



June 2, 2025

The Honorable John Thune  
Majority Leader  
The United States Senate  
S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Minority Leader  
The United States Senate  
S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C., 20510

**Re: VOTE NO on the Confirmation of Joe Kent to serve as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center**

Dear Majority Leader Thune and Minority Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) and Western States Center (WSC) and the 46 undersigned national, state, and local organizations, we write to convey our strong opposition to the confirmation of Joe Kent to serve as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC).

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is a civil and human rights organization that has been working as a catalyst for racial justice since 1971. For decades, we have tracked extremist groups operating across the country and published investigative reports and expert analysis that have informed the media, policymakers, and the public. Each year, our annual *Year in Hate and Extremism* report documents the landscape of hate groups and anti-government extremists in the U.S., tracking their growing influence, organization, and reach into communities nationwide.<sup>1</sup>

The Western States Center (WSC) has worked for nearly forty years to build a more equitable and inclusive democracy. Rooted in the Pacific Northwest and Mountain West, we work in local communities nationwide to defend against the threats, intimidation, and violence that bigoted and anti-democracy movements use to build power. Our experts monitor white nationalist and other anti-democracy actors in our region and nationally, leveraging our analysis to inform and empower communities and institutions to confront these threats.<sup>2</sup>

Evaluating any nominee requires assessing not only their personal background, knowledge, and experience but also how their qualifications align with the mission of the agency and their role. In a letter to Senators dated January 10, 2025,<sup>3</sup> the SPLC stressed the need to evaluate each presidential nominee based on their expertise, character, and commitment to upholding the law, including: a firm dedication to preserving the independence of their respective agency from partisan influence; a proven track record of supporting or vigorously enforcing federal law, particularly civil rights laws, as well as a commitment to guarding against the weaponization of agencies; a willingness to defend against any efforts to dilute or weaken federal laws; an abiding

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<sup>1</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center, *The Year in Hate and Extremism 2023*, June 4, 2024, <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/guides/year-hate-extremism-2023/>.

<sup>2</sup> Western States Center, <https://www.westernstatescenter.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Huang and LaShawn Warren, *Letter to senators urging careful evaluation of President-elect Trump's administrative nominees*, Southern Poverty Law Center (Jan. 10, 2025), <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/policies/letter-to-senators-urging-careful-evaluation-of-president-elect-trumps-administrative-nominees/>.



respect for the role of government and the critical contributions of career public servants; and a demonstrated commitment to advancing their respective agency's work in upholding our nation's promise of equality and justice for all.

The Director of the NCTC must be a highly qualified individual who has the expertise, independence, and good judgment necessary to lead coordination of our nation's intelligence gathering and analysis – without compromising constitutional rights and liberties and without prejudice or political bias.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Kent's record, past statements, and associations makes clear he does not meet that standard.

### **Mr. Kent Is Unqualified – and Cannot be Trusted to Lead the Nation's Counterterrorism Coordinating Agency**

The NCTC was created in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks to improve intelligence coordination and prevent future threats.<sup>5</sup> Initially established by President George W. Bush,<sup>6</sup> the NCTC was later codified by Congress through the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 which formally established its role as the federal government's central hub for analyzing and integrating terrorism-related intelligence.<sup>7</sup> The Center works closely with the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and other agencies to lead both international and domestic counterterrorism efforts.<sup>8</sup>

Such a role requires a leader with proven expertise, sound judgment, and a clear commitment to protecting both national security and civil liberties – without political bias or prejudice. Mr. Kent meets none of these criteria. Mr. Kent's has embraced discredited anti-government conspiracy theories – including that the FBI and the intelligence community were involved in the January 6, 2021 deadly attack at the U.S. Capitol.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, his connections with bigoted individuals, far-right violent extremists, and anti-democratic movements<sup>10</sup> and his frequent threats that, once in power, he would target Black activists and treat them as domestic terrorists,<sup>11</sup> makes him a threat to public safety and civil liberties. Mr. Kent lacks the professional qualifications to lead and manage this large and complex institution, and his record and associations should disqualify him from working in any government agency, let alone serving in this crucial national security leadership role.

