racist systems “with preferential treatment for the nonwhite.”

Attacks on DEI in schools

In education, DEI is often invoked to promote literary bans, restrictive history and sex education curricula, and to infuse hard-right ideology into public classrooms. The antigovernment group PragerU calls DEI “an affront to America’s core values” that must be “cast ... into the dustbin of history alongside all the other racist and discredited ideas of the past.” In 2024, the group’s lessons were approved for use in at least nine states, including Florida and Louisiana.

Emily Jones of the Moms for Liberty chapter in Madison County, Alabama, said on “1819 News: The Podcast” that students are inundated with DEI masquerading as mental health. “It’s sick,” she claimed, explaining how prompting kids to think about their feelings can lead them “down this road of anxiety, depression, suicidal tendencies.”

In 2024, legislation to dismantle DEI programs again swept the nation, affecting 212 college

campuses in 32 states. These legislative measures restrict discussions of race and gender in classrooms, and, in states like Texas and Florida, cut funding for programs that disproportionately impact employees from marginalized communities who work in DEI roles. Communities that don't teach honest history are doomed to repeat errors and tragedies and lose empathy and a sense of shared humanity. The combination of restrictions and defunding risks further institutionalizing wealth inequalities, particularly among Black women.

In a December 2024 article applauding the Idaho Board of Education for banning DEI initiatives, the anti-LGBTQ+ hate group Family Research Council claimed eliminating DEI initiatives was at the vanguard of “the movement to increase conservative governance of educational institutions,” adding, “These policies can be used as a model for other state boards or legislatures.”

Also in 2024, two Texas universities reportedly fired at least 80 faculty members to comply with new anti-DEI regulations. Similarly, the University of Florida reportedly eliminated its DEI positions and canceled some contracts with outside vendors because of the DEI ban. On X, anti-DEI advocate Christopher Rufo claimed: “University of Florida has fired all employees related to DEI. The conservative counter-revolution has begun.”

While hard-right politicians legislate against DEI initiatives, hate and antigovernment groups have also taken direct actions against them. Arguing that DEI programs promote divisiveness, indoctrination or so-called “reverse discrimination,” such groups as Parents Defending Education have filed lawsuits against individual school districts and complaints with the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. Similarly, Do No Harm has initiated a campaign and published a report resulting in more than 50 federal investigations to challenge DEI initiatives it claims will “disadvantage capable students and applicants.”

In 2023, the Supreme Court struck down race-conscious admissions policies, a cornerstone of DEI in higher education. This decision set a precedent that emboldened broader efforts in 2024 to dismantle DEI practices.

In 2024, Do No Harm filed eight lawsuits challenging programs like scholarships and fellowships for marginalized people. The group claims that the practice of nonprofit organizations like the American Association of University Women to provide fellowships to students of color and LGBTQ+ students

— groups historically underrepresented in academia and medicine — harms patients by requiring medical schools to accept or fund unqualified candidates. According to the group, the case was dismissed “after AAUW agreed to drop the racial criteria in the fellowship’s selection process.”

‘Demoralize, Dismantle, Demolish’ corporate DEI principles

Corporate DEI efforts have been packaged within a broader set of investment and organizational principles called ESG or environmental, social and governance frameworks that promote corporate accountability to communities as well as shareholders, equitable environmental standards and DEI principles.

DEI policies promote accountability for contemporary acts of discrimination by barring discrimination against protected groups and encouraging everyone to take stock of how they might unconsciously contribute to the mistreatment of others. This might take the form of encouraging people not to assume a person’s gender identity because of their appearance, for example. For these reasons, anti-DEI activists frequently mischaracterize DEI principles as stand-ins for “socialism” and “Marxism” and claim DEI restricts freedoms of speech or association.

Opponents of DEI falsely suggest DEI initiatives give preferential treatment to unqualified Black and Brown applicants, which, they claim, results in poorer-performing professionals taking the place of better-qualified peers.



Robby Starbuck
An anti-DEI activist
and hard-right
former congressional
candidate.



Parents Defending Education
Parents Defending Education (PDE) claims to be an organization fighting indoctrination and politicized classrooms. However, its policy and legal work puts it among the leaders of anti-student inclusion groups aiming to end the acceptance and representation of diverse students in public schools.

In 2024, publicly traded companies and private businesses increasingly faced legal challenges and pressure campaigns to drop their DEI programs. Companies including Walmart, Boeing, John Deere, Harley-Davidson, Lowe's, Nissan and Ford publicly announced they would scale back DEI programs in response to legal and political pressure generated by hard-right former congressional candidate Robby Starbuck.

Starbuck, who suggested DEI advocates promote “anti-capitalist” rhetoric in a 2024 interview, also claims to be representative of American consumers and that LGBTQ+ groups have a conspiratorial stranglehold on corporate boardrooms. “If I’m a ‘far right extremist’ because I oppose racist DEI policies, forced woke indoctrination at work and the sexualization of children then sure, I’m a far right extremist,” Starbuck told critics in a November 2024 post on X.

Reflecting on his work in December 2024, Starbuck said on X, “We demoralized the activists behind DEI and shifted culture back toward sanity,” but warned that “2025 will be the year we dismantle everything these far left activists have built.” His goal, he said: “Demoralize, Dismantle, Demolish” DEI. In October, Jeremy Tedesco of the anti-LGBTQ+ hate group Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) tweeted that Starbuck was on a “mission of mercy in corporate America.”

Since 2022, ADF has similarly promoted a corporate-focused campaign called the “Viewpoint Diversity Score.” The group’s advisory council includes investment bankers, a “Christian economist and financial advisor,” investors focused on “biblically responsible investing,” and Christian investment firms. A proposal to JPMorgan Chase shareholders submitted in 2022 by ADF Viewpoint Diversity Score adviser David Bahnsen claims corporations are “giving fringe activists and governments a foothold to demand that private financial institutions deny service” to conservatives.

Underpinning ADF’s viewpoint diversity advocacy is a “debanking” conspiracy theory that suggests that banks and governments improperly work together to censor conservatives and close bank accounts primarily for sectarian religious groups that interpret their religion to oppose LGBTQ+ rights.

In 2024, ADF also promoted its Viewpoint Diversity Score program with language that mimics white supremacist narratives, characterizing diversity and LGBTQ+ nondiscrimination protections as threats to white Christian men. Through litigation and lobbying, ADF is working to dismantle DEI protections and weaponize government regulations to enforce sectarian Christian doctrines in publicly traded companies.

DEI policies promote accountability
for contemporary acts of discrimination by
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Rolling back progress

The multiracial movement for social justice and democratic accountability that emerged in summer 2020 was built on the collective experiences of Black Americans who have struggled for centuries against unfair policing, housing, financing, employment and education systems. Yet, it simultaneously generated hope for a better, more diverse, equitable and inclusive future.

Although some limited progress has since been achieved, attacks on DEI programs have wide-ranging consequences. Growing public consciousness of institutional inequalities pushed conversations about equity and fairness into boardrooms and school boards where wealth and educational inequalities are often perpetuated.

Companies and the public sector rushed to hire diversity and equity specialists to help them implement anti-racist principles and create inclusive spaces. In addition, thanks to DEI efforts instituted after 2020, large corporations have hired more Black and Brown people.

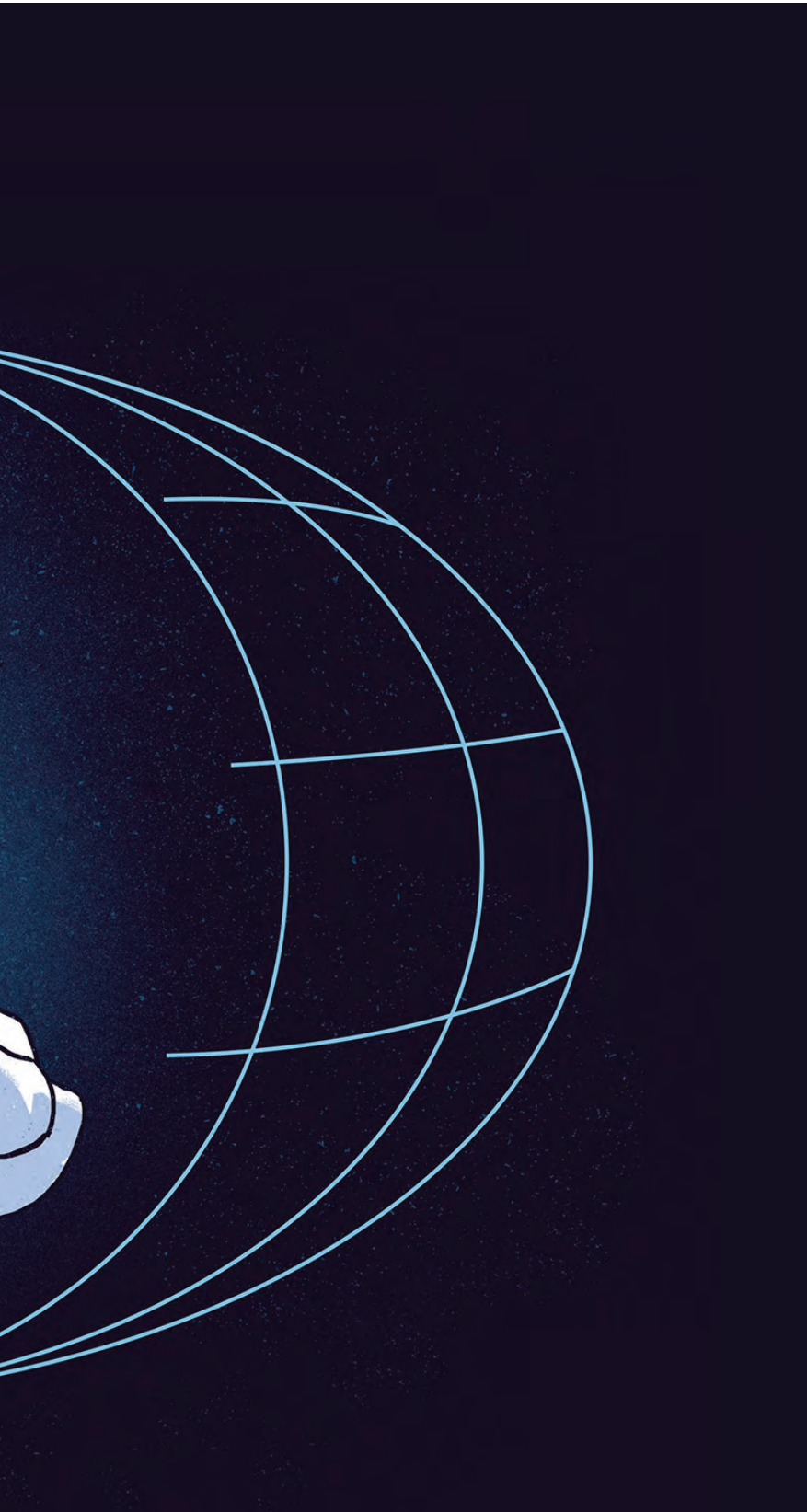
The erosion of DEI programs risks reversing decades of progress in promoting fairness and inclusivity. Defending DEI is crucial to building just, innovative and resilient communities. The fight for diversity and inclusion is ultimately a fight for the future of an equitable society. ●

From Screens to Schools

Male Supremacy's Impact and Prevention Tactics

By Rachael Fugardi and Lydia Bates





In the wake of the 2024 presidential election, misogynistic content was rampant across social media. Posts using the phrase “your body, my choice” increased by 4,600% on X just 24 hours after the election. While these posts aimed to undermine women’s ability to freely and safely navigate online platforms, such hate is not detached from offline, interpersonal interactions. Girls and women across the country also reported being harassed in schools and on college campuses.

