

An isometric illustration of a classroom. In the top left, a teacher stands by a blue chalkboard with handwritten text and red lines. Several desks with blue chairs are arranged on the left. In the center, a large red rectangle features a white silhouette of a man in a suit. To its left, a red rectangle shows a white flame. Below the suit figure, a red rectangle contains a white star with black dots. To the right, a large red rectangle depicts a white fist. People in various outfits are scattered throughout the room, interacting with these elements. The floor is a blue and black checkered pattern. A red fire alarm pull station is visible in the bottom left, and a red fire extinguisher is in the top right. A red square with a white triangle is in the bottom right.

SP
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2022

The Year in Hate & Extremism

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.

Explore what's happening in your state at [**splcenter.org/hate-map**](https://splcenter.org/hate-map)

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Illustration by [**Kasia Bojanowska**](#)

Director's Note

Two weeks after the deadly Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection, I joined SPLC to lead its historic work to track, expose and counter hate and extremism in the United States. With our democracy in crisis and the danger of former President Trump's "big lie" exposed, I was hopeful both parties' political leaders would choose to protect our nation from extremists.

I was wrong.

Two years post-insurrection, GOP leaders have unabashedly welcomed notorious antisemites, conspiracy theorists and white nationalists. "We want to cross the Rubicon. We want total war. We must be prepared to do battle in every arena. In the media. In the courtroom. At the ballot box. And in the streets," New York Young Republican Club President Gavin Wax declared at the organization's December black-tie gala.

This is not idle chatter. Over half of Republican respondents to a June 2022 SPLC and Tulchin Research poll reported believing the U.S. is headed toward civil war. Threatened by the growing power of increasing diversity, many on the right seek to return to an America before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and using political violence to accomplish racist goals is now widely accepted.

In 2022, the hard-right movement **mobilized hate and Extremism from the mainstream to the main street**. Extremist actors—often armed—brought hatred into our daily lives and public spaces, protesting LGBTQ inclusion, reproductive rights and classroom discussions of systemic racism.

Founded to ensure civil rights for all, SPLC has deep expertise in monitoring—and holding to account—the Ku Klux Klan, the neo-Nazi movement, racist skinheads, antigovernment militias and other domestic hate groups and extremists.



We do this as part of our work to defend and advance a multiracial, inclusive democracy. The challenges are formidable; we must cast white supremacy out of the mainstream and prevent the violent and racist harms these extremists unleash in our streets, our churches, synagogues and mosques and our schools. In 2022, we created a new DataLab to better track hate across the digital frontier. We established a unit focused on prevention of extremism using public health models. Our investigative reporting led the national media in exposing extremist activity and influence. Our analysts helped policymakers, including the bipartisan House Jan. 6 Special Committee investigation, hold hate perpetrators accountable.

The 2022 edition of *The Year in Hate and Extremism* further uncovers threats to our diverse nation and our daily lives. SPLC will continue to support impacted and vulnerable communities, working in common cause with diverse allies, grassroots activists, policymakers and the media. Together, we can counter extremism and protect our democracy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan Corke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'S' and 'C'.

Susan Corke
Intelligence Project Director

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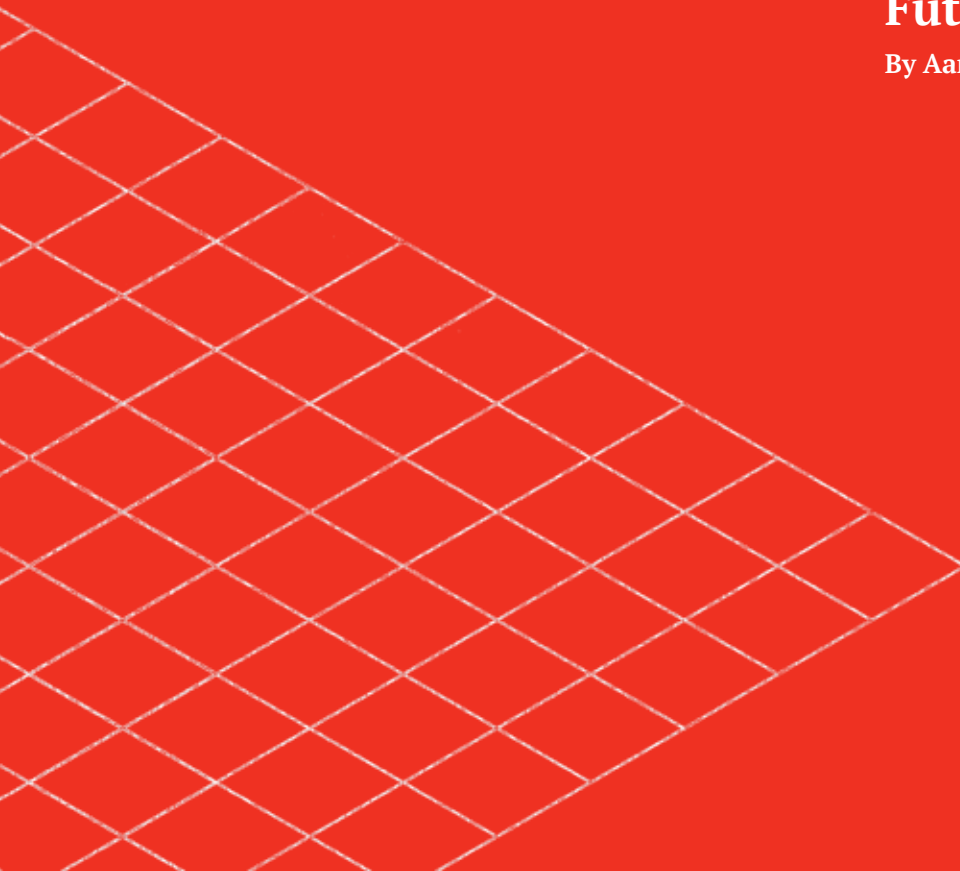
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Hate and Extremism In the Mainstream and on the Main Street

By Cassie Miller and Caleb Kieffer

In 2022, the hard-right movement succeeded in burrowing deeper into people's lives in visible and material ways, even if it did not have widespread electoral success. Its fingerprints are everywhere: people's homes, schools, doctors' offices, libraries, bars, restaurants, churches and other community spaces. The fear and pain experienced by Black, Brown, and LGBTQ communities went far beyond any individual incident, deeply disrupting their ability to participate in an inclusive democracy.

Black and queer people were murdered in shocking acts of violence allegedly motivated by hard-right conspiracy theories. "As long as the White man lives, our land will never be theirs and they will never be safe from us," the alleged white supremacist mass shooter who targeted the Black community in Buffalo, New York wrote in a manifesto. Across the country, states instituted new laws that have forced teachers to cut and alter lessons addressing Black history, impacting student access to inclusive, accurate and education about the country's history of racism.² A wave of anti-LGBTQ demonstrations and harassment campaigns resulted in increased security measures at drag shows, library story hours and Pride celebrations; in many cases, organizers this year cancelled queer community events out of safety concerns. A historic number of anti-trans bills now restrict the rights of trans people and, often, their ability to seek crucial gender-affirming medical care. And, because of the Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision, people in 13 states cannot seek abortions where they live, and face the loss of personal autonomy, injury and even death.