The NCTC, the FBI, and the DHS have repeatedly documented that the most lethal domestic terrorist threat to our country are racially motivated violent extremists who advocate for the

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<sup>4</sup> Center for Presidential Transition, *Director of the National Counterterrorism Center*,

[https://presidentialtransition.org/position\\_description/director-of-national-counterterrorism-center-2/](https://presidentialtransition.org/position_description/director-of-national-counterterrorism-center-2/)

<sup>5</sup> National Commission of Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *9-11 Commission Report* (last updated August 21, 2004), <https://9-11commission.gov/report/>.

<sup>6</sup> George Bush, *Executive Order 13354*, Federal Register (Aug. 27, 2004), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2004-09-01/pdf/04-20050.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, 50 USC § 401 (2004),

<https://www.congress.gov/108/statute/STATUTE-118/STATUTE-118-Pg3638.pdf>

<https://www.congress.gov/108/statute/STATUTE-118/STATUTE-118-Pg3638.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Michael E. DeVine and Heidi M. Peters, *National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC)*, Congressional Research Service (Apr. 10, 2017), <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/intel/IF10709.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Joe Kent, *Post*, X (Jul. 29, 2021), <https://x.com/joekent16jan19/status/1420607306266382342> (commenting on the January 6<sup>th</sup> insurrection).

<sup>10</sup> Brian Slodysko, *GOP's links to extremism surface in congressional primary*, Associated Press (Jul. 27, 2022, 12:15 AM EDT), <https://apnews.com/article/2022-midterm-elections-donald-trump-campaigns-race-and-ethnicity-be616cae0967ca6ee9c78ac1efee8e31>.

<sup>11</sup> Joe Kent, *Reward Law Enforcement that Enforces the Rule of Law*, YouTube (Jun. 9, 2021), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_VkpssNvEUQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VkpssNvEUQ).



superiority of the white race and violent anti-government extremists.<sup>12</sup> A 2022 report from the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee reaffirmed that finding, stating that the increase in domestic terror attacks “has been predominantly perpetrated by white supremacist and anti-government extremist individuals and groups.”<sup>13</sup> That report concluded that “the federal government – specifically FBI and DHS – has failed to systematically track and report data on domestic terrorism as required by federal law, has not appropriately allocated its resources to match the current threat, and has not aligned its definitions to make its investigations consistent and its actions proportional to the threat of domestic terrorism.”<sup>14</sup>

**Mr. Kent has Worked to Smear Black Activists and Peaceful Protesters as Terrorists, While Downplaying the Violence of January 6 Insurrectionists**

In the summer of 2020, over 93 percent of protests associated with the Black Lives Matter movement were peaceful.<sup>15</sup> Over 26 million people participated in protests, making it likely the largest protest movement in American history.<sup>16</sup> However, Mr. Kent has repeatedly stated that Black Lives Matter activists and other protesters must be targeted, arrested, and prosecuted as part of terrorist organizations.<sup>17</sup> In a response to pre-hearing questions after his nomination, Mr. Kent confirmed that he maintained this view.<sup>18</sup> The suggestion that government resources should be used to target a largely peaceful movement led by Black activists calls into question Mr. Kent’s ability to objectively assess terrorist threats.