This rhetoric is not only a symptom of the president’s misogynist language and actions but also a facet of a patriarchal, white supremacist culture that continues to value the contributions, opinions and sheer existence of men and boys over all others. The increase in the most extreme corners of the “manosphere” — a collection of blogs, forums and websites, the members of which mobilize around misogyny and anti-feminism — in 2024 is hardly unpredictable when these ideas are platformed by elected figures in the highest offices.

Male supremacist hate groups and trends in 2024

This year, the Southern Poverty Law Center documented seven new male supremacist hate groups, thanks in part to continued efforts to improve tracking of this ideology. This brings the total number of male supremacist hate groups to 16, though this is certainly still a low estimate. While the number of male supremacist hate groups remains relatively low, this ideology is a facet of all other supremacist ideologies the SPLC tracks, and these groups have outsized influence on society. Many of these new groups represent a rise in self-styled “alpha male” social media influencers who peddle pseudoscientific advice about physical health, relationship guidance that promotes misogyny and rigid gender roles, and supposedly effective schemes to make money.

One group appearing on the SPLC hate and antigovernment extremist map for the first time is Fresh & Fit. The Fresh & Fit podcast, dedicated to “females, fitness, and finances,” is hosted by Myron Gaines



(real name Amrou Fudl) and Walter Weekes. Gaines is the author of the 2023 book *Why Women Deserve Less*, and Weekes is a “dating and lifestyle coach” in the predatory pickup artist and alpha male industry. On their podcast and in related business ventures, the hosts repackage age-old toxic masculinity as self-improvement and describe relationships as transactional and zero-sum. For example, Weekes offers virtual coaching sessions related to dating or business, charging \$500 for a 20-minute session. While Fresh & Fit has been deplatformed on Facebook and Instagram, it has 1.56 million subscribers on YouTube and over 360,000 followers on the alternative video-sharing platform Rumble.

Many of the other groups listed are part of the Black manosphere — a subset of the broader manosphere that specifically aims to attract Black men. Like its predecessor, the Black manosphere rejects

feminism and views men as the primary victims of modern society. In addition to these core beliefs, the Black manosphere presents itself as a movement to uplift Black men, often disparaging Black women and the wider Black community in the process.

The leaders of the Black manosphere blame Black women for serious issues facing the Black community such as disproportionate incarceration rates, poverty and higher incidence of HIV.

While dominated by men, the manosphere is not exclusively male. Hannah Pearl Davis is perhaps the most influential woman within the male supremacist movement, and she runs the business entity Just-PearlyThings LLC. Davis holds many contradictory opinions. She argues that we need to return to “traditional values” but insists “marriage is a bad deal for men.” She has advocated banning divorce, repealing the 19th Amendment (guaranteeing women the right

1 out of 12

high school students who have dated in the last year experienced physical dating violence during that same period.

to vote), and calling for women to fully submit to their husbands. She inflates negative statistics about women and not only questions but downplays the allegations of sexual harassment, assault and domestic violence. As of December 2024, the media-labeled “anti-feminist” and “female Andrew Tate” had nearly 2 million subscribers on YouTube.

Widespread impact

While the toxic masculinity, dehumanization of women and restrictive gender stereotypes the male supremacist movement endorses is nothing new, social media algorithms have allowed its message to reach millions. A leaked guide from Andrew Tate’s subscription-based program directed supporters to use controversy to manipulate TikTok’s algorithm and reach wider audiences. “What you ideally want is a mix of 60-70% fans and 40-30% haters,” the guide directed. “You want argument, you want war.” Tate has also used his platform and appearances on other male supremacist podcasts to argue women are their husbands’ property, “are barely sentient” and must “obey” their partners.

A large body of research as well as whistleblowers have warned that social media algorithms amplify hateful and extremist disinformation. In one study, researchers found that over just five days of consuming content related to loneliness or self-improvement on TikTok, the number of misogynistic videos promoted on accounts’ “For You” pages nearly quadrupled, from 13% to 56%. Another study found that new accounts started by boys on TikTok and YouTube Shorts were fed manosphere content within 26 minutes of being on the platforms.

While these hate groups and hard-right extremist figures organize primarily online, their consequences extend far beyond screens. The results of

one survey found children and young people exposed to misogynistic online content like Andrew Tate’s are twice as likely to believe there should be a more dominant person in a relationship and almost five times more likely to believe physically hurting someone is acceptable.

Beliefs underpin actions. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about one in 12 high school students who have dated in the last year experienced physical dating violence during that same period. One in 10 also experienced sexual dating violence. These harms disproportionately impacted female students and those who identified as LGBTQ+.

Vulnerabilities to and warning signs of radicalization

The male supremacist groups and individuals that motivate this harm exploit young people’s vulnerabilities to manipulation. While no single combination of factors guarantees a person will internalize these hateful ideologies, many life experiences can increase a person’s susceptibility to them. Many of these experiences are genuine grievances that should be addressed as such; male supremacists, however, exploit these difficulties by scapegoating women, the LGBTQ+ community and feminism as the cause of societal and personal hardship.

Social isolation, depression, loneliness or a perceived lack of belonging can leave young people searching for community and a sense of self. Male supremacists engage in actions that promise to fill the void created by a lack of belonging with a sense of self that centers on wealth, status, fitness and social dominance.

Many of the male supremacist groups and individuals listed on the SPLC’s 2024 Hate Map also harness ideas about gendered roles and entitlements that boys and young men are often socialized to uphold. For example, patriarchal social norms lead some boys and men to believe they should dominate and control women. Illustrating this belief, the Fresh & Fit podcast’s X account tweeted, “Give [women] less so they respect you and give you more.” Similarly, in a podcast episode featuring Andrew Tate and his close friend Justin Waller, Waller explains, “Fear equals respect equals love,” when discussing how to build relationships with women. When male supremacists’ supposed entitlements to women’s bodies, time, attention and labor are not being met, blame and backlash ensue as evidenced by Mumia Obsidian Ali of the Black Manosphere. He has argued

Figures to Know

Fresh&Fit
PODCAST

Fresh & Fit Podcast
A podcast hosted by Walter Weekes and Myron Gaines. The podcast covers “females, fitness, and finances,” and boasts more than 1.5 million subscribers on YouTube. The hosts are known for mistreating the Black women who appear as guests on their show and for their comments about Black women.

that if women don't have sex after every date, men should use the Black Manosphere's network to create a "dinner whore registry" to shame them.

Trauma, loss and disruption to one's daily routines may also increase a young person's susceptibility to radicalization. These often unpredictable and uncontrollable events leave people searching for meaning and reason. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, some extremists offered simplistic pseudoscientific answers for complex questions about vaccines and racist disinformation about the cause and spread of the illness.

In the United States, only 26 states require that sex and HIV education be medically accurate. This leaves chasms in young people's understanding of sexual health, sexual orientation and gender identity, anatomy and reproduction, and consensual relationships. With a lack of knowledge about reproductive health and processes, male supremacists spread violent disinformation about abortion and other facets of reproductive justice. For example, in a November 2023 poll on X, male supremacist and online manosphere figure Anthony Johnson, who runs the hate group 21 Studios, asked his followers how women should be punished for abortions: life in jail or capital punishment. Most of his supporters voted for the death penalty. Similarly, male supremacists use a lack of knowledge about transgender identities, experiences and health care to spread pseudoscientific disinformation about members of this community. This contributes to dehumanization and fearmongering, as evidenced by Hannah Pearl Davis' assertion: "I'm transphobic. I am in fact afraid of trans people."

Male supremacists often lace their rhetoric with edgy humor from their subculture's ever-changing terminology. They use humor to degrade girls, women and transgender men and boys and to make their bigoted content more palatable or enticing. While similarly dehumanizing, the evolving language of male supremacists, with terms such as "alpha," "hypergammy" and "sexual market value," also reinforces a sense of belonging and camaraderie among group members.

Preventing radicalization and harm

The harm caused by male supremacist and anti-LGBTQ+ hate can seriously impact a young person's sense of self, safety and social inclusion, but there are steps all caregivers can take to prevent such targeted incidents from occurring. The SPLC and the Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation

Lab (PERIL) recently published *Not Just a Joke: Understanding & Preventing Gender- & Sexuality-Based Bigotry* to provide information and tools to prevent youth radicalization. The guide helps prepare the trusted adults in young people's lives with the skills to bolster resilience-building and to intervene when warning signs appear.

As a first step, trusted adults should ensure that those who were targeted or harmed by hateful rhetoric and/or actions are provided with the immediate support they need to restore a sense of safety. With the offending individual, ask open-ended questions to uncover the source of manipulation or disinformation. Help them understand how this rhetoric is harmful and that the people disseminating it don't have the young person's best interests in mind but are rather motivated by malicious aims. This is also an opportunity to address the compounding and underlying experiences that have contributed to the young person's vulnerability to manipulative, supremacist ideologies.

In addition to guidance about responding to moments of harm, *Not Just a Joke* provides readers with detailed information about male supremacy and the anti-LGBTQ+ movement. While both are standalone hate ideologies, they mutually reinforce each other as adherents seek to impose rigid, traditional gender roles that limit bodily autonomy and personal liberty. The guide also explains the ways both male supremacy and anti-LGBTQ+ hate intersect with other supremacist ideologies to amplify conspiracy theories like the "great replacement."

Building off this information, the guide gives readers examples of some of the online and offline pathways that can lead a young person to hold supremacist beliefs. Coupled with a section about warning signs to be aware of, this information prepares all adults who care for and work with young people to know when to intervene.