While voters rejected many of the most extreme candidates in the 2022 midterm elections, the country remains in a reactionary political moment—explained, in part, as backlash to progressive successes both real and perceived.³ The right is increasingly expressing fear of a so-called "great replacement" of white people and depicting demands for LGBTQ equity as dangerously radical in the wake of visible progressive mobilizations, including the racial justice protests of 2020 for Black lives and a growing trans rights movement. Backlash is a political strategy employed by the right—one that, the historian Lawrence Glickman has written, shifts the "focus from those denied





equity under the law and demanding justice to those who [imagine] threat or inconvenience in the possibility of social change.”⁴

That backlash has kicked up a swarm of conspiracy theories and racist tropes: Black men are inherently criminal, immigrants are “invading” the country, LGBTQ people are “grooming” children, nefarious actors are throwing our elections, leftists are working through schools and libraries to undermine “traditional” gender roles, young people of color are engaging in voter fraud, and multiculturalism is an ideal designed to replace and eliminate white people. These ideas now circulate widely among influential right-wing figures and within the Republican party, which lends them legitimacy and allows them to influence policy.

The SPLC works to track and expose the activities and harms extremist organizations in the U.S. inflict. These include both hate groups and antigovernment extremist groups. Hate groups hold beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics, while antigovernment groups see the federal government as an enemy of the people

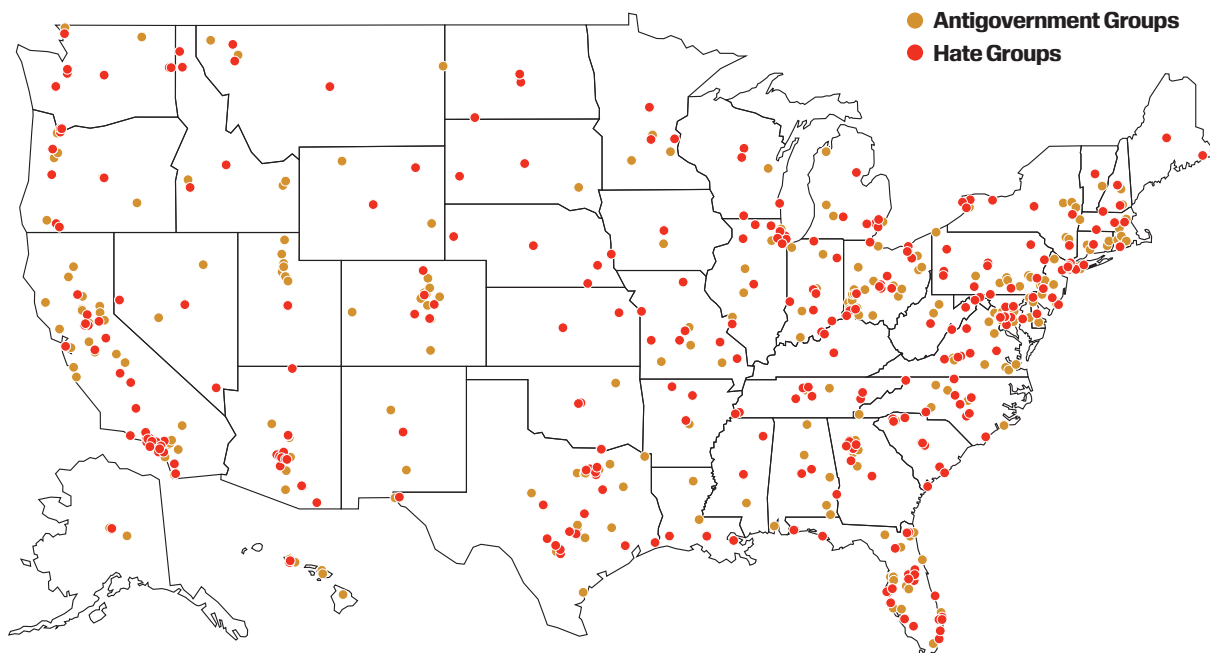
and promote baseless conspiracy theories. These groups often work together, can hold shared beliefs, use similar strategies and negatively impact the same communities.

Hate and antigovernment groups make up the extreme edge of America’s hard right, an inherently antidemocratic movement that rejects pluralism and equity. The movement instead strives to build a society dominated by hierarchy, where people whom far rightists deem lesser or threatening—women, Black and Brown people, LGBTQ people, non-Christians and others—are socially and politically subjugated. The hard right has the advantage of building on already existing structural white supremacy, as well as its persistent and regular manifestations in everyday life and in politics.⁵

In 2022, the SPLC documented 523 hate and 702 antigovernment extremist groups, totaling 1,225 active groups.

The presence of established groups is only one way to gauge the power and impact of the hard right. Through stories, public polling and social media analysis, this report clearly shows the impact of these groups and hard-right figures in the mainstream and

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on Main Street, demonstrating the growing harm and threat they pose to individuals, communities and democracy itself.

Growing GOP extremism

Hate groups, extremist activists, and one of our country's major political parties have become increasingly intertwined since Donald Trump's presidency began. Republican politicians now mingle freely with members of the organized white nationalist movement and employ their rhetoric more freely than at any other time in recent American history.

Indeed, 2022 began with a member of Congress speaking at a white nationalist event. In February, hard-right Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga., was a featured speaker at the America First Political Action Conference hosted by Nick Fuentes, one of the country's most prominent white nationalists and an outspoken antisemite who has repeatedly praised Hitler. Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., Arizona Sen. Wendy Rogers, R-Ariz., and Idaho Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin all prerecorded speeches that were played at the event.

In November, Fuentes and antisemitic rapper and designer Ye (formerly known as Kanye West) ended up at a dinner at Mar-a-Lago with former President Trump, who did not distance himself from the racist and antisemitic activists when their meeting came to light. Instead, he simply posted on Truth Social that he "didn't know Nick Fuentes," and, of Ye, "We got along great, he expressed no anti-Semitism, & I appreciated all of the nice things he said about me on 'Tucker Carlson.'"⁶

Less than three weeks after the Mar-A-Lago meeting, a collection of radical right figures gathered at an event hosted by the New York Young Republican Club (NYYRC) in Manhattan. Donald Trump Jr., Rudy Giuliani, Steve Bannon and Greene hobnobbed with #Pizzagate conspiracy theorist Jack Posobiec, prominent white nationalist activists Peter and Lydia Brimelow, and an array of ultranationalist European leaders.

The NYYRC gala captured the dark mood that has overtaken a growing faction of the American right: one fixated on dominating enemies, ruminating on their own perceived victimhood, and weaving a reality in which dramatic action—including violence—is justified.

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"We want to cross the Rubicon. We want total war. We must be prepared to do battle in every arena. In the media. In the courtroom. At the ballot box. And in the streets."

Gavin Wax

New York Young Republican Club, President

arena. In the media. In the courtroom. At the ballot box. And in the streets," NYYRC president Gavin Wax told attendees.

Greene ventured into even more violent territory, telling the audience that if she and Bannon had planned the Jan. 6 insurrection, "We would have won. Not to mention, it would've been armed." At other events, Greene has alleged that Democrats pose a murderous threat to members of her own party. "I am not going to mince words with you all," she speciously told an audience at a Trump rally in Michigan. "Democrats want Republicans dead and they have already started the killings."

In the two years since the insurrection, the right has only increased the political temperature. Far-right activists have embraced ever more violent rhetoric, while Republican officials consistently fail to acknowledge that their words are contributing to an atmosphere that breeds political violence.