At the same time, Mr. Kent has promoted baseless conspiracy theories seeking to excuse or shift blame for the violent January 6 insurrection. Mr. Kent has promoted the false idea that the FBI and the intelligence community were involved in “planning/directing the riot.”<sup>19</sup> At the September 18, 2021, *Justice for J6* rally in Washington, DC, Kent referred to individuals convicted of crimes associated with the January 6 violent attack on the U.S. Capitol as “political prisoners.”<sup>20</sup> During his 2020 campaign for Washington’s third congressional district, Mr. Kent

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<sup>12</sup> FBI, DHS, NCTC, *Special Analysis: Wide-Ranging Domestic Violent Extremist Threat to Persist*, Joint Analytic Cell (Jun. 17, 2022), [DHS-FBI-NCTC-DomesticExtremistThreatPersists.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022/06/DHS-FBI-NCTC-DomesticExtremistThreatPersists.pdf) see also: U.S. Government Accountability Office, *The Rising Threat of Domestic Terrorism in the U.S. and Federal Efforts to Combat It*, GAO (Mar. 2, 2023), <https://www.gao.gov/blog/rising-threat-domestic-terrorism-u.s.-and-federal-efforts-combat-it>.

<sup>13</sup> Senator Gary Peters, *The Rising Threat of Domestic Terrorism*, U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs (Nov. 2022), [https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/imo/media/doc/221116\\_HSGACMajorityReport\\_DomesticTerrorism&SocialMedia.pdf](https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/imo/media/doc/221116_HSGACMajorityReport_DomesticTerrorism&SocialMedia.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Roudabeh Kishi, Sam Jones. *Demonstrations and Political Violence in America: New Data for Summer 2020*, ACLED (Sept. 3, 2020), <https://acleddata.com/2020/09/03/demonstrations-political-violence-in-america-new-data-for-summer-2020/>.

<sup>16</sup> Larry Buchanan, Quoc Trung Bui, Jugal K. Patel, *Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History*, The New York Times (July 3, 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>.

<sup>17</sup> “We need to treat antifa and BLM like terrorist organizations... We need to use the tools of the federal government, the FBI, the US Marshals—go after them like organized criminals and terrorists. So, when we start arresting these guys and charging them with federal terrorism charges, that’s going to take away a lot of the incentive to go out and riot.” Noah Lanard, *Trump’s Pick for Counterterrorism Called for Arresting BLM Leaders as Terrorists*, Mother Jones (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/02/joe-kent-trump-blm-terrorism-counterterrorism-tulsi-gabbard-nomination/>.

<sup>18</sup> Select Committee on Intelligence, *Prehearing Questions for Joseph Kent upon his nomination to be the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center*, United States Senate (April 9, 2025), [https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/aphq-jkent-040925\\_0.pdf](https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/aphq-jkent-040925_0.pdf).

<sup>19</sup> Joe Kent, *Post*, X (Jul. 29, 2021), <https://x.com/joekent16/jan19/status/1420607306266382342> (Kent criticizes credibility of DCPD Officer Michael Fanone’s account of January 6th Insurrection).

<sup>20</sup> Noah Lanard, *Joe Kent’s Forever War*, Mother Jones (Oct. 5, 2022), <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2022/10/joe-kent-green-beret-portland-hererra-beutler-gluesenkamp-perez/>.



made a campaign video criticizing the House vote to create the January 6th Select Committee, stating that the bipartisan committee was created to further “the Democrats’ narrative that January 6 was an insurrection against our government and that it was, somehow, planned and directed by President Trump.”<sup>21</sup>

Mr. Kent is currently serving as an aide to Director of National Security Tulsi Gabbard. At his confirmation hearing, Kent stated that he and others in the Intelligence Community are currently investigating the role of the FBI Washington Field Office in the violence of January 6<sup>th</sup>.<sup>22</sup>

### **Promotion of Xenophobic Bigotry and Conspiratorial Rhetoric**

Following the Trump Administration’s recent designation of several Latin American criminal cartels and gangs as foreign terrorist organizations, Mr. Kent has stated that, if confirmed, this area would be a priority for the NCTC, and that individuals purported to be associated with these organizations could be included in national counterterrorism watchlists.<sup>23</sup> This focus on the Southern border would be especially concerning, because Mr. Kent has endorsed conspiratorial rhetoric suggesting that irregular migration at the Southern border is part of a nefarious “invasion” supported by American politicians, stating: “The left is supporting an invasion of illegal immigrants to replace American voters and undercut working class jobs.”<sup>24</sup>