Since preventing radicalization is easier than de-radicalization, *Not Just a Joke* also provides caregivers with guidance to help young people strengthen their resilience to manipulation. "Encouraging a shift in how we think about masculinity, femininity and gender roles begins with open, ongoing conversations about sex, (social) media and the messages we consume," explains Pasha Dashtgard, director of research at PERIL. The steps this guide offers to help facilitate these conversations can be enacted and bolstered across the entire network of trusted adults who care for young people at home, school and throughout their communities.

While moments of national polarization and tumult may feel daunting and unmanageable, resisting manipulation begins with one conversation, one act of inclusion, one lesson on hard history. “These conversations are hard, but they’re so important,” explains Dashtgard. “Understanding the roots of gender-based bigotry means diving into the digital waters that young people are swimming in and learning how to discuss the messages they’re encountering there.” When buttressed by the proper tools and information, these individual conversation threads reinforce the social fabric that embraces young people and stymies the flow of harmful disinformation. ●



To learn more about our PERIL resources go to splcenter.org/resources/guides/peril-understanding-preventing-gender-sexuality-bigotry/



Male Supremacy Key Terms

Male supremacy

Belief that cisgender men are naturally, biologically and genetically superior to women, transgender men and nonbinary people. Male supremacists justify and rationalize the social, political, economic and legal domination of women and anyone who does not adhere to a fixed gender binary.

Misogyny

The hostile strategies of enforcement that police the behavior of women, men and children who reject patriarchal expectations.

Pseudoscience

Information that is not supported by science being mischaracterized as scientifically sound.

Radicalization

Any process that leads a person to hold extremist beliefs. These beliefs may or may not lead to overt violence. Just as there are many forms of extremism, there is no single pathway to radicalization. It is a complex process involving many personal and external influences.

Transgender

A person whose gender identity or expression is not aligned with the sex they were assigned at birth.



A Strategic Application of Chaos

By **Creede Newton**, **Joe Wiinikka-Lydon**
and **RJ Reinhart**



The Intelligence Project has raised alarms over the last several years about the mainstreaming of far-right extremist conspiracy theories and extremists themselves. This is a profound cultural and political transformation the right pushes to grasp political control, stifle the possibility for dissent and urge a more just future out of reach. The stakes, then, are high, and history illustrates how the right's colonization of the center never comes without violence, threat and fearmongering speech.

The 2024 election year and the specter of authoritarianism brought with it violent threats from the hard right. Such threats work by chilling civic spaces, such as polls, schools and town halls, that are absolutely critical to any democracy worthy of

the name. Over the past year, the hard right has drawn on new language from Christian supremacy that focuses on demonic possession and pseudoscience. This language undermines free thought and demonizes one's neighbors for having different views — or for being born in a different place, in a different way. All of this is part of a growing hard-right movement, as it means to hold and take the power of the state to roll back the rights and liberties of so many persons in the United States that were hard-earned and not easily recovered.

This is all part of a strategic application of chaos that creates enough space for authoritarians and Christian supremacists to take away our democracy.

Bomb threats in 2024

During 2024, the use of bomb threats proved popular among domestic and foreign actors intent on creating or deepening chaos in areas around the U.S. that were already lightning rods for far-right attention.

The tactic is popular among these actors because it is simple, cheap and difficult to counter. Bomb threats are almost guaranteed to cause at least low-level disruption. These threats were applied in a strategic manner in 2024, focusing on targets already experiencing uncertainty and fear.

Perhaps the most high-profile instances of bomb threats occurred in September in Springfield, Ohio. In the wake of Donald Trump and JD Vance amplifying false allegations targeting Haitian immigrants in that community, at least 33 hoax bomb threats were made targeting Springfield schools and government buildings.

This was followed by the extensive use of bomb threats targeting polling locations on Election Day in the swing states of Arizona, Pennsylvania and Georgia. In Georgia, hoax bomb threats targeted 60 of the state's polling locations. The FBI subsequently traced the threats to polling locations to Russian email domains.

Bomb threats also targeted specific groups already on edge. Some online supporters of the far-right Libs of TikTok (LOT) were some of the most prolific employers of bomb threats, with more than 40 threats having been communicated to Planet Fitness locations after LOT highlighted the fitness chain's trans-inclusive locker room policy. Schools and hospitals across the country were also targeted by LOT supporters over the group's identification of LGBTQ+ individuals working at these locations or supposedly pro-LGBTQ+ programs at these locations.

Politicians, pundits and provocateurs on the right have turned toward demonic language to tar those who disagree with them.

The SPLC also documented numerous bomb threats targeting Jewish institutions across the U.S. The antisemitic threats were intimidating and created a heightened sense of fear among Jewish people across the country. This continued a trend of increased bomb threats targeting Jewish institutions that began after the Oct. 7, 2023, attack in Israel.

Threats to poll workers

In 2024, the U.S. witnessed a disturbing surge in threats and harassment directed at poll workers, particularly those of color. This alarming trend underscores the persistent racial animus and hostile climate that threatens the integrity of our democratic processes.

Poll workers of color have been on the front lines, ensuring that elections are conducted fairly and securely. However, according to the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Black poll workers have faced a barrage of threats, including bomb scares and physical violence. These threats are not isolated



incidents but part of a broader pattern of racial harassment aimed at undermining the democratic participation of communities of color.

The Department of Justice has reported an increase in threats against election workers, with over a dozen cases under investigation. The Election Threats Task Force, established to address this issue, has highlighted the severity of the situation, noting that many of these threats are racially motivated.

White supremacist ideologies and conspiracy theories that paint poll workers of color as threats to the electoral system often fuel these threats. This rhetoric has been amplified by extremist groups and individuals who seek to destabilize democratic institutions through fear and violence.

According to a Hatewatch analysis, “an array of villains” crafted conspiracy theories “where believers were able to choose who they believed was behind the ‘fraud’ and, in some cases, target these groups with hateful rhetoric, threats and actual violence.”

The demonization of America

Politicians, pundits and provocateurs on the right have turned toward demonic language to tar those who disagree with them. This language of evoking the idea of people controlled by demons comes from the new Christian Right, including Christian supremacist ministries led by the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), a Christian, charismatic movement that aims to dominate all aspects of life, culture and politics in the United States, crafting a Christian, fascist state in its own image.

Many Christian churches and denominations are opposed to this movement, yet the NAR, the strongest Christian supremacist movement today, remains a powerful and growing political force. Not only are NAR leaders highly influential in right-wing politics — this includes advising Donald Trump during both of his presidential terms and his 2024 campaign, as well as some of the NAR leaders who participated in the planning of some public events at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021 — their language and theology have become central to politically engaging the nascent, hard right.

Many NAR leaders effectively preach that any obstacle to their march toward political and cultural domination is the work of a demonic presence, so that they literally demonize their detractors. This worldview is inherently opposed to democracy, as it paints any and all opponents as either possessed or

demonic themselves. According to NAR believers, one cannot negotiate with the devil, by definition, so there is no room for other worldviews, nor for the compromises upon which democracy rests. As the NAR movement has become one of the key pillars of the Make America Great Again effort and the right’s growing fascism, it is safe to say that the NAR is one of the major anti-democratic forces in the U.S. today.

Its influence has been profound, as numerous politicians and right-wing personalities appeal to demonic language to castigate and disparage those who do not agree with them. Personalities such as Tucker Carlson, Alex Jones and Laura Loomer have taken up such language, with Carlson claiming he was attacked by demons in his sleep and that we had “dark forces in charge” of the Biden administration.

Jones has spoken in vile terms of both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, saying they smelled of hell: “Imagine how bad she [Hillary Clinton] smells, man. I’m told her and Obama just stink, stink, stink, stink. You can’t wash that evil off, man. Told there’s a rotten smell around Hillary. I’m not kidding, people say, they say — folks, I’ve been told this by high-up folks. They say, ‘Listen, Obama and Hillary both smell like sulfur.’ ... I’ve talked to people that are in protective details, they’re scared of her. And they say, ‘Listen, she’s a frickin’ demon and she stinks and so does Obama.’ I go, ‘Like what?’ ‘Sulfur. They smell like hell.’”

Politicians too have taken up this language, including U.S. Sen. Tommy Tuberville, Rep. Lauren Boebert, former Rep. Michele Bachmann and even Donald Trump. Tuberville has spoken of his Senate colleagues in demonic terms, writing, “@TheDemocrats are a Satanic cult.” This language is often combined with other epithets, such as “Marxist,” “communist” and “groomer.” Trump himself links these terms, including at a Family Research Council event where he said he stands “up to the communists, the Marxists, the atheists and the evil and demonic forces that want to destroy our country.”

Threats and fear are central to the hard right, and that orientation has entered the mainstream arena of life and politics. ●

Figures to Know



Tucker Carlson
Tucker Carlson is a veteran television personality who emerged in 2016 as one of the most influential figures of the authoritarian, anti-democracy, right-wing movement. Carlson’s propaganda, which obsessively portrays white men as being victims of a corrupt, feminist, multicultural system, often mirrors the talking points found in fringe internet spaces where extremists congregate.

Targeting Democracy

Local Militias and National Sovereign Citizens

By **Calum Farley** and **Rachel Goldwasser**





The militia and sovereign citizen movements continued their efforts to be a substitute for government in 2024, all the while threatening public workers and democracy. Militias sought to frame themselves as emergency-preparedness groups or auxiliary law enforcement, while sovereign citizens continued trying to establish U.S. shadow governments and courts. Both movements continued to make local communities unsafe, whether by interfering with hurricane relief or getting into shootouts with law enforcement officers. While they shared ideological similarities, militias tended to focus on local structures, while sovereign citizens continued forming or following national organizations.

Going local: Militias return to their roots

The consequences national militias faced in the wake of the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection served as a catalyst for the militia movement to reorganize. The connections inherent in a national organization model like the Oath Keepers proved to be a liability for members in the law enforcement crackdown following the insurrection. Local militia groups have grown in the vacuum left by the fracturing of national organizations. The Southern Poverty Law Center documented 52 militias in 2024, which was the same number as in 2023. However, the growth of local militias, which operate with more secrecy and deception, is difficult to locate and track post-2021.

Local militias have taken various forms. In recent years, the SPLC has tracked numerous antigovernment groups that have lobbied county governments to recognize local militias through official resolutions, despite counties not having the constitutional authority to take such action. These debates and resolutions have occurred mostly in Virginia, but they have also been proposed in New York, Illinois and Michigan. Supporters of creating county militias often describe the role they could play responding to emergencies, assisting law enforcement or both. Some county militias

held “musters” or training and planning drills in 2024, including those in Southampton County and Lynchburg, Virginia.