A stark example came in October, when Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband was attacked by a man with a hammer who entered their home asking, "Where is Nancy?" Far-right media and influencers immediately embraced a grab bag of conspiracy theories, purporting, among other things, that the attack was a "false flag" meant to distract from Pelosi's alleged corruption or to give pretext

to persecute conservatives. Elected officials, meanwhile, condemned the attack but roundly chose to ignore the role played by their years of demonizing their political opponents, Pelosi in particular.⁷

Violent anti-LGBTQ attacks fueled by the right

While the hard-right movement has for years increased their use of violent rhetoric, they crossed a dangerous threshold when activists from across the right doubled down on their attacks against LGBTQ people in the wake of a mass shooting at a queer club in November.

“The tragedy that happened in Colorado Springs the other night—it was expected and predictable,” a guest on Tucker Carlson’s Fox News show said after a 22-year-old person shot and killed five people and injured 25 others at Club Q, before suggesting that LGBTQ people were bringing attacks like this on themselves.⁸ “I don’t think it’s going to stop until we end this evil agenda that is attacking children,” she told Carlson.

In the months leading up to the attack, the right relentlessly deployed the accusation that LGBTQ people are preying on children by “grooming” them either for the purpose of sexual abuse or to influence their sexuality and gender identity. That rhetoric was accompanied by an unprecedented legislative attack on LGBTQ people: In 2022, legislatures across the country introduced more than 300 anti-LGBTQ bills, many targeting trans youth.⁹ Eighteen states now ban transgender youth from participating on sports teams consistent with their gender identity, while three states in 2022 banned or criminalized gender-affirming care for youth.¹⁰

Hard-right activists and influencers used social media as their primary tool to ignite animus toward queer people. Anti-LGBTQ activist Chaya Raichik helped lead the charge with her 1.7 million-follower Libs of TikTok Twitter account. Raichik’s posts mock LGBTQ individuals and teachers who employ inclusive, anti-racist curricula, making them into targets for harassment. Her account has helped to spread the narrative that LGBTQ people (and trans individuals, especially) are mentally ill and part of a broad leftist conspiracy to sexualize and abuse children.¹¹

That notion is not confined to right-wing echo chambers. According to SPLC polling conducted in November 2022, 74% of Republicans believe that “Democrats are attempting to sexualize children by indoctrinating them into an LGBTQ lifestyle,” including over half of whom strongly agree with that

“People of color don’t have the privilege of focusing on only one issue—everything is connected. Reproductive justice has always been more than just being ‘pro-choice.’ To be pro-choice you must have the privilege of having choices.”

Monica Simpson

SisterSong, Executive Director

statement. Among Democrats, fewer than 25% agree.

Individuals, events and institutions targeted by Raichik and her anti-LGBTQ cohort on social media have received harassment, bomb threats and death threats, and they have been targeted by extremist protesters. An Idaho Pride event Raichik drew attention to on Twitter, for example, was the target of a protest by 31 members of the white nationalist group Patriot Front. Numerous children’s hospitals have received harassment and threats criticizing the care they provide for adolescents.¹²

Far-right extremists have especially targeted events that include drag performers—people who boldly and visibly defy the right’s strict ideas of gender and gender identity. The Proud Boys, whose chapters have grown considerably since the group participated in the Jan. 6 insurrection, targeted more than 40 LGBTQ events in 2022 through harassment or protests.¹³



But they are far from the only ones threatening drag events. According to GLAAD, there were at least 141 protests and threats against drag events across 47 states in 2022.¹⁴ One establishment was firebombed after hosting a drag performance, a shot was fired through the window of a brewery hosting a drag queen story hour, a library hosting a children's event was stormed by Proud Boys, and another was interrupted by a Proud Boy carrying a gun. Innumerable other events were cancelled out of concern for the safety of children and other patrons.

Male supremacy animates the right

The campaign the right has waged against LGBTQ people is part of a broader assault on bodily autonomy and gender equity, which also targets women and those who can give birth.

The right saw the fruit of a decades-long campaign in June of 2022 when the Supreme Court over-

turned *Roe v. Wade*, leading to a wave of state-level restrictions on abortion. By the end of the year, 13 states banned abortion completely while many others have enacted restrictions that make it difficult to access abortion care, including Georgia where abortion is banned at the gestational age of six weeks.¹⁵ These bans disproportionately affect people of color and those who live in poverty, who already faced increased obstacles to accessing reproductive care.

"People of color don't have the privilege of focusing on only one issue—everything is connected," Monica Simpson of SisterSong penned even before the fall of *Roe*. "Reproductive justice has always been more than just being 'pro-choice.' To be pro-choice you must have the privilege of having choices."¹⁶

The Supreme Court decision emboldened the hard right, many of whom believed that overturning abortion would open new frontiers for their movement including overturning the Constitutional

amendment that gave women the right to vote. Meanwhile, as pro-reproductive justice demonstrations surged, so did counterdemonstrations. Far-right participation in anti-abortion activism soared in 2022.¹⁷ Hate groups such as the Proud Boys attended dozens of anti-reproductive justice demonstrations in 2022, some outside of facilities that provide abortion care.

Belief in strict, “traditional” gender roles is at the core of hard-right ideology, while resistance to feminism, combined with a belief that modern society emasculates men, has grown on the right. Tucker Carlson this year produced a fearmongering documentary called “The End of Men,” while longtime conservative establishments including the Claremont Institute published a flurry of articles warning, for example, that “woke communists” are “determined to destroy traditional sex roles as part of their project to destroy America.”

Anti-feminism is particularly noxious because it appears to unite a substantial portion of men across the political spectrum—especially younger men. In April, a nationwide SPLC poll found that 37% of people believe “feminism has done more harm than good,” including 46% of Democratic men under 50 and 62% of Republican men in the same age range. Those statistics underline how effective the appeals to preserve masculinity can be at pulling men into far-right movements.¹⁸

Locally driven right-wing mobilization

In the aftermath of Trump’s election loss and the insurrection at the Capitol, the right shifted tactics: Without Trump at the helm, activists have made a concerted effort to organize in the local arena, pursuing their agenda in venues where it is easier to gain power.

37%

**Respondants answered
“feminism has done more
harm than good”**

Source: SPLC/Tulchin Research Poll, 2022

Schools, especially, have been on the receiving end of ramped-up and coordinated hard-right attacks, frequently through the guise of “parents’ rights” groups. These groups were, in part, spurred by the right-wing backlash to COVID-19 public safety measures in schools. But they have grown into an anti-student inclusion movement that targets any inclusive curriculum that contains discussions of race, discrimination and LGBTQ identities.

At the forefront of this mobilization is Moms for Liberty, a Florida-based group with vast connections to the GOP that this year the SPLC designated as an extremist group. They can be spotted at school board meetings across the country wearing shirts and carrying signs that declare, “We do NOT CO-PARENT with the GOVERNMENT.” The group hijacks meetings, preventing officials and parents from conducting their normal proceedings. “I can be sitting in a meeting minding my own business, and they turn around and scream at me that I am a commie and teachers want to see all kids fail,” a teacher’s union president in Brevard County, Florida, explained to a *Washington Post* reporter.¹⁹

Galvanizing supporters around supposed “parental rights” and “family values” is nothing new—similar rallying cries were adopted by those who opposed school desegregation during the civil rights movement and by the Moral Majority of the 1980s. These political slogans have been used repeatedly because they are effective, framing the organizing of far-right activists as something done solely out of real concern for children.