Such language is dangerous and irresponsible. Multiple domestic terror attacks – from the slaughter of 11 Jewish worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2018,<sup>25</sup> to the 2019 murder of 23 people targeted for being Hispanic in El Paso, Texas,<sup>26</sup> to the 2022 murder of 10 Black people at a supermarket in Buffalo New York<sup>27</sup> – were committed by people who used exactly this sort of language to rationalize their actions. The Senate should reject any nominee that promotes the harmful and false anti-immigrant “invasion” or “replacement” language, especially one who would have substantial responsibility for intelligence analysis on the Southern border.

### **Promotion of Racial and Islamophobic Bigotry**

Mr. Kent has said “[e]specially now, with CRT, I don’t think there’s anything wrong with there being a, like, a white people special interest group. They have to, you know, I think be very careful about the way they couch that and the way they frame that...”<sup>28</sup> In addition, in an online

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<sup>21</sup> Joe Kent, *January 6th commission*, YouTube (May, 20, 2021), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9MTUC8Y-IO>.

<sup>22</sup> Select Committee on Intelligence, *Open Hearing*, United States Senate (April 9, 2025), <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/hearings/open-hearing-nominations-aaron-lukas-be-principal-deputy-director-national-intelligence>.

<sup>23</sup> Select Committee on Intelligence, *Prehearing Questions for Joseph Kent upon his nomination to be the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center*, United States Senate (April 9, 2025), [https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/aphq-jkent-040925\\_0.pdf](https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/aphq-jkent-040925_0.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Erin Mansfield, Candy Woodall, *Republican politicians all over the country have repeated the Great Replacement theory*, USA Today (May 29, 2022), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2022/05/29/republicans-great-replacement-theory/9798199002/>.

<sup>25</sup> Matt Sciavenza, Ayelet Parness, *Deep Dive: The Great Replacement Theory*, HIAS (Nov. 1, 2024), <https://hias.org/news/deep-dive-great-replacement-theory/>.

<sup>26</sup> Stephania Taladrid, “The Legacy of the El Paso Shooting,” *The New Yorker*, Aug. 8, 2023, at <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/the-legacy-of-the-el-paso-shooting>.

<sup>27</sup> Jason Wilson and Aaron Flanagan, *The Racist ‘Great Replacement’ Conspiracy Theory Explained*, SPLC (May 17, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/hatewatch/racist-great-replacement-conspiracy-theory-explained/>.

<sup>28</sup> J.D. Wolf, *Trump Endorsed GOP Candidate: Nothing Wrong With “White People” “Special Interest Group.”* MTN (Jul. 29, 2024), <https://meidasnews.com/news/trump-endorsed-gop-candidate-nothing-wrong-with-white-people-special-interest-group>.



exchange in 2021, Mr. Kent described Islam as “based on conquest at its core.”<sup>29</sup> In other comments, he has conflated support for Palestinian human rights with support for the terrorist group Hamas, smearing political figures as “pro-Hamas.”<sup>30</sup> Given Mr. Kent’s stated intent to prioritize Islamist terrorism as NCTC Director,<sup>31</sup> this Islamophobic bigotry is especially concerning. Especially because the United States intelligence community has a long history of warrantless surveillance and civil rights violations targeting Arab and Muslim Americans, the NCTC Director must be an individual who can be trusted to uphold the civil rights and liberties of all Americans, including Muslim and Arab Americans. Mr. Kent is not that person.