Another local-minded trend, similar to the tactic used by Three Percenter groups, is the use of the word “minutemen” in group names, which is an attempt to compare themselves to the minutemen of the American Revolution. These militias engage in paramilitary training while framing themselves as preparedness groups. While they try to sanitize their public-facing social media, a deeper look into posts by individual minutemen finds them sharing many of the hard-right political and conspiratorial beliefs that have long ignited the militia movement.

Minutemen ties to white supremacy

The growing local structure of militias harks back to the modern militia movement’s roots in the 1990s. Many militias of that era presented themselves as benign entities to help with law enforcement or emergency preparedness, all the while engaging in paramilitary training for what they viewed as imminent war with the federal government. Many minutemen militia members play this same public relations game, while also exhibiting white supremacist connections similar to their predecessors.

On social media, militia activists in the minutemen network espouse antigovernment conspiracy theories, anti-immigrant rhetoric and white supremacist beliefs. The Mid-Missouri Minutemen chat on Telegram included the account Prairie

Nationalist, the point of contact for the white nationalist Heartland Active Club, as a member. When an interested recruit lived outside the range of the Mid-Missouri Minutemen, other chat members, including Prairie Nationalist, encouraged the recruit to go through the vetting process to attend Heartland Active Club events instead.

The 1st New England Minutemen’s extremist beliefs are hidden in plain sight. The group’s mission statement reads, “To develop, train, and sustain a citizen’s militia comprised of men throughout New England focused on service, fraternity, and traditional values to secure and defend a brighter future for our children.” The end of the mission statement closely resembles the white supremacist “14 Words” slogan, which calls to secure “a future for White children.”

Minutemen militias and Active Clubs also share a similar organizing structure. Both sets of groups are independent but will use the same symbols and follow a common political ideology. For example, several minutemen groups use a common symbol to represent their militias. It references the Revolution-era minutemen emblem but replaces the musket with an AR-style rifle. Both minutemen and Active Clubs attract younger men who get together in small groups and train, with Active Clubs engaging in strength training and sparring while minutemen conduct paramilitary drills. Both are built on loose networks of small groups interconnected by a larger hard-right ideological movement.

Minutemen on the ground

In 2024, members of the River Valley Minutemen and the Central Ohio Minutemen performed multiple multiday training exercises with one another, almost exclusively related to combat scenarios. Individual minutemen militias may seem small, sometimes with only five to 10 members. Yet, because of their online network, they are effectively part of a more prominent militia. Social media accounts from different groups can be seen interacting with one another. As a result, groups and individuals are in constant contact with one another and can organize in-person field training exercises alongside each other.

Many minutemen groups the SPLC tracked had Instagram accounts. They appear to have escaped deplatforming by framing themselves as preparedness groups. Embracing the far right’s perception of X.com as a platform for free speech, some militias and followers have announced they were leaving Instagram due to its perceived targeted moderation



Many minutemen groups use this symbol, either alone or incorporating it into their logos. The symbol is a reference to the minutemen of the American Revolution, but with an assault rifle in place of a musket — an apparent attempt to connect these modern groups with the colonial-era militia.



of right-wing opinions. Regardless of the outreach method, minutemen seem to be careful to present a very apolitical façade for their training.

In October 2024, following the destruction caused by Hurricane Helene, militia groups traveled to western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee, claiming to provide disaster relief for those affected by the storm. One example was the Nantahala Reconnaissance Group, which set up a GoFundMe page. River Valley Minutemen claimed to have both raised almost \$9,500 in donations and transported over 10,000 pounds in goods. These efforts reinforced militia claims of being community-focused and helped them try to gain traction with locals.

At the same time, some militias and their members shared misinformation, heightening tensions in the areas they claimed to be helping. On Instagram, accounts for minutemen militias and their

On social media, militia activists in the minutemen network espouse antigovernment conspiracy theories, anti-immigrant rhetoric and white supremacist beliefs.

members shared conspiracy theories about the Federal Emergency Management Agency's response and, in some cases, posted threats against government employees. In an Instagram post targeting FEMA's response, Clandestine Operations Group stated, "You are at war with your government, right now," and now is "a good time to load mags & build a fucking guillotine." The rhetoric promoted by these groups contributed to aid work being stopped in certain areas for the safety of workers.

Militia response to Hurricane Helene shows that while the militia movement has become much more localized and, in turn, harder to track, groups will still come together and insert themselves into current events. While many local militias are positioning themselves as harmless preparedness groups, their tactical paramilitary training strongly suggests that their concern is not clearing roads of debris, filling sandbags, or rebuilding structures. Instead, they train for the same reason their predecessors did in the 1990s — preparing for what they consider to be imminent war.

Shadow governments and courts

For decades, sovereign citizen groups organized as disparate local entities that shared ideologies and materials across the country by way of the internet or traveling seminars. In that way, their structure was similar to the minutemen militias. However, in recent years, national organizations have supplanted local sovereign citizen groups.

Some of these organizations use the term "American State Nationals" in a bid to separate themselves from the term "sovereign citizen," which has a negative public connotation, particularly among law enforcement. These national sovereign citizen groups have a top-down hierarchical structure, with leaders who are often treated as all-knowing, infallible figures. These national leaders worked in 2024 at building and branding local chapters underneath their control and in developing materials and rules used universally throughout their organizations.

This evolution is part of an effort by sovereign leaders to further their nationwide agenda. Their plan is to create shadow governments and courts, often called assemblies. The groups are composed of conspiracy theorists unhappy with the U.S. economic and political environment. They believe our current government will fail, and they can install their own in the resulting power vacuum.

Their attempts to install their own governments as a replacement to U.S. democracy is a danger to

both local communities and the country. Leaders in the movement have sold followers on the idea that by declaring sovereign citizenship, they have separated from the government and don't need to follow state or national laws. This has caused volatile altercations with police that have led to the death of law officers and sovereign citizen adherents. Some sovereign citizen groups continue to engage in "paper terrorism," whereby sovereign citizens retaliate against public officials or other perceived enemies by filing fraudulent liens or other fake "legal" documents.

Fake "judge" Anna von Reitz, who now leads the American States Assembly, claimed the Reign of the Heavens Society's "Government of The United States of America" was planning to invade the Continental United States of America, a now-defunct group to which von Reitz previously belonged. Reign of the Heavens Society struck back by issuing an international arrest warrant signed by its fake government against von Reitz, her partner James Clinton Belcher, and current National Assembly co-leader Destry Payne. The warrant declared that "any and all are hereby authorized to detain, incarcerate, and in the case of violent resistance, use deadly force against" these individuals.

In 2024, National Assembly was plagued by internal struggles that resulted in multiple state chapters leaving the organization and forming Restore-America.org to build "general jural assemblies" through online promotions and a billboard in Georgia.

This trend has ballooned the number of organizations forming fake governments, creating more options from which new recruits can pick.

These new recruits have shifted sovereign citizen demographics. The sovereign citizen movement was first developed by militant, male white supremacists under the leadership of William Potter Gale, but has begun attracting more women and people of color.

The merger between sovereign and QAnon philosophies in the last three years, which brought new, younger faces into the movement, was followed shortly thereafter by the COVID-19 pandemic. This brought in antivaxxers who found common cause with sovereign citizens against the government.

Most recently, demographics have shifted even more to include current and retired white-collar professionals, from accountants to coroners to talent agents, and a former Air Force lieutenant colonel as the volunteer coordinator and fake "governor of Texas" for the Republic for the United States of America organization.

Violence and coordination with the hard right

In 2024, there was an uptick in violence by sovereign citizens, mainly against police. From the SPLC's tracking, these incidents involved sovereign citizens who weren't members of faux courts or governments, but movement adherents whose conspiratorial ideas and rhetoric led to volatile encounters.

Sovereign citizens collaborated with other hard-right extremists. In early 2024, sovereign citizens from the Republic of Texas and People's Operation Restoration helped coordinate the "Take Our Border Back" convoy events, which brought together a cross section of the hard right, from sovereign citizens and white nationalists to neo-Nazis and border vigilantes.

Like some militias, the American States Assembly got involved with targeting federal personnel following Hurricane Helene. It issued a notice to county sheriffs in early October which stated that "any Federal Personnel" who might be "offering to encumber, delay or restrict civilian rescue and recovery efforts" or "confiscating relief supplies" should be arrested. It also declared that "federal personnel failing to render immediate aid and assistance must be arrested, shot or hung on the spot as the situation demands." Calls for or acts of violence like these, against government workers, public safety officers and others, are likely a harbinger of things to come as these fake governments and courts continue to grow in 2025. ●

The SPLC documented 91 sovereign citizen groups in 2024.

Organizations facilitating the creation of fake sovereign governments, from largest in chapters to smallest, include but aren't limited to the following:

- American States Assembly
- National Assembly
- Restore-America.org
- Republic for the united States of America [sic]
- Life Force Network
- National Liberty Alliance
- Statewide Common Law Grand Jury
- United States of America Republic Government
- Reign of the Heavens Society
- The California Assembly

Many of these groups' leaders have networked or coordinated, but they have also tended to become easily mired in drama with each other.



Decline of the Neo-Confederates

By **Rachel Carroll Rivas** and **Jeff Tischauser**



Almost 25 years ago, the Southern Poverty Law Center documented 121 neo-Confederate groups and called the movement “burgeoning.” For nearly a decade at the beginning of the 21st century, neo-Confederate group numbers across the South hovered near that high. The movement had been building since the 1990s and had returned to the more overt white supremacist trappings inherent in its Civil War roots.

The neo-Confederate movement is at its core a reactionary, revisionist branch of American white nationalism typified by its fondness for symbols of the Confederate States of America. It pairs this revisionism with a strong belief in the validity of the failed doctrines of

nullification and secession that rose to prominence from 1901 to the present-day South.

Today, the movement is a shadow of what it was during its modern peak in the early 2000s. By 2022, only 14 neo-Confederate hate groups existed, and in 2024, just four remained and showed any sign of activity.

The waning relevance and reach of the neo-Confederate movement can be attributed to a few key efforts — a decades-long pressure campaign led by the SPLC and Southern civil rights activists; legal costs from the civil case against the organizers of the deadly 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia; criminal cases relating to events surrounding Unite the Right; and the adoption of neo-Confederate ideology by more politically engaged groups in the far-right movement.

The figures that upheld this movement and its groups have struggled to find relevance in a crowded hard-right white nationalist environment. For a decade, the movement was centered around Michael Hill’s organization the League of the South. Founded in 1994 as the Southern League, its overarching mission has been to create a white ethnostate, a “godly” nation run by an “Anglo-Celtic” people. This white Christian theocracy would be the realization of the goals of Southern secession.