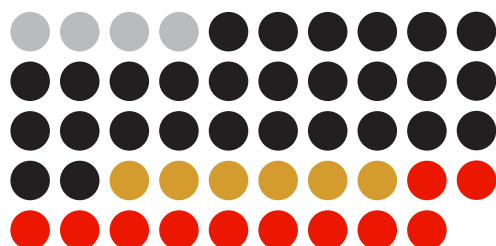
But Moms for Liberty activities make it clear that the group’s primary goals are to fuel right-wing hysteria and to make the world a less comfortable or safe place for certain students—primarily those who are Black, LGBTQ or who come from LGBTQ families. A Tennessee chapter of Moms for Liberty, for example, claimed that the state’s second-grade curriculum, which includes a book about Martin Luther King Jr. and another by Ruby Bridges, was “anti-White.”²⁰ Their focused attack on critical race theory became a substitute for most things pertaining to Black history and culture.

Other chapters have attacked the book *Gender Queer*, a memoir about adolescence by a non-binary author, and others that explore sexuality and gender identity. The group has shown up alongside Proud Boys at multiple protests, including in Florida and Texas.²¹

Far-right activists circulate lists of books they

Results for 99 Extremists Running for Public Office in 2022

49 Antigovernment



26 Hate



24 Both



● Won Election
 ● Lost General Election
 ● Lost Primary Election
 ● Dropped Out
 ● Disqualified

Source: SPLC Action Fund Exposing Extremism in Elections project

find objectionable on social media, spurring others to petition their own school board and libraries to ban books. The campaigns have become so charged and hate-filled that they have reportedly caused many librarians to leave their jobs, while others have been fired for refusing to take certain books off the shelves.²²

Extremists fall flat in the 2022 midterms, but election conspiracies persist

While there has been a recent groundswell of far-right on-the-ground organizing, the movement continues to fight in the electoral arena. In the 2022 midterms, the SPLC Action Fund tracked 99 candidates with apparent ties to extremist groups, or who expressed sympathy toward their messages, running for public office. These candidates embraced ideologies including antigovernment extremism, antisemitic and QAnon beliefs, and anti-LGBTQ and anti-immigrant posturing.

Most extremist candidates lost their bids, including longtime militia leader Ammon Bundy in his run for governor of Idaho. U.S. House candidate Neil Kumar of Arkansas ran and lost on a ticket to “Stop the Great Replacement” and “end birthright citizenship,” the clause under the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution guaranteeing citizenship to anyone born on U.S. soil. Kumar’s platform mirrors other hate groups’ efforts to abolish birthright citizenship as part of their anti-immigrant agenda.

However, a cluster of incumbents in mostly safe districts retained their seats. In all, 23 of the 99 extremist-tied candidates tracked by the SPLC Action Fund won their election, including incumbent Reps. Marjorie Taylor Greene, Paul Gosar and Lauren Boebert.

The election was marred by inflammatory and racist rhetoric, including from a new outfit called America First Legal that is connected to former Trump adviser Stephen Miller. In the run-up to the midterm, AFL spent millions on an inflammatory ad campaign calling for an end to “anti-white bigotry.” The ads, which appeared on TV and the radio in such states as Georgia and Florida, accused the Biden administration, as well as “progressive” corporations, airlines, and universities, of being anti-white and engaging in “left-wing racism.”

Trump’s own conduct in the aftermath of the 2020 election has provided a roadmap for other anti-democracy candidates. Kari Lake, an Arizona gubernatorial candidate whose campaign was powered by anti-immigrant and anti-LGBTQ rhetoric as well as 2020 election conspiracy theories, refused to concede to winner Katie Hobbs and has filed a lawsuit against her former opponent and Maricopa County to overturn the results. Laura Loomer, a self-described “proud Islamophobe” who ran for the U.S. House in Florida, also refused to concede after losing her primary, citing alleged voter fraud.

The great replacement conspiracy unites the hard right and fuels violence

Racist and conspiratorial beliefs continue to inspire violence from the far right, particularly affecting Black communities.

On May 14, 2022, a gunman killed 10 Black people at a Tops Supermarket in Buffalo, New York. The alleged shooter left behind a digital footprint of sprawling propaganda materials showing the attack was in response to a supposed “great replacement” happening in the United States. The term refers to



a racist conspiracy narrative falsely asserting that there is an active, covert effort to replace white populations in current white-majority countries. The conspiracy is antisemitic, anti-immigrant and anti-Black. According to its proponents, Jewish people are behind the anti-white scheme; immigrants are invading majority-white countries and outpacing white birth rates; and Black people are eroding white demographic power through racial intermarriage, affirmative-action policies they claim provide Black people an unfair advantage, and a campaign of violence targeted specifically at white people. This latter myth, in particular, was cited in the manifesto of the man who murdered nine Black congregants in a Charleston, South Carolina, church in 2015. The great replacement has animated many other white nationalists and extremists, inspiring additional terroristic mass shootings

in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; El Paso, Texas; and Christchurch, New Zealand, among others.

Once a fringe conspiracy, the great replacement myth has permeated the mainstream with the help of such figures as Fox News' Tucker Carlson, whose show consistently ranks among the most-watched cable news programs in the country. "The great replacement. Yeah. It's not a conspiracy theory. It's their electoral strategy," Carlson said, referring to Democrats during a July 2022 episode of his show. After the Buffalo shooting, the white nationalist blogsite VDARE celebrated "the heroic Tucker Carlson" for having "noticed the Great Replacement."²³

The great replacement narrative has permeated the right: A nationwide poll conducted by SPLC and Tulchin Research in early 2022 found that nearly seven in 10 Republicans agree to at least some extent that demographic changes in the U.S. are delib-

erately driven by liberal and progressive politicians attempting to gain political power by “replacing more conservative white voters.”²⁴

Some elected officials doubled down on their racist claims in the aftermath of the Buffalo shooting. Two days after the attack, Elise Stefanik, the third-ranking GOP member in the U.S. House, posted a version of replacement theory on Twitter. “Democrats desperately want wide open borders and mass amnesty for illegals allowing them to vote,” she tweeted. “Like the vast majority of Americans, Republicans want to secure our borders and protect election integrity.” After receiving criticism, Stefanik reiterated her claims, telling right-wing commentator Ben Shapiro, “There’s nothing racist about opposing mass amnesty.”

Stefanik was not the only one. In April 2022, U.S. Rep. Michael Cloud, R-Texas, tweeted his disapproval of efforts to revoke Trump’s Title 42 immigration policy, saying Biden’s administration is “complicit in this continued invasion.” In November 2022, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott even invoked an “invasion clause” in response to migrants appearing at the Texas border.

The anti-immigrant hate group Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) gave cover to those pushing invasion rhetoric. In a November 2022 fundraising email, FAIR’s longtime president Dan Stein wrote, “We can’t allow the invasion of our borders to destroy our communities.”²⁵

The immigration advocacy group America’s Voice tracked GOP ads in the 2022 election featuring xenophobic dog whistles from elected officials and electoral campaigns.²⁶ America’s Voice documented over 300 campaign ads and materials featuring “invasion” and nearly 4,000 items on immigration in general, all targeting immigrant communities and reinforcing the great replacement conspiracy. The organization also tracked nearly 600 ads about critical race theory, over 400 on “defunding the police” and over 800 on crime as part of the political attack on the accurate teaching of history and efforts to portray Black people as criminals.