### **Associations with White Nationalists, Violent Groups, and Anti-Democracy actors**

Mr. Kent cannot be relied upon to appropriately assess and act on international far-right hate and extremism as the Director of the NCTC, given his associations with the movement here in the US. Mr. Kent participated in a call discussing campaign social media strategy with white nationalist and antisemite Nick Fuentes. Kent also criticized Twitter’s move to de-platform Fuentes, tagging him in a Twitter post.<sup>32</sup> In June 2022, Mr. Kent gave an interview to Greyson Arnold, a live streamer who once referred to Hitler as “a complicated historical figure which many people misunderstand.”<sup>33</sup> In both cases, Mr. Kent disavowed the figures and claimed he did not know who they were prior to interaction with them. During his 2022 run for Congress, Kent invited far-right Patriot Prayer founder Joey Gibson to speak at a campaign rally and introduced him with praise.<sup>34</sup> Patriot Prayer is a far-right group, active in the Pacific Northwest, that has hosted and promoted rallies in progressive cities like Portland, frequently engaging in violence against their political opponents. Patriot Prayer rallies have regularly included the Proud Boys, paramilitary groups, white nationalists, and other antigovernment extremist groups.<sup>35</sup> At a time when the FBI, DHS, and NCTC have all identified white supremacist and anti-government actors as the most lethal domestic terror threat to the United States<sup>36</sup>— and when a 2022 Senate Homeland Security report confirmed that most recent domestic terror attacks have come from these groups<sup>37</sup> — Mr. Kent’s record is not only deeply troubling, it raises serious concerns about his willingness or ability to take these threats seriously.

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<sup>29</sup> Liz Yates, *Joe Kent should not be federal counterterrorism leader*, Seattle Times (updated Feb. 27, 2025), <https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/joe-kent-should-not-be-federal-counterterrorism-leader/>

<sup>30</sup> Joe Kent, *Post*, X (Dec. 20, 2023), <https://x.com/joekent16jan19/status/1737607239387746449>; Joe Kent, *Post*, X (Dec. 11, 2023), <https://x.com/joekent16jan19/status/1734298007972241420>.

<sup>31</sup> Select Committee on Intelligence, *Open Hearing*, United States Senate (April 9, 2025), <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/hearings/open-hearing-nominations-aaron-lukas-be-principal-deputy-director-national-intelligence>.

<sup>32</sup> Brian Slodysko, *GOP’s links to extremism surface in congressional primary*, Associated Press News (Jul. 27, 2022, 12:15 AM EDT), <https://apnews.com/article/2022-midterm-elections-donald-trump-campaigns-race-and-ethnicity-be616cae0967ca6ee9c78ac1efee8e31>.

<sup>33</sup> Jason Wilson, Hannah Gais, and Cassie Miller, *No Red Wave for Extremists*, SPLC (Nov. 9, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/hatewatch/no-red-wave-extremists/>.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Hatewatch Staff, *What We Know About Patriot Prayer*, SPLC (Aug. 31, 2020), <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/hatewatch/what-we-know-about-patriot-prayer/>.

<sup>36</sup> FBI, DHS, NCTC, *Special Analysis: Wide-Ranging Domestic Violent Extremist Threat to Persist*, Joint Analytic Cell (Jun. 17, 2022), [DHS-FBI-NCTC-DomesticExtremistThreatPersists.pdf](#) see also: U.S. Government Accountability Office, *The Rising Threat of Domestic Terrorism in the U.S. and Federal Efforts to Combat It*, GAO (Mar. 2, 2023), <https://www.gao.gov/blog/rising-threat-domestic-terrorism-u.s.-and-federal-efforts-combat-it>.

<sup>37</sup> Senator Gary Peters, *The Rising Threat of Domestic Terrorism*, U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs (Nov. 2022), [https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/imo/media/doc/221116\\_HSGACMajorityReport\\_DomesticTerrorism&SocialMedia.pdf](https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/imo/media/doc/221116_HSGACMajorityReport_DomesticTerrorism&SocialMedia.pdf).