Initially, Hill recruited thousands by advertising his group’s academic facade, and initially insisting that the group was not racist. As the SPLC worked to expose the League of the South’s coordination with other white nationalist groups like the neo-Nazi National Alliance and Council of Conservative Citizens and its harmful ideas, such as advocating for a return to “general European cultural hegemony,” its membership dwindled.

Today the League of the South has not rebounded from the fallout from its attendance at the deadly August 2017 riot at Unite the Right. While 10 chapters persisted in 2022, only one remained operational by 2024. The organization didn’t even hold its annual conference in 2024.

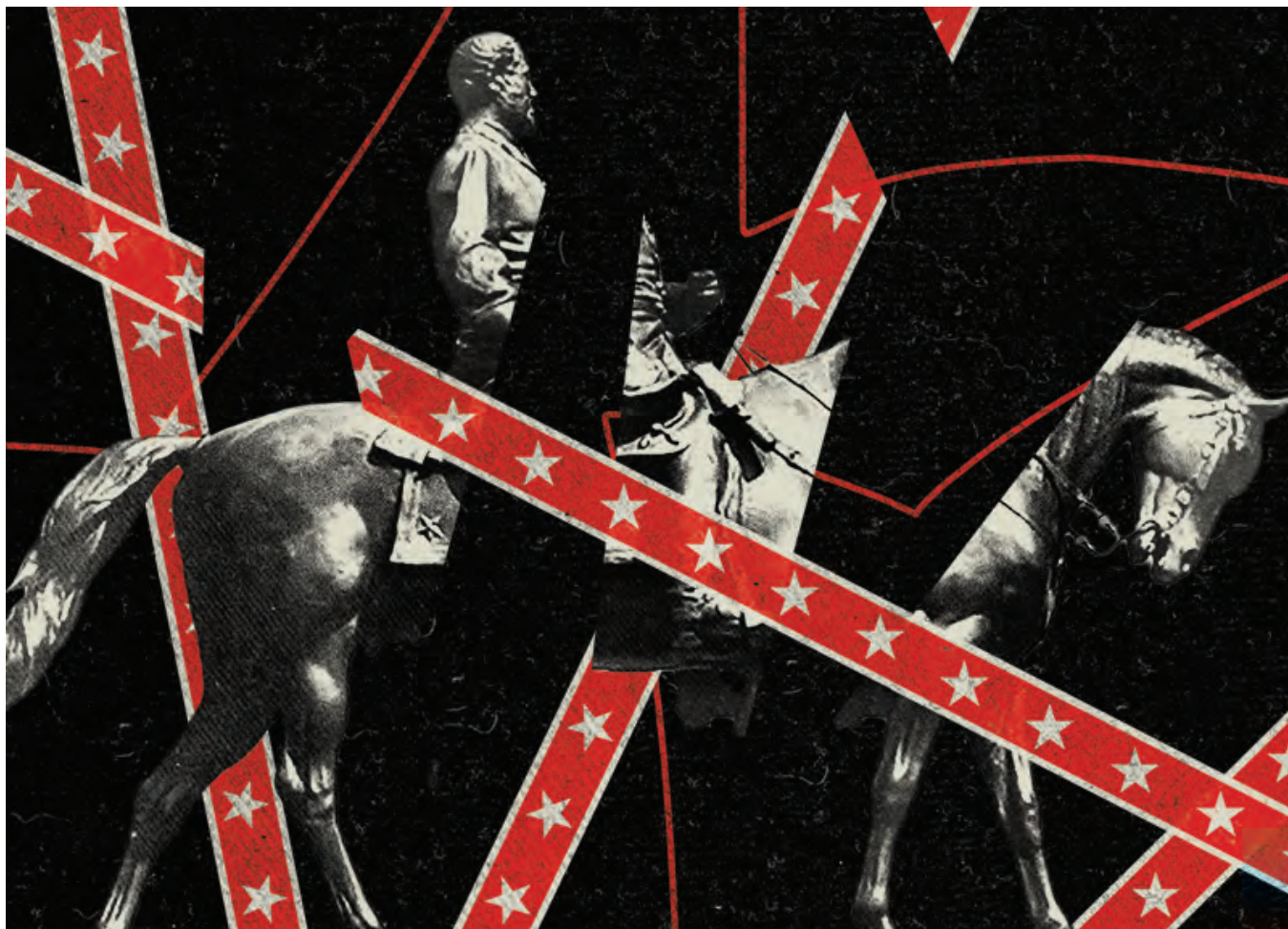
Later, Hill rebranded the League of the South as the Southern Nationalist League in late 2024, perhaps in an attempt to salvage the movement. Complete with a new website, donation apparatus, podcast and blog, the new venture seemingly provides the group an opportunity to avoid the financial burden stemming from the *Sines v. Kessler* lawsuit. Nine plaintiffs harmed at the Unite the Right rally brought the lawsuit against Hill and

Figures to Know



League of the South

This hate group denounces the federal government and Northern and coastal states as part of a materialist and anti-religious society it calls The Empire. It has increasingly embraced violence, criticized perceived Jewish power and warned Black people that they would be defeated in a future race war.



other white nationalist organizers and promoters, who were found liable in 2021 on civil conspiracy.

The remaining four neo-Confederate groups in 2024 organized small, insular gatherings like Dixie Fest and the Southern Cultural Center's annual conference. The conference featured John Weaver, previously of the Council of Conservative Citizens; white nationalist Jared Taylor of American Renaissance; and white nationalist radio host James Edwards. Southern Cultural Center members also attended the American Renaissance conference, which included lectures by former Klan lawyer Sam Dickson, white nationalist propagandist Kevin DeAnna and University of Pennsylvania Law School professor Amy Wax.

The neo-Confederate movement long used this kind of gathering to network within the larger white nationalist movement and to deepen the ideological commitment of adherents. The movement also primarily employed public demonstrations to bring

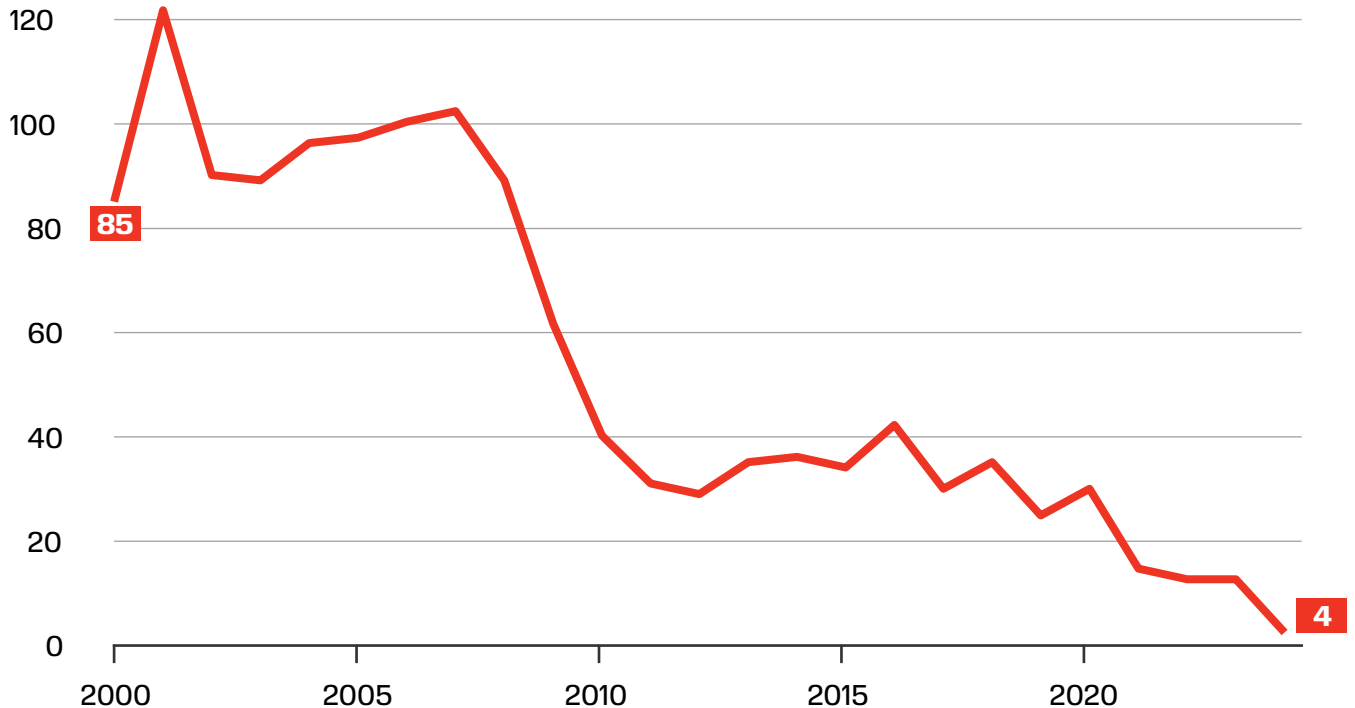
attention to its cause and intimidate Black communities. At its peak in January 2000, some 8,000 neo-Confederate sympathizers gathered in South Carolina in front of the world's largest Confederate flag to rail against "political correctness" and the NAACP's effort to remove the flag.

No such large-scale rally filled statehouse steps in 2024. The years of ostentatious marches and histrionic demonstrations have diminished with the persistence of local efforts to remove racist and Confederate iconography from public memorial. However, the tactic of making inroads into partisan politics through a focus on public policies around Confederate monuments, symbols and revisionist educational curricula has continued.

Nothing better exemplified this blatant effort than an incident at the opening of the 2000 Republican National Convention when a small plane flew over the Philadelphia venue with a Confederate battle flag trailing behind it across the sky. John

Neo-Confederate Groups in the U.S., 2000-2024

The number of observed neo-Confederate groups active in the U.S. over time.



Source: Southern Poverty Law Center, 2024

McCain and George W. Bush, the principal Republican presidential candidates at the time, declined to take a position on the Confederate flag flying over the South Carolina statehouse. McCain initially called the flag a “symbol of racism and slavery,” before backtracking the next day and calling it a “symbol of heritage.”

Yet, despite the near-complete disappearance of the organized neo-Confederate movement 25 years later, its influence in politics remains evident. During the 2024 presidential election, then-candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. told far-right podcaster Tim Pool that the top Confederate general, Robert E. Lee, had “extraordinary qualities of leadership” that deserve to be celebrated.

While 2024 was concerning for the rise of white supremacist ideas in mainstream political discourse and institutions, the decline of neo-Confederate groups also offered lessons for action. The institutional creep of harmful neo-Confederate ideas was

laid bare in Florida in 2024 as schools instructed kids that some Black people benefited from slavery because it taught enslaved people useful skills.