The SPLC reported on anti-Muslim hate group The United West teaming up with former acting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) director Tom Homan on a project focused on fearmongering about the Southern border.²⁷ “FOREIGN INVASION - NOW AT CATASTROPHIC LEVELS,” reads a December 2022 email sent by The United West’s Tom Trento on behalf of Homan’s project.

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Looking forward

Though Trump still retains a hold on much of the political right, many extremists are ambivalent about his 2024 presidential campaign.²⁸ White nationalists Nick Fuentes and Joseph Jordan (aka Eric Striker) called Trump's announcement an "EPIC FAIL" and "pathetic." The poor showing of Trump-backed candidates in the midterm elections also led some on the hard right to abandon the real estate mogul in favor of Florida governor and potential presidential hopeful Ron DeSantis. White nationalist columnist Ann Coulter—once a staunch supporter of Trump—called the midterm a "a humiliating defeat" for him and noted the strong showings of DeSantis and Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp—"the two Republicans Donald Trump hates with the hot, hot hate of a thousand suns."

The future of Trump's movement remains somewhat uncertain. While Trump has yet to face criminal charges, many insurrectionists have been charged and convicted for crimes related to their participation in the riot. The price has been especially high for the Oath Keepers and other members of the militia movement. In November, two members of the Oath Keepers, including founder Stewart Rhodes, were found guilty of seditious conspiracy and others were still facing charges at year's end.

The attention brought by the insurrection has done severe damage to the militia movement, driving away members who no longer want to be associated with the day's violence and immobilizing the leader, Stewart Rhodes. Over the past three years, the number of active Oath Keepers chapters has drastically declined and left the organization's future existence in serious question.

The criminal charges brought against other groups have been less impactful. While members of the Proud Boys also face charges of seditious conspiracy, the group, overall, has continued to grow. In fact, members have embraced their identity as insurrectionists and turned "Proud Boys did nothing wrong" into a political slogan and a meme shared in "alt-tech" social media spaces during the Jan. 6 Congressional hearings. Their numbers have grown dramatically since 2020, reaching 78 chapters in 2022, as the group continues to organize and hold local protests throughout the country.

The continued growth of such groups as the Proud Boys, as well as the continued violence emanating from and encouraged by the right, make it clear that the racist, authoritarian politics Trump

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ushered in will not dissipate in his absence. Even if Trump's continued political aspirations fall flat, there will be plenty of others—influencers, think tanks, hard-right activists, media figures, and politicians—who are ready and able to pick up the torch.

The movement for civil and human rights must be prepared for a new string of hard-right activists. In order to interrupt, neutralize and effectively counter the hard-right hate and antigovernment extremist movement in the U.S., the strategies and tactics of such actors must be exposed for their falsity, manipulation and the harm they cause in people's daily lives. Organizing to prevent the roll-back of civil and human rights is more effective when armed with the knowledge of how these movements operate and attempt to divide communities. ●



Building New Networks to Help Protect Young People

By Aaron Flanagan

In early 2020, the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Laboratory (PERIL) at American University formed a strategic partnership to pilot innovative models and resources that help educate, equip and empower communities to address youth radicalization toward extremism and violence. Our work began with listening to impacted community members to identify pressing problems. We then began designing resources that are tested for safety and effectiveness and continually refined based on our findings. In spring 2020, we released *Building Resilience & Confronting Risk in the COVID-19 Era*:

A Parents & Caregivers Guide to Online Radicalization and subsequently revised this resource for use beyond that era. In November 2022, we released a new resource, the first edition of our *Building Networks & Addressing Harm: A Community Guide to Online Youth Radicalization*.

The best way to prevent radicalization is to address its root causes, far upstream from potential harms. As we detail in our new guide, it is imperative to “inoculate” young people against radicalizing individuals and material before they ever encounter them. That requires a whole-of-community effort, encompassing the trusted adults who make up a

Members across disciplines at PERIL. **First Row:** Katie Spann, Laura Kralicky, Meili Criezis, Kesa White, Norah-Frida Tebid, Emily Stingle, Emily Pressman **Second Row:** Cynthia Miller-Idriss, Brian Hughes, Nicholas Caraballo, JJ West, Wyatt Russell, Chealsea Daymon



Pasha Dashtgard, Director of Research (PERIL)

young person's support network. Such adults are, therefore, at the forefront of building community resilience and preventing harms stemming from radicalization.

Our new *Building Networks* guide aims to expand on its companion, our guide for *Parents & Caregivers* and accompanying resources. This new guide is designed to help equip, educate and empower broader networks of trusted adults, offering knowledge and insights about how to identify and effectively intervene when a young person is becoming radicalized, to help young people build resilience against radicalization and to help those targeted and harmed feel safe and included. In December 2022, we asked our partners at PERIL to reflect on the urgent need to release this new resource.

Why was producing the *Building Networks & Reducing Harms* guide important? How were stakeholder groups selected and how are their needs discovered through testing? How does this resource aim to meet those needs and better support these stakeholder groups included in the guide?

Pasha Dashtgard, Director of Research (PERIL): The *Building Networks and Reducing Harms* guide builds on our prior guide for parents and caregivers. It is part of our longer-term effort to equip all adults across local communities with the tools to recognize

youth exposure to online harms and feel empowered to intervene. The oft-repeated adage, “It takes a village,” is true in this case; we need to equip all the adults in youth’s lives—their coaches, employers, mentors, extracurricular leaders and more—with the knowledge and skills to step in and prevent harm.

In 2020, our partnerships released the guide specifically for *Parents & Caregivers*²⁹ to help them safely intervene to prevent harms related to extremism and radicalization. The new guide addresses numerous overlapping audiences: How does our new “Building Networks” guide complement the previous guide and what are some key differences between the two?

Dashtgard: The original *Parents & Caregivers Guide* was always intended to address the needs of noncustodial caregivers as well as parents and caregivers who live with young people. However, much of the original guide provided information and strategies that benefit from close, personal contact with the youth susceptible to radicalization.

The new *Building Networks* guide takes these same principles of connecting deeply with youth, listening to understand who is influencing them and what about the radicalizing rhetoric is appealing to them. But the new guide also takes into account the distinct roles and varying relationships that people who live outside of the home have in the lives of young people. A coach or an after-school caregiver can be a safer, more trusted adult in the life of a child who is grappling with exposure to hate-fueled ideologies. So, while both guides provide trusted adults with the specific knowledge, background information and skills necessary to intervene in the life of a young person at risk of radicalization, we modify these strategies in the *Building Networks* guide for the particular role/relationship of an extended network of trusted adults, such as school mental health counselors, tutors, grandparents and other youth mentors, with the recommended strategies varying by level of proximity to the youth.

In *Building Networks*, we note that trusted adults who understand their roles within young people’s “networks of care” can more effectively help prevent harms related to radicalization. We also note the important role they can play supporting those who have been targeted or harmed by hate and bigotry. Why is this so

important within communities and how best can adults offer such support?

Dashtgard: This guide invites community members to reflect critically on the role(s) they play in the lives of young people. Beyond your role as a parent or caregiver, are you a mentor to a young person? Do you have youth in your life that look up to you or treat you as an authority figure? If so, how can you leverage your role in their life in order to help protect them from radicalization to extremist ideologies? The answer to that question is not obvious or often considered, but this is exactly what the *Building Networks* guide prepares adults to reflect on. How can we help young people resist propaganda aimed at convincing them to hate Jews, feminists and people of color? How can we help young people build media literacy such that they can recognize when someone is embedding racist, sexist, hateful ideas into seemingly benign jokes, memes or forum posts? By giving trusted adults the skills and knowledge to engage in conversation with youth on difficult, politically/socially fraught topics, we can build communities that support adults in deploying preventative, non-carceral approaches to countering extremist recruitment strategies targeting youth and adolescents.