### **Mr. Kent Lacks the Commitment to Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Necessary to Lead the NCTC**

The potential threat of confirming Mr. Kent or any Director for the NCTC without a strong commitment to civil rights has significantly grown following several harmful actions taken by the Trump administration that simultaneously undermine efforts to counter domestic extremist threats, while invoking the specter of international terrorism to target individuals in the United States based on political activity. The first of these is the deeply disturbing decision President Trump made to commute sentences and offer pardons to more than 1500 individuals who were charged with crimes associated with the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol.<sup>38</sup> The president's action to excuse and even celebrate these illegal attacks is likely to embolden extremist groups and lead to an increase in political intimidation tactics and violence.<sup>39</sup>

In addition, the Administration has begun revoking student visas based on alleged affiliations with Hamas – a designated terrorist organization – frequently without providing evidence of such affiliation.<sup>40</sup> The Administration has also designated several Latin American criminal gangs and cartels as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs), expanding the application of counterterrorism tools and increasing the potential for unwarranted government surveillance and misidentification surrounding a troublingly broad swath of organizations and private citizens with government sanction for allegedly associating or supporting them.<sup>41</sup> Already, hundreds of U.S. residents have been incarcerated in a foreign prison based on alleged affiliation with one of these newly designated cartels, without consideration of due process.<sup>42</sup>

### **Mr. Kent Lacks the Independence and Judgment Necessary to Lead the NCTC**

Also of deep concern in this regard is the fact that the Trump administration has cut tens of millions of dollars that had been allocated to extremism and violence prevention initiatives – including gutting the DHS Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships, which “has awarded nearly \$90 million to community groups and law enforcement agencies working at the local level to prevent terrorism and targeted violence such as mass shootings.”<sup>43</sup> Finally, the Trump administration recently decided to stop funding a national database tracking domestic terrorism, hate crimes and school shootings, eliminating a proven, valuable resource that was

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<sup>38</sup> The White House, Proclamation, *Relating to the Events at or Near the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021*. (January 20, 2021) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/granting-pardons-and-commutation-of-sentences-for-certain-offenses-relating-to-the-events-at-or-near-the-united-states-capitol-on-january-6-2021/>

<sup>39</sup> Dean Jackson and Justin Hendrix, *Nine Experts on the Impact of President Trump's Pardons and Commutations for January 6 Offenders*, Just Security (Feb. 3, 2025), <https://www.justsecurity.org/107288/nine-experts-pardons-january-6/>.

<sup>40</sup> Karina Tsui, *What We Know About the Federal Detention of Activists, Students and Scholars Connected to Universities*, CNN (April 2, 2025), <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/31/us/what-we-know-college-activists-immigration-hnk/index.html>

<sup>41</sup> Rachel Levinson-Waldman, *The Dangerous Sweep of Trump's Plan to Designate Cartels as Terrorist Organizations*, Just Security (February 5, 2025), <https://www.justsecurity.org/107400/trump-plan-cartels-terrorist-organizations/>. Ernesto Castañeda, *The Trump administration says Tren de Aragua is a terrorist group – but it's really a transnational criminal organization. Here's why the label matters*. The Conversation (April 4, 2025), <https://theconversation.com/the-trump-administration-says-tren-de-aragua-is-a-terrorist-group-but-its-really-a-transnational-criminal-organization-heres-why-the-label-matters-252793>.

<sup>42</sup> Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, *These Men Were Deported to El Salvador With No Due Process. Their Stories Show Why an Investigation Is Necessary*. Immigration Impact (April 3, 2025), <https://immigrationimpact.com/2025/04/03/men-deported-el-salvador-stories-investigation/>.