While policies that reject teaching the truth about slavery were not always popular opinion, the adoption of neo-Confederate ideas into public policy may have helped to render the movement obsolete.

But the most direct impact on the decline of the neo-Confederate groups is the consistent pressure campaign by the courageous modern civil rights movement. Watchdog groups and local activists have diligently worked to oppose the legacy of the Confederacy found in Black communities across the South. These actions pushed neo-Confederate groups into the shadows and interrupted their organizing. Modern civil rights activists opposing neo-Confederate ideology must now focus on the public institutions intent on incorporating neo-Confederate ideology into policy. ●

Turning Point USA

A Case Study of the Hard Right in 2024

By **Rachael Fugardi**

Research contributions by **Maya Henson Carey**
and **Joe Wiinikka-Lydon**





Several weeks after the 2024 presidential election, Charlie Kirk, founder and president of Turning Point USA (TPUSA), proudly embraced a white nationalist conspiracy theory while celebrating then-President-elect Donald Trump’s plans for mass deportation.

Kirk accused Democrats of embracing immigration as part of their plot to secure voters, permit crime and enact the “great replacement.” He warned his hundreds of thousands of listeners, “We native-born Americans are being replaced by foreigners.” He then promised Trump will “liberate” the country from “the enemy occupation of the foreigner hordes.”

Charlie Kirk’s TPUSA is a well-funded, hard-right organization with links to Southern Poverty Law Center-identified hard-right extremists and a tremendous amount of influence in conservative politics. While the group was previously dismissed by key figures within the Republican National Committee (RNC), Trump attended several TPUSA events across the country throughout 2024, and several of his nominees have ties to the organization. Turning Point Action, the group’s sister 501(c)(4) organization, led Trump’s 2024 campaign efforts in key battleground states and played a vital role in the election of far-right candidates in Arizona, while TPUSA participated on the advisory board of Project 2025, a blueprint to radically reshape the federal government.

Over the last several years, the political right has increasingly shifted toward an authoritarian, patriarchal Christian supremacy dedicated to eroding the value of inclusive democracy and public institutions. The political right in the U.S., whose party infrastructure is dominated by the Republican Party but includes the current Libertarian Party and is flanked to the right by the Constitution Party, has embraced aggressive state and federal power to enforce a social order rooted in white supremacy. Turning Point USA and its growing influence on conservative politics is emblematic of this current state.

As a nonprofit, TPUSA does not pay any taxes on its revenue — approximately \$80 million in 2022 — though numerous

Figures to Know



Charlie Kirk
Co-founder and executive director of Turning Point USA



Candace Owens
Former TPUSA employee and hard-right media figure

actions appear to potentially violate its tax status. In 2024, TPUSA invited Lara Trump to speak at a 501(c)(3) sponsored event in her official capacity as co-chair of the RNC, where she encouraged attendees to support her father-in-law in the upcoming presidential election.

In 2020, ProPublica raised questions about the independence of the firm that audited its financial dealings and the reliability of the organization's public financial disclosures. The Associated Press reported that TPUSA has made millions in payments to companies controlled by key figures within the organization and even paid for Kirk's wedding reception in 2021 by billing the event as a fundraiser and ninth anniversary celebration.

The politics of fear

Turning Point USA's primary strategy is sowing and exploiting fear that white Christian supremacy is under attack by nefarious actors, including immigrants, the LGBTQ+ community and civil rights activists. TPUSA and its spokespeople often warn their audience that their children, wives, religion, way of life and they themselves are under attack by various constructed enemies. TPUSA exploits complicated feelings of insecurity and anxiety to manufacture rage and mobilize support to revive and maintain a white-dominated, male supremacist, Christian social order.

TPUSA is at the forefront of the movement to promote Christian nationalism, the theocratic worldview that the U.S. is a fundamentally Christian country and that Christian values and beliefs should inform the government and wider culture. In a clip Kirk shared on X, he blamed shifts in the religious makeup of America for causing "a constitutional crisis" and asserted, "You cannot have liberty if you don't have a Christian population."

In the organization's early years, Kirk advocated for right-wing politics to adopt a "secular worldview," reiterating, "We do have a separation of church and state." He even criticized Christians for trying to impose their religious beliefs on the rest of the country. However, in recent years, Kirk has been influenced by pastors such as Rob McCoy to turn TPUSA into an arm of the religious right to "restore America's biblical values."

In 2021, Turning Point launched a new subdivision, Turning Point Faith, to organize certain pastors and church communities to work toward TPUSA's goals. TPUSA Faith works at the intersection of Trumpism and Christian supremacy. This

initiative offers religious courses, sermon templates and training opportunities to guide pastors toward political activism. They also host events like The Believers' Summit and Pastors Summit.

TPUSA simultaneously positions Christianity as superior and dominant, while also orchestrating myths of religious persecution. This framing is used to justify its extreme, authoritarian vision for the country that threatens the foundation of our democracy. While speaking about the need to support Trump's 2024 presidential campaign to an audience full of pastors, Kirk warned, "If we don't get this right, though, and if we continue theological disputes and don't focus on liberty, then we're going to be having those theological disputes from prison."

Similarly, Candace Owens has also warned about what she views as a war on Christianity at various TPUSA events. Owens is a former TPUSA employee, hard-right media figure, and has been featured at TPUSA events and on the organization's website in 2024. At a TPUSA women's event in June 2024, she encouraged the audience to reexamine their understanding of history, particularly World War II, which she sees as a perpetual "holy war" being waged against Christianity and a "concerted effort to remove Christ."

At a Trump rally in Georgia, Kirk told attendees, "I believe there is a spiritual battle happening all around us. ... Right now, this state is a Christian state, I want to see that to continue. But we need the faithful, we need those of you that have influence over your congregation to put pressure on your pastors." He also directed pastors to give sermons dedicated to preaching that "the Democratic Party believes everything that God hates."

'Satan wants the children'

One of the strongest examples of TPUSA exploiting the politics of fear to advance its hard-right agenda is in its battle against public education. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, TPUSA mobilized around the broader conservative backlash against public schools. TPUSA and other hard-right actors encouraged parents to be fearful the government was harming their children in schools. They used this fear to target LGBTQ+ books, so-called critical race theory and other examples of inclusive education as well as to promote homeschooling. This was an opportunity to radicalize parents to build parallel institutions aligned with its worldview.

TPUSA originally purported to be dedicated to promoting conservative views in higher education



and protecting free speech principles. However, TPUSA increasingly takes aggressive action to silence political speech and attack educational institutions as a collective. In 2016, TPUSA launched its “Professor Watchlist,” targeting professors it accused of promoting “a radical agenda.” In 2021, TPUSA expanded these efforts with its “School Board Watchlist.” TPUSA also continues to play an influential role in the growing movement to ban books and censor inclusive education in schools. According to TPUSA, efforts to teach students about institutionalized racism and hard histories are fundamentally racist and harmful to children’s development.

During the summer of 2022, TPUSA expanded its effort to replace inclusive education with

Christian nationalism with the introduction of Turning Point Academy. Turning Point Academy is a subdivision of the organization working to open Christian schools, develop educational resources and organize a political movement dedicated to “RESTORING God as the foundation of education,” according to the TPUSA website.

In June 2024, Turning Point Academy held a summit for educators, featuring Alex Newman, a longtime contributor to the John Birch Society’s magazine, *The New American*, and author of the book *Indoctrinating Our Children to Death: Government Schools’ War on Faith, Family, and Freedom — And How to Stop It*. At TPUSA’s Educators’ Summit, Newman declared public education went awry when

For TPUSA's narrow vision of womanhood, the most important role women have is to submit to their husbands and serve in the home. Women, men and nonbinary people who deviate from this rigid gender dichotomy are demonized because they threaten the hard right's efforts to maintain white, male, Christian dominance in America.

“the Supreme Court banned the Bible, they banned prayer” from public schools in the early 1960s and falsely claimed that the social-emotional learning offered in public schools is rooted in demonology and teaches students empathy for open borders and abortion. He warned attendees that, when it comes to education, America is engaged in a spiritual battle because “Satan wants the children. Satan wants our country. Satan wants you.”

At the same event, Kirk discouraged participation in school boards, arguing instead, “If you’re not willing to close the local school, then you shouldn’t be on the school board.” He advocated for the elimination of federal and state departments of education and told the audience that America’s economy should be one where “the female” doesn’t have to enter the workforce if she chooses not to do so. The usage of the word “female” by the hard right has increased in popularity as a means of reducing women to their reproductive abilities alone.

Hard-right extremists often see education as a low-hanging fruit. Efforts like Turning Point Academy exacerbate existing parental fears and instill new ones, while continuing to attack the institution of public education.

‘If we’re going to win the culture war, we have to start at home’

Turning Point USA also exploits fear to advocate for increasingly restrictive gender roles and a system of male supremacy. TPUSA activists have long decried feminism as a destructive force that threatens every aspect of American life. At TPUSA’s 2024 Young Women’s Leadership Summit (YWLS), Alex Clark warned attendees to “stop outsourcing the home” and putting children at risk through dependence on public education. “Children are under attack, and you and I have to protect them,” she warned.

Alex Clark is a TPUSA pop culture and lifestyle influencer and the host of POPolitics and Culture Apothecary (formerly The Spillover) podcasts. TPUSA describes the role of the conservative pop culture shows as, “politics is always downstream from culture, and if we can reach people where they’re at culturally — that’s how we influence our nation.” Clark has used her platform to attack day care and make the false claim that hormonal birth control can make people bisexual. Her Instagram page sprinkles these views among sponsored content and carefully curated photos. She plays a crucial role in TPUSA’s effort to soften its extremist positions by putting women at the forefront of its male supremacist work.

Clark, Kirk and other key figures have called on young women and girls to abandon their educational and career aspirations in favor of their

“natural” position as wives and mothers. Kirk once asserted, “More younger women need to get married at a young age and start having kids. The single woman issue is one of the biggest issues facing a civilization.” At another TPUSA event, Owens defended this need to pull women away from social and political life. “Every ill we are fighting right now in society has been brought forth by women.”

According to Owens, one of those ills includes “transgenderism,” which she credits to feminist efforts. TPUSA frames the existence of trans people — trans women in particular — as an existential threat to womanhood.

At the 2024 YWLS, Kirk argued the acceptance of gay marriage allowed for the “abolition” of what it means to be a man or woman. “First, they wanted you to affirm, and then they wanted you to celebrate and then they wanted you to participate. And if you don’t, they are willing to destroy your life,” Kirk said of LGBTQ+ people.