The problem of youth radicalization is complex, but our partnership has captured evidence that trusted adults can intervene safely and effectively. If they are educated and equipped with the right resources, our studies together show they will be better empowered to intervene proactively. And together this year we will launch a community engagement effort to design and test solutions at community level. Can you discuss some of our partnership's findings, this upcoming effort and why they give you hope?

Dashtgard: Some of the most exciting findings consistently demonstrate it is truly possible to equip local communities with the tools to prevent hate and violence. We have demonstrated that it takes only seven minutes of reading, on average, for parents and caregivers to improve their knowledge about harmful online content, supremacist propaganda and other hateful conspiracy theories and to feel more confident about intervening when

they recognize warning signs in a young person they know. We have shown that it is possible to bridge partisan divides and bring people together around shared concerns about harmful online worlds and rising hate and violence. And we have shown that equipping everyone in the lives of young people with these tools—from parents and relatives to youth mentors, coaches and teachers—has the potential to help build social cohesion and create understanding and responsiveness to rising hate that can bring communities together rather than further polarizing them.

Importantly, the content found in our *Parents & Caregivers Guide* was well received by both Democrats and Republicans, and parents who identify as male or female. The information and strategies contained in the *Building Networks* guide are not intended to speak to only one group or type of person. We have developed resources that speak to trusted adults across the political and social spectrum.

By providing trusted adults with strategies and approaches to difficult conversations, information about propaganda techniques and resources that trusted adults can refer to if they suspect a child is susceptible to radicalization to hateful ideologies, we can empirically see a rise in confidence and willingness to engage young people on these difficult topics.

Now it is time for us to scale up these resources and make sure that every community across the country has access to them—because everyone deserves access to strategies that we know work to prevent violence, hate and harm. ●

Editor's note: Unfortunately, our ability to represent the full range of respondents' gender identities and social/family roles is limited by online survey recruitment platforms. Future research should focus on any differences in caregivers gender identity and their reception of the project's tools.

Resources to Prevent Online Youth Radicalization



PERIL Research
perilresearch.com



Learning for Justice
lfj.pub/prevention



SPLC / PERIL
splcenter.org/peril

Returning to the Schoolhouse Steps

Extremist Groups' Reactionary Anti-Student Inclusion Efforts

By Maya Henson Carey

A group of Southern women are standing outside of a school, protesting changes while yelling derogations and obscenities at a child they do not want to attend the school. The only so-called threat this child poses is that, in one simple way, she is different from these women's children. The school is now being forced to accept and acknowledge all children, not just the ones that look like theirs.

The year is 1960. Although it could just as easily be 2022.

When author John Steinbeck documented his travels across America in 1960 and encountered whom he would call the “Cheerleaders of New Orleans” standing outside of William Frantz Elementary School and screaming at 6-year-old Ruby Bridges, the country was still drowning in the repercussions of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the groundbreaking U.S. Supreme Court case that ended racial segregation and eventually forced public schools to integrate.³⁰

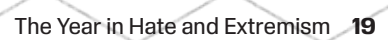
This 1954 high court decision would incite in education a decades-long retaliatory campaign rooted in racism. Almost immediately after *Brown* was decided, Virginia Sen. Harry Byrd Sr. galvanized a movement that would be known as “massive resistance,” inciting “concerned parents” across the country to form groups to preserve segregation. Within this movement, women formed their own grassroots organizations, such as the Mothers' League of Central High School, which fought integration in Little Rock, Arkansas, and the “Cheerleaders of New Orleans,” which proudly called young Ruby Bridges “bestial and filthy and degenerate.”^{31 32}

The Reemergence of the Attack on Inclusive Schools

The attacks following the *Brown* decision were not the beginning of the so-called parental rights movement, and it certainly was not the end. Going back to the 1920s, the U.S. has witnessed ebbs and flows of white, cisgender, heterosexual groups battling public education.³³

Regardless of the time period, most attacks against public education have been reactionary and rooted in racism, from





the fight against integration after *Brown v. Board*, to the so-called school choice movement, to the latest attacks on inclusive education.³⁴

Segregationist parents did not relent and side-stepped *Brown v. Board* through self-titled “school choice” that made it possible for parents who were allowed to maintain their racist values by sending their children to private Christian academies. Some 3,500 white, racially discriminatory church-based schools sprung up in the wake of *Brown v. Board*. However, when the tax-exempt status of these “segregation academies” were revoked by the court in 1971 and then upheld by former President Jimmy Carter’s IRS, parents claimed government infringement and violation of their parental rights to make decisions about their children’s education.³⁵

This was not the first or last time claims of government overreach would be used as a protestation by these groups. It has become a common theme in iterations of anti-student inclusion groups over the decades.

Today’s so-called parental rights activists have also copied and pasted from the scripts of past groups, adapting old racist and homophobic ideas, as well as conspiracy theories asserting Marxist indoctrination. They are now adding a dash of QAnon rhetoric, accusing progressives of attempting to groom and sexualize children.

Over the past two years, reactionary anti-student inclusion groups have been popping up from coast to coast, claiming to battle for parents’ rights. Just like their predecessors, their rhetoric takes on marked anti-LGBTQ, racist and nationalist themes, excluding from their parental concern large demographics segments of American society.

These groups publicize their fight for alleged parents’ rights while simply attempting to maintain absolute authority on issues they oppose. In 2021 their primary issue was any curriculum that focused on greater inclusivity, particularly if race or the history of racism (deemed critical race theory) were addressed.

In 2022 their focus shifted more explicitly to material related to the LGBTQ community and the Biden administration’s proposed changes to Title IX, providing more inclusions and protections for the LGBTQ community. A consistent tactic has been the attempt to ban books from classrooms and libraries based on what these groups deem inappropriate because the content addresses race, LGBTQ issues and gender.

84

Anti-student inclusion bills pre-filed or introduced in 26 states by the end of 2022

“Parental rights” has once again become a common phrase as bills are introduced and passed in several states, and some politicians are making the subject a key prong of their platforms during campaigns.

In his administration’s “Parental Bill of Rights,” Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas promises to expand parent access to course curriculum, to remove from school libraries material he deemed pornographic and to add to the state’s “Do Not Hire Registry” anyone distributing such materials to students. Abbott has also vowed to amend the Texas constitution to ensure that parents are the primary decision makers and that their rights “cannot be overridden without due process of the law.”

In Virginia, the birthplace of massive resistance, current Gov. Glenn Youngkin capitalized on the rapidly growing movement and ran his 2021 campaign almost solely on a platform of so-called parents’ rights.³⁶ Politicians have used reactionary anti-student inclusion groups to mobilize key voters, sparking fear and resentment.