<sup>43</sup> Hannah Allam, *Killing Grants That Have Saved Lives: Trump's Cuts Signal End to Government Work on Terrorism Prevention*, ProPublica (Mar. 20, 2025, 11:59 AM EDT), <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-doge-budget-cuts-terrorism-prevention>.



designed to improve community safety in the face of violent extremist threats.<sup>44</sup> Mr. Kent lacks the professional credentials and qualifications needed to lead the work of the NCTC in any administration. But confirming someone with his background and associations to serve as NCTC Director as part of an administration which has already demonstrated such a skewed perspective on the threat landscape and such little regard for safeguarding constitutional rights should be unthinkable.

### **Conclusion**

The decision to confirm a nominee is a Senator's solemn responsibility which requires measured evaluation and consideration of suitability for the chosen role. The framers of the Constitution established the Senate's "Advice and Consent" role for a reason: to ensure that the nation's and the public's interests – not those of any political party or president – are protected. The confirmation process serves as a crucial check on presidential power, protecting our nation by preventing the appointment of unqualified or unsuitable individuals to lead agencies that impact the everyday lives of millions of Americans.

The person confirmed to lead the NCTC must be trusted to use his national platform to accurately explain the nature and magnitude of actual threats to our nation. At a time when world events, growing political polarization, disinformation, and heightened racial, ethnic, and religious tensions have contributed to significant concerns about far-right domestic extremism and the highest number of hate crimes reported to the FBI on record, all Americans must be assured that the NCTC will be led by professionals who will not target political opponents and will not turn a partisan blind eye to threats posed by far-right and anti-government actors. Joe Kent's record makes clear that he is unfit to lead the NCTC and, therefore, we strongly oppose his nomination for this crucial role.

We urge you to vote NO on his confirmation. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Liz Yates, Western States Center Momentum Program Director, Western States Center, [elizabethy@wscpdx.org](mailto:elizabethy@wscpdx.org) or Michael Lieberman, Senior Policy Counsel for Hate and Extremism, Southern Poverty Law Center, [Michael.Lieberman@splcenter.org](mailto:Michael.Lieberman@splcenter.org).

Sincerely,

### **National Organizations**

Western States Center  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Advancing Justice | AAJC  
Advocates for Trans Equality  
American Oversight  
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action  
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies  
Fair Immigration Reform Movement  
Global Project Against Hate and Extremism  
Hindus for Human Rights  
Hispanic Federation  
Human Rights First  
Interfaith Alliance

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<sup>44</sup> Ellie Silverman, *Trump administration cuts national database tracking domestic terrorism*, Washington Post (Mar. 25, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/03/25/domestic-extremism-database-trump-cuts/>.



Japanese American Citizens League  
Matthew Shepard Foundation  
Minority Veterans of America  
Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC)  
National Immigrant Justice Center  
National Immigration Law Center  
National Urban League  
People for the American Way  
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights  
Witness at the Border  
The Workers Circle

**State and Local organizations**

California Association of Human Relations Organizations  
Family Action Network Movement  
Japanese American Citizens League, Chicago  
Japanese American Citizens League, Dayton Chapter  
Japanese American Citizens League, Cincinnati Chapter  
Japanese American Citizens League, Florin-Sacramento Valley Chapter  
Japanese American Citizens League, Houston Chapter  
Japanese American Citizens League, Idaho Falls Chapter  
Japanese American Citizens League, Mt. Olympus Chapter  
Japanese American Citizens League, Northern California Western Nevada Pacific District  
Japanese American Citizens League, Olympia Chapter, PNWDC  
Japanese American Citizens League, Portland Chapter  
Japanese American Citizens League, Sacramento Chapter  
Japanese American Citizens League, St. Louis Chapter  
Japanese American Citizens League, San Diego  
Japanese American Citizens League, San Jose Chapter  
Japanese American Citizens League, San Mateo  
Japanese American Citizens League, Seabrook Chapter  
Japanese American Citizens League, South Bay  
Japanese American Citizens League, Twin Cities Chapter  
Latino Network  
Oasis Legal Services  
San Jose Nikkei Resisters (SJNR)  
Unidos Bridging Community