Kirk helped lead a boycott against Target in June 2022 for its Pride collection, insisting it amounted to “support for grooming kids.” In 2023, *Rolling Stone* revealed that a registered sex offender was the leader of a Christian fashion company that sponsored TPUSA’s 2023 Pastors’ Summit. Kirk defended the man, who was convicted and served federal prison time for trying to coerce an underage girl into sex, as “a nice person who did something wrong over a decade ago” before doubling down on Target being the true threat to the safety of children.

The hard right has historically used narratives about maternal responsibility and manufactured threats to children to mobilize women. White nationalist propaganda is full of depictions of mothers with their children, and “securing our future one child at a time” is the motto of Women for Aryan Unity. Mothers’ organizations were at the forefront of segregationist efforts, battles over school curricula and campaigns to uphold patriarchal systems. QAnon’s #SaveTheChildren campaign provided a powerful entry point into the violent conspiracy theory by feeding off parental anxiety — particularly for mothers — at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For TPUSA’s narrow vision of womanhood, the most important role women have is to submit to their husbands and serve in the home. Women, men and nonbinary people who deviate from this rigid gender dichotomy are demonized because they threaten the hard right’s efforts to maintain white, male, Christian dominance in America.

At its founding, Turning Point USA insisted it was committed to promoting free conservative speech on college campuses. Early on, Kirk avoided controversial social issues, including abortion and racism, and preached the virtues of America’s secular government. He praised Martin Luther King Jr. as a “hero” and a “civil rights icon,” and TPUSA sold \$55 shirts featuring his image. Today, Kirk condemns King as “awful” and “not a good person” as part of TPUSA’s broader effort to discredit civil rights legislation.

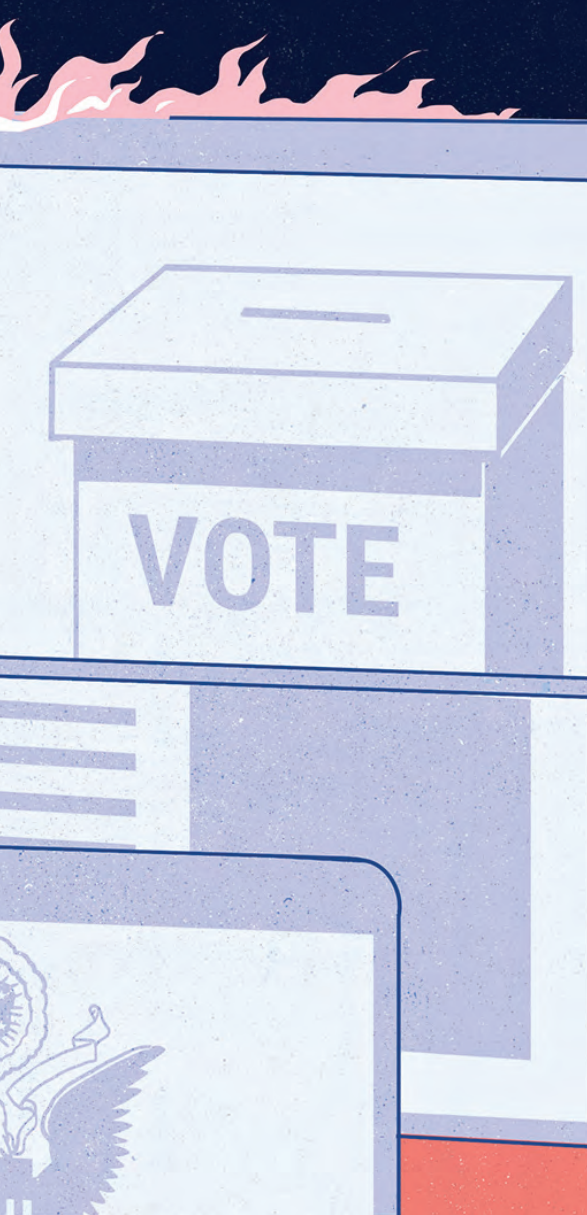
As he positions his organization to be at the forefront of every culture war, Kirk has even directed supporters: “Buy weapons. Buy ammo. If you go into a public place, bring a gun with you.”

Turning Point USA’s effort to sow fear and division to enforce social hierarchies rooted in supremacy is emblematic of the hard right’s broader political project to destroy our foundational democratic principles and institutions. ●



Understanding Telegram's Toxic Recommendations

By **Megan Squire** and **Creede Newton**



Telegram is a social media and messaging application that is popular worldwide but was less commonly used in the U.S. until 2019, when extremists adopted it as their go-to social media platform.

Following the 2019 massacre in Christchurch, New Zealand, the 2020 rise of QAnon and the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, U.S.-based platforms such as Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) began to ban, or “deplatform,” users who violated their terms of service by posting hate speech or disinformation. Many of these users turned to Telegram as a replacement. Telegram is free, broadly available across servers and smartphones and has most of the features found on these other platforms, including channels to spread propa-

ganda and chats for small-group messaging. Most importantly for its extremist users, Telegram also has relatively lax content-moderation practices.

A broad variety of extremist groups and individuals, including neo-Nazis, antisemites, conspiracy theorists, Proud Boys, QAnon influencers and others, were operating openly on Telegram in 2024, spreading propaganda, recruiting new adherents and forming communities. On Jan. 13, 2025, the Department of State even designated the Telegram Collective, a group of neo-Nazis operating on Telegram, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists.

To understand the way these extremists interact on Telegram, the Southern Poverty Law Center Data Lab collected a trove of data from the “similar channels” feature that Telegram launched in late 2023. Telegram calculates the proportion of users of one channel who are also on other channels, recommending these as “similar channels.” By collecting these recommendations for a large number of extremist channels, we were able to uncover the joining patterns that undergird Telegram, including crossover between channels and neighborhoods of channels.

The results show that Telegram users are regularly suggested extremist channels, even those who are brand new to the platform, or who are browsing channels that are ostensibly about nonpolitical subjects such as celebrities or technology. The SPLC also found that users who elect to consume extremist content from one ideology or belief system, such as antigovernment conspiracy theories or election disinformation, can find themselves being “suggested” channels from other extremist ideologies such as antisemitism or white nationalism. ●

The results of this research were featured in the BBC documentary series “Panorama” on Dec. 16, 2024.

Since the report came out in December 2024, Telegram has begun restricting which channels offer recommendations. It is unclear what rules or thresholds they are using to make this decision, but some of the extremist channels highlighted in the SPLC’s report are no longer displaying channel recommendations at all.

Figures to Know



QAnon

QAnon is the umbrella term for a sprawling spiderweb of right-wing internet conspiracy theories with antisemitic and anti-LGBTQ+ elements that falsely claim the world is run by a secret cabal of pedophiles who worship Satan and are plotting against President Trump. Though some influential individuals are active in the movement, it is not an organized group with defined leadership.



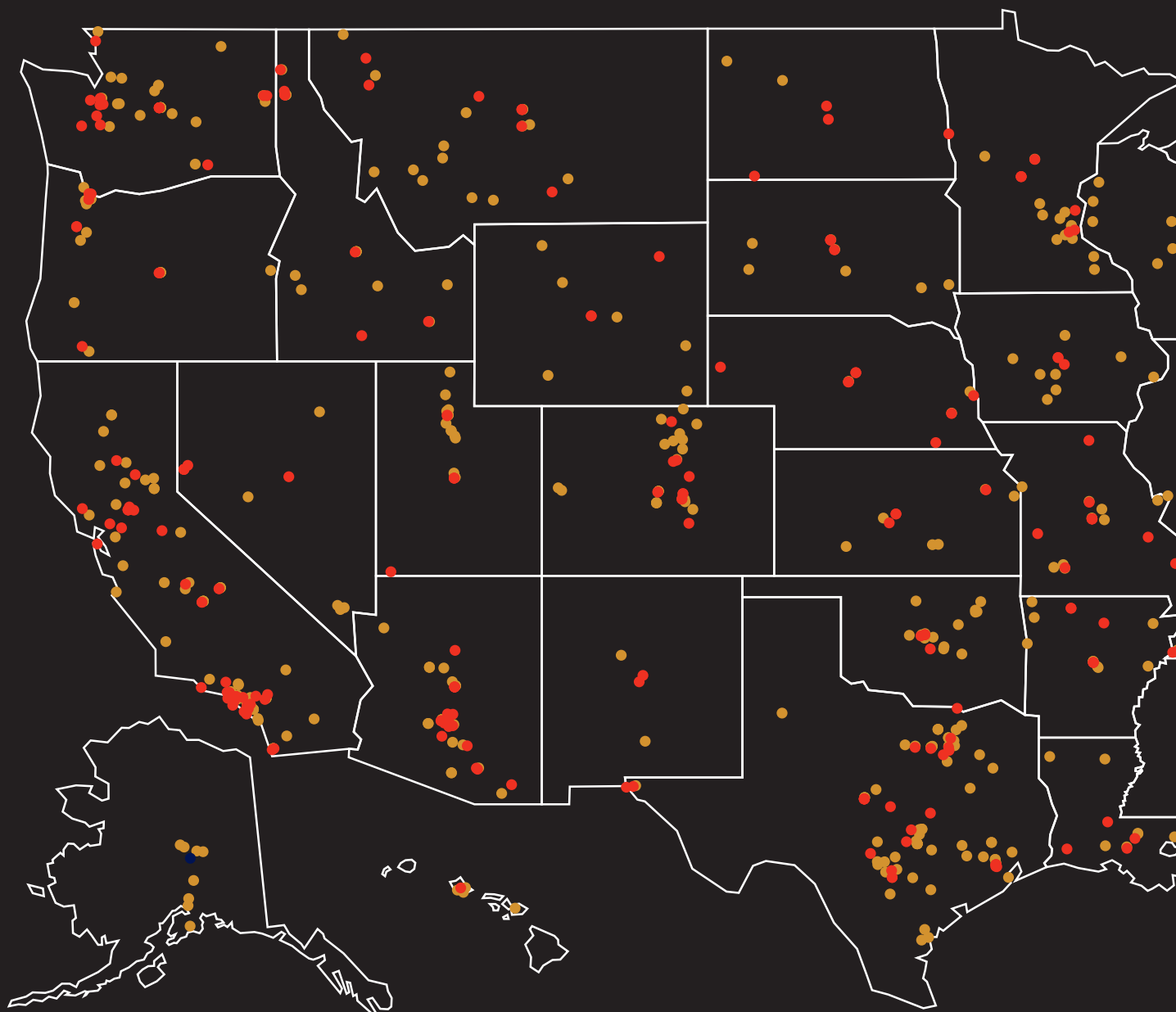
Proud Boys

Established in the midst of the 2016 presidential election by Vice Media co-founder Gavin McInnes, the Proud Boys are self-described “Western chauvinists” who adamantly deny any connection to the racist “alt-right.” They insist they are simply a fraternal group spreading an “anti-political correctness” and “anti-white guilt” agenda.