By the end of 2022, 84 anti-student inclusion bills had been at least pre-filed or introduced in 26 states.³⁷ Florida made waves when Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the Florida Parental Rights in Education Act, more commonly known as the “Don’t Say Gay” law, which built on the existing 2021 Florida Parents’ Bill of Rights. DeSantis, is a staunch supporter of these groups and they, in turn, have enthusiastically backed him, campaigning for him and lobbying for his legislation.³⁸

Moms for Liberty: The Movement’s “Joyful Warriors”

In 2020, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting remote schooling of children across the country led to a resurrection of anti-public school

Number of Principals Reporting That Parents or Other Community Members Sought to Limit or Challenge

Issues of Race
and Racism

50%

Social
Emotional Learning

39%

Access to books in
school library

33%

Policies and practices related
to LGBTQ+ student rights

48%

Source: Educating for a Diverse Democracy, 2022, University of California

sentiment, as far right activists opposed school mask mandates, demanded a return to school on their terms or withdrew in favor of private or home-school. After schools reopened, the fight morphed into confrontation about pedagogy and curriculum, as far-right antigovernment parents under the guise of simply being concerned, began to assert themselves into what can and cannot be taught in public schools.

Thanks in part to its grand disruptions at school board meetings, political alliances and extremist ties, Moms for Liberty has quickly become one of the most recognized names in the anti-student inclusion movement. Founded in early 2021, the organization claims to have a membership of over 100,000 in 250+ chapters in 42 states.

Like the mothers of massive resistance before them, Moms for Liberty is ready to fight tooth and nail to preserve the unseen but understood caste system existing in their public schools and communities. Coming together to fight mask mandates in schools in their own Florida counties, co-founders Tina Descovich, Tiffany Justice and Bridget Ziegler quickly led their troops to the front lines to combat inclusive curriculum, LGBTQ rights and what they see as inappropriate reading material in classrooms and libraries.

Since the group's 2021 founding, Moms for Liberty members across the nation have been making waves for intimidating and harassing teachers and school officials. They have publicly battled teachers' unions, labeling them as "cartels" and "terrorist organizations." They condemn corporations, like The Walt Disney Co., that are supportive of the LGBTQ community. They lobby for parental rights bills, such as the "Don't Say Gay" law and advocate for anti-critical race theory bills. These groups offer rewards for identifying teachers who violate newly

enacted anti-critical race theory (CRT) laws and file complaints after passage of these bills.

Following the call for an increase in inclusive curriculum and training, CRT was spotlighted in areas where it never had been before. What began primarily in graduate-level coursework in the mid-1970s as a concept to explore the intersection of culture, race and power in U.S. society, CRT has exploded into mainstream America discourse, often pegged as a savage ideology aimed to paint all whites as racists and to indoctrinate children.

With claims that CRT is anti-American, reactionary anti-student inclusion groups vehemently oppose its tenets, such as the concept of systemic oppression. Critical race theory is labeled as racist, with adversaries often appropriating the line from the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech expressing his hope that his children not be judged by the "color of their skin but by the content of their character." However, as civil rights attorney Alfred Blumrosen observed, "It [is] clear that a 'color-blind' society built upon the subordination of persons of one color [is] a society which [cannot] correct that subordination because it [can] never recognize it."³⁹

Critical race theory is at the top of the hit list for many reactionary anti-student inclusion groups, who erroneously label as CRT anything having to do with race, equity, inclusion or teaching parts of history that they do not wish to face or acknowledge. In fact, one Moms for Liberty chapter in Tennessee filed a complaint under the state's new anti-CRT law, claiming that some books taught in schools such as *Martin Luther King Jr. and the March on Washington* and Ruby Bridge's autobiography were anti-American and anti-white.⁴⁰ This is the very same Ruby Bridges that in decades past the Cheerleaders of New Orleans harassed for trying to

During the mid-terms, Moms for Liberty claims to have “flipped” 17 school boards to parental rights-supportive majorities.

Almost immediately following elections, many of these boards began making sweeping changes at school board meetings, such as firing superintendents and making curriculum changes.

walk to public school. According to the complaint, the Moms for Liberty chapter took issue with things like pictures depicting Bridges’ accounts of walking to school and seeing signs reading, “We want segregation.”

In June, Moms for Liberty’s newly created political action committee was propelled by a \$50,000 gift from Florida-based Publix grocery store heiress Julie Fancelli, who also helped finance one of the rallies leading up to the Jan. 6 “Stop the Steal” rally in Washington, D.C., that preceded storming of the U.S. Capitol Complex.⁴¹

In an effort to expand its footing in local government, the organization, along with its Political Action Committee, endorsed 270 school board candidates during the 2022 mid-term elections. It is their stated goal to have a chapter in all 3,000 U.S. counties and to “recruit moms to serve as watchdogs over all 13,000 school districts.”

During the mid-terms, Moms for Liberty claims to have “flipped” 17 school boards to parental rights-supportive majorities. Almost immediately following elections, many of these boards began making sweeping changes at school board meetings, such as firing superintendents and making curriculum changes.

In Berkeley County, South Carolina, for instance, the newly sworn in school board voted 6-2 to ban the teaching of “critical race theory.” The six who voted in favor were all endorsed by Moms for Liberty during the mid-term election. During the same meeting, the school board voted to fire the superintendent and replace him with a school board member supported by Moms for Liberty, fire the school district’s attorney and establish a committee to evaluate the appropriateness of books and materials for school.^{42, 43}

Despite their efforts to seize control of school boards, rewrite curricula and determine reading materials are appropriate for all students, Moms for Liberty is simultaneously advocating for the total abolition of the U.S. Department of Education and a migration from the public school model.

As a featured speaker at the first Moms for Liberty national summit in Florida, former U.S. Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos stated, “I personally think that the Department of Education should not exist.” The organization featured the quote on the website as a teaser to invite followers to view further content from the Summit. Further, in October 2021 the group’s

then-spokesperson discussed a “mass exodus from the public school system,” explaining that parents have several homeschooling and private school options.⁴⁴ In fact, several Moms for Liberty chapter pages feature private schools they endorse.

Sarasota, Florida:

A Case Study in Hate and Extremism

In June 2022, Florida Gov. DeSantis took to Twitter to make an unprecedented move: he endorsed 10 school board candidates throughout the state in races considered nonpartisan.^{45 46} One of those endorsed candidates was incumbent Sarasota County school board member Bridget Ziegler. Although the Moms for Liberty co-founder left the group back in 2021, she still maintains affiliation and still very much operates by the same playbook.

Ziegler’s August reelection to the Sarasota County School Board likely came thanks in part to her husband Christian Ziegler’s position as vice-chair of the Florida Republican party and a ringing endorsement from the Proud Boy-run Sarasota Watchdogs, an affiliation Ziegler has since attempted to downplay. In September 2022, she told the Sarasota *Herald-Tribune*, the Proud Boys were not “involved with the work, and they played no part in the win. ...These guys who show up—are total yahoos, irrelevant.”⁴⁷ Yet according to reports, Ziegler was photographed with known Proud Boys celebrating at an election-night victory party.⁴⁸

It did not take long for the newly installed school board, including Ziegler, to apply pressure to Sarasota County School Board Superintendent Brennan Asplen, who had been at the helm since 2020, led the district through the COVID-19 pandemic and earned a state rating of “A” both years. After a grilling from the new school board, which heavily favored a non-inclusive curriculum, books bans and opposed LGBTQ rights, Asplen submitted his resignation, stating, “I spend more time on politics and nonsense than anything else. I can’t even spend time on a lot of the instructional (elements) because we’re dealing with this kind of nonsense.” He continued, “Does anybody know what I am? No? I am a conservative Republican.”

Tom Edwards, the only board member who voted against the resignation motion concluded, “What we’re doing here tonight, the chaos that this board brought needlessly, is to create chaos in public education so that they can advance charter schools for profit.”⁴⁹

45%

of principals report “more” or “much more” community level conflict during the 2021–2022 school year than prior to the pandemic.

Source: Educating for a Diverse Democracy, 2022, University of California

According to Carol Lerner, co-director of a pro-student inclusion organization called Support Our Schools, Sarasota was not always like it is today. A retired educator, Lerner chose Sarasota because of its arts and culture, but she explains that the county’s turn toward hate and extremism happened in several waves. The first occurred in 2020 when then-President Trump gave a speech accusing schools of indoctrinating students with Black Lives Matter propaganda and “far-left fascism.”⁵⁰ This prompted a clash in the Sarasota community with those who absolutely saw systemic racism and those, like Bridget Ziegler, who took to Facebook to post things like “Our job is to educate, not indoctrinate.”⁵¹

Finally, when COVID-19 hit, Sarasota was among the 12 counties in the state that had a school board that disregarded Gov. DeSantis’ ban on mask mandates, following instead those issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This, along with the fight against including so-called critical race theory in school curriculum, was the catalyst behind the founding of Moms for Liberty in Florida and sister groups in the area.⁵²

Wasting no time, Moms for Liberty and its members have built ties with politicians and extremist groups alike. Paulina Testerman, co-director of Support Our Schools in Florida and advocate for inclusive schools and accurate history, noted the stronghold the movement had on the state, “There was a time when extremism was concealed behind layers of insulation. Those days have passed. Moms for Liberty are emboldened throughout the country, but the root of their organizations and their hate is certainly deep in Florida soil.”

These groups denigrate lessons on diversity and inclusion. They spew homophobic and transphobic speech in the name of protecting their children’s innocence, disregarding and disrespecting children in the LGBTQ community. They ban reading materials that they deem inappropriate, which almost always happens to be LGBTQ or non-white in subject matter. They embrace racist and nationalist ideology, claiming to want the teaching of America’s accurate history in the schools but label the true, harsh history of the country as unpatriotic and unsuitable for children.

Looking Ahead

During the years immediately following *Brown v. Board*, the fight was easily identifiable: anti-integration. Groups formed in the era of massive resistance were proud segregationists.

Now, almost seven decades after *Brown* and the Civil Rights Acts, “parental rights” has once again become a common rallying cry with an even larger boogeyman: inclusion.

Over the past few years, many reactionary anti-student inclusion groups have risen across the country in reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic and an increased focus on equity and inclusion programs. They have also quickly fomented their place as part of the hard-right movement.

These groups continue to spread conspiratorial rhetoric, opposing what they consider to be indoctrinating public school curricula and plots by progressives to groom schoolchildren for sexual exploitation. They also seek legitimacy and mask hate speech by combining their vitriol with rhetoric that appeals to concerned parents.

Reactionary anti-student inclusion groups such as Moms for Liberty, Moms for America, Parents Defending Education that the SPLC lists as extremist groups are, by their very nature, responding to social progress that they dislike and

have no control over. Like many other hard-right groups, these reactionary anti-student inclusion groups are constantly painting themselves as an oppressed class, while vilifying those discriminated against.

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Much like the massive resistance groups before them, the reactionary anti-student inclusion groups of today are just wielding coded language for white, cisgender, straight rights above all others.⁵⁵ And if these reactionary parents are allowed to turn back the hands of time and continue transforming schools and curricula into what only they want to see, schools will once again become less welcoming and inclusive for anyone they consider not like them. ●



Paulina Testerman, Co-Director of Support Our Schools

“We refuse to allow our teachers to be vilified. We refuse to allow our students to be political pawns. We refuse to allow politicians to financially suffocate public education while lining the pockets of their supporters who are building charter school conglomerates.”

Paulina Testerman

Support Our Schools, Co-Director

decided there was a need for a fight, a pushback,” said Testerman, “so we decided we needed to become a nonprofit, that we needed to organize formally.”

In doing so, Support Our Schools became a focal point of resilience in Florida. The group built a website and Facebook page to coordinate with local members and compile a mailing list. They also hosted forums on book bans and the rewriting of history to help inform and empower community members.

Propagated by anti-student inclusion groups

like Moms for Liberty and Moms for America, the far-right attacks that galvanized Support Our Schools have contributed to volatile climates for educators and school board members, as well as unsafe, regressive learning environments for students. *Educating for a Diverse Democracy*, a study⁵⁵ published in November 2022 by researchers at University of California, Los Angeles, and University of California, Riverside, looks at the impact these polarizing efforts have on American public schools. In the researchers’ survey of 682 public school principals, more than “two-thirds reported

substantial political conflict over hot button issues” in their schools.

In particular, conflict is prevalent in politically mixed—or “purple”—areas, where “some parents, connected to conservative national organizations, such as ‘Moms for Liberty,’ are aggressively challenging and even threatening educators over policies and curriculum on race, LGBTQ+ rights and other issues.” Specifically, principals reported that parents and community members “sought to limit or challenge: Teaching about issues of race and racism (50%); Policies and practices related to LGBTQ+ student rights (48%); Student access to books in the school library (33%); or Social Emotional Learning (39%).”

“We refuse to allow our teachers to be vilified. We refuse to allow our students to be political pawns,” Testerman said. “We refuse to allow politicians to financially suffocate public education while lining the pockets of their supporters who are building charter school conglomerates.”

Collective Power

In light of this resilient messaging, SOS’ reputation has grown. “We get at least 50 emails a week” said Lerner, “cities, counties, states, asking if we can start a chapter there, if we can help them, and we’re happy to share what’s working.” To accommodate the influx of inquiries and to better disseminate information, SOS is revamping its website, hosting more community forums and will meet monthly.

For others seeking to develop similar efforts in their community, Lerner and Testerman encourage people to attend school board meetings, and use their voices and collective power and organize. Involvement can be as simple as donating to local groups doing the work or as involved as making your own nonprofit to network⁵⁶ with other groups in your state. “Anyone can be an activist,” both Lerner and Testerman said, “you just have to care.”

While small organizations like SOS “being pitted up against a machine-like Moms For Liberty ... may feel like a David and Goliath challenge,” Testerman said, they “honestly ... make the work easy. They don’t even hide their bigotry, their homophobia or their racism. That, she said, “just means that all of these small grassroots organizations have to come together and stand united and fight back.” ●



Carol Lerner, Co-Director of Support Our Schools



Understanding Youth and Radicalizing Firearms Narratives To Build a Safer Future

By Aaron Flanagan

The epidemic of gun violence in the United States injects pain and trauma into communities every day. Consider K-12 schools, for example. Researchers at Everytown for Gun Safety have found: “Every year, more than 3,500 children and teens⁵⁷ are shot and killed, and 15,000 more are shot and injured⁵⁸. An estimated 3 million children⁵⁹ in the U.S. are exposed to shootings per year.” But such statistics only scratch the surface of rippling harms felt across families and communities.

Polarizing political schisms in our country have opened another dimension of danger. Published in the wake of the white supremacist attack on Black

community members in Buffalo, New York, polling by SPLC and Tulchin Research found that while levels of support for threats and violence generally do not differ substantially among partisans, 44% of Americans agreed that the “U.S. seems headed toward a civil war in the near future.” Online and offline, young people find themselves vulnerable to manipulative rhetoric related to firearms and gun violence. These firearm narratives are often premised on rigid, regressive gender roles and stoke