For more information, go to splcenter.org/resources/hatewatch/telegram

Active Hate & Antigovernment Groups

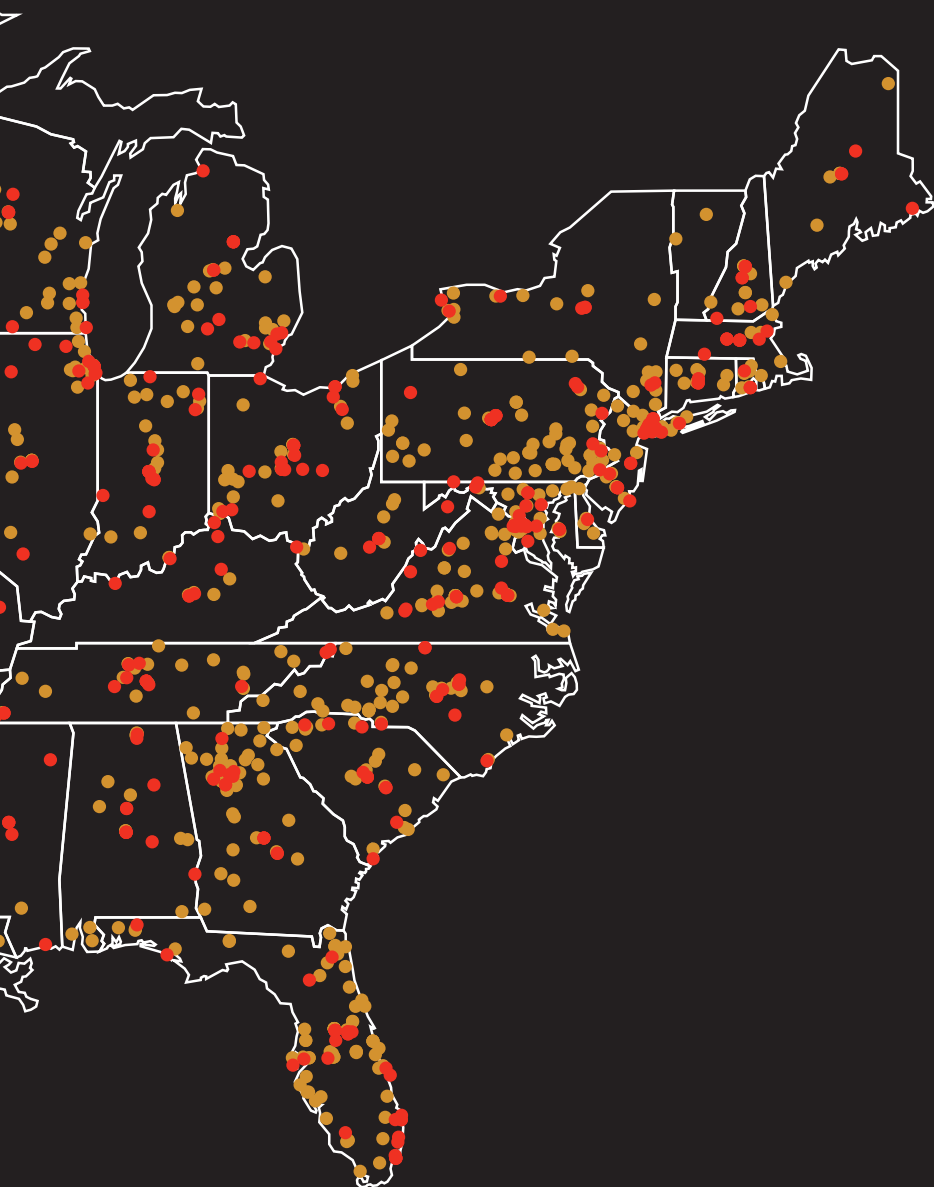


Groups

838

Antigovernment Groups

- 618** General Antigovernment
- 56** Conspiracy Propaganda
- 5** Constitutional Sheriff
- 16** Christian Supremacy
- 52** Militia
- 91** Sovereign Citizen



533

Hate Groups

- 17** Anti-Immigrant
- 96** Anti-LGBTQ+
- 31** Anti-Muslim
- 14** Antisemitism
- 9** Christian Identity
- 76** General Hate
- 10** Hate Music
- 14** Ku Klux Klan
- 16** Male Supremacy
- 4** Neo-Confederate
- 61** Neo-Nazi
- 49** Neo-Völkisch
- 10** Racist Skinhead
- 8** Radical Traditional Catholicism
- 118** White Nationalist



Explore our interactive
Hate Map by scanning
the QR code or by visiting
splcenter.org/hate-map

Extremist Ideologies & Definitions

Antigovernment Groups

Antigovernment General Antigovernment groups are part of the antidemocratic hard-right movement. They believe the federal government is tyrannical, and they traffic in conspiracy theories about an illegitimate government of leftist elites seeking a “New World Order.” In addition to groups that generally espouse these ideas, the movement is composed of sovereign citizens, militias, overt conspiracy propagandists and constitutional sheriff groups. In the past, this movement was referred to as the “Patriot” movement by adherents and critics.

Christian Supremacy Christian supremacy is the idea that Christians have the God-given right or duty to rule, govern and control society, culture and politics. Those who espouse Christian supremacist theologies or ideas understand “Christian” in a very limited sense. Christians who do not agree with supremacist claims are often cast as part of the larger “enemy,” against which Christian supremacy directs its ire. This “enemy,” often described in terms of “communists,” “Marxists,” “godless,” and even “demonic,” is broad enough to include not only other Christians but liberals, progressives, and marginalized groups.

Conspiracy Propagandists Conspiracy propagandists aim to delegitimize government institutions or government officials by stoking fears concerning door-to-door gun confiscations, martial law, supposed takeover of the U.S. by the “New World Order” or “Deep State,” and anxieties around the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Constitutional Sheriffs The origins of constitutional sheriff ideology lie in the two concepts of the county supremacy movement: The county — not the state or federal governments — should control all land within its borders, and the county sheriff should be the ultimate law enforcement authority in the U.S. These ideas were pioneered by Christian Identity minister William Potter Gale in the 1970s and described as “Posse Comitatus.”

Militia Movement Militia groups are characterized by their obsession with field training exercises (FTXs), guns, uniforms typically resembling those

worn in the armed forces and a warped interpretation of the Second Amendment. Antigovernment militia groups engage in firearm training and maintain internal hierarchical command structures.

Sovereign Citizens Movement Sovereign citizens believe they are not under the jurisdiction of the federal government and consider themselves exempt from U.S. law. They use a variety of conspiracy theories and falsehoods to justify their beliefs and their activities, some of which are illegal or violent. Their rejection of legal documentation such as Social Security numbers, driver’s licenses, vehicle registration and other forms of government identification lead to frequent interactions with law enforcement.

Hate Groups

Anti-Immigrant Anti-immigrant hate groups are the most extreme of the hundreds of nativist and vigilante groups that have proliferated since the late 1990s, when anti-immigrant xenophobia began to rise to levels not seen in the U.S. since the 1920s.

Anti-LGBTQ+ A central theme of anti-LGBTQ+ organizing and ideology is the opposition to LGBTQ+ rights or support of homophobia, heterosexism and/or cisnormativity, often expressed through demonizing rhetoric and grounded in harmful pseudoscience that portrays LGBTQ+ people as threats to children, society and often public health.

Anti-Muslim Anti-Muslim hate groups broadly defame Islam and traffic in conspiracy theories of Muslims being a subversive threat to the nation. These groups largely appeared after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and mix racism and anti-immigrant ideas. Their rise breeds a climate of fear, hate and intimidation directed toward Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim.

Antisemitism Antisemitic hate groups hold Jewish people collectively responsible for society’s ills, believing they possess outsized, worldwide societal influence that they use to create social, economic and political instability for their own benefit. Antisemitism undergirds much of the far right, unifying adherents in their belief that Jewish peo-

ple pose the primary threat to white social dominance. Antisemitic groups and actors also distort and deny the reality of the Holocaust to cast Jews as conniving opportunists.

Christian Identity Christian Identity (CID) is an antisemitic, racist theology that gained a foothold during the Civil Rights Era and reached a prominent position within the racist right by the 1980s. “Christian” in name only, CID doctrine claims that white people, not Jewish individuals, are the true Israelites favored by God in the Bible. The movement has maintained a contentious relationship with evangelicals and fundamentalists, who believe that the return of Jewish people to Israel is essential for fulfilling end-time prophecy.

General Hate Groups in this category peddle a combination of well-known hate and conspiracy theories, in addition to unique bigotries that are not easily categorized. Several of the groups seek to profit from their bigotry by selling hate materials from several different sectors of the white supremacist movement.

Hate Music Hate music groups are typically music labels that record, publish and distribute racist music of a variety of genres along with products that promote their hateful, often terroristic worldview.

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, adherents also attack Jewish people, persons who have immigrated to the United States, and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Male Supremacy Male supremacy is a hateful ideology rooted in the belief of the supposedly innate superiority of cisgender men and their right to subjugate women, trans men and nonbinary people.

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.

Neo-Nazi Neo-Nazi groups share a hatred for Jews and a love for Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany. While they also hate nonwhite people, LGBTQ+ people and even sometimes Christians, they perceive “the Jew” as their cardinal enemy.

Neo-Völkisch Born out of an atavistic defiance of modernity and rationalism, present-day neo-Völkisch, or Folkish, adherents and groups are organized around ethnocentricity and archaic notions of gender.

Radical Traditional Catholicism For “radical traditionalist” Catholics, antisemitism is an inextricable part of their theology. They subscribe to an ideology that is rejected by the Vatican and some 70 million mainstream American Catholics.

Racist Skinhead Racist skinheads have long been among the most violent-minded elements of the white power movement. During the 1980s, 1990s and the mid-2000s, particularly, the movement rose to prominence through the lucrative, international hate music scene. The movement has shrunk steadily since.

White Nationalist White nationalist groups espouse white supremacist or white separatist ideologies, often focusing on the alleged inferiority of nonwhite groups. They frequently claim that white people are persecuted by society and even the victims of a racial genocide. Their primary goal is to create a white ethnostate. Groups listed in a variety of other categories, including Ku Klux Klan, neo-Confederate, neo-Nazi, racist skinhead and Christian Identity, could also be fairly described as white nationalist.

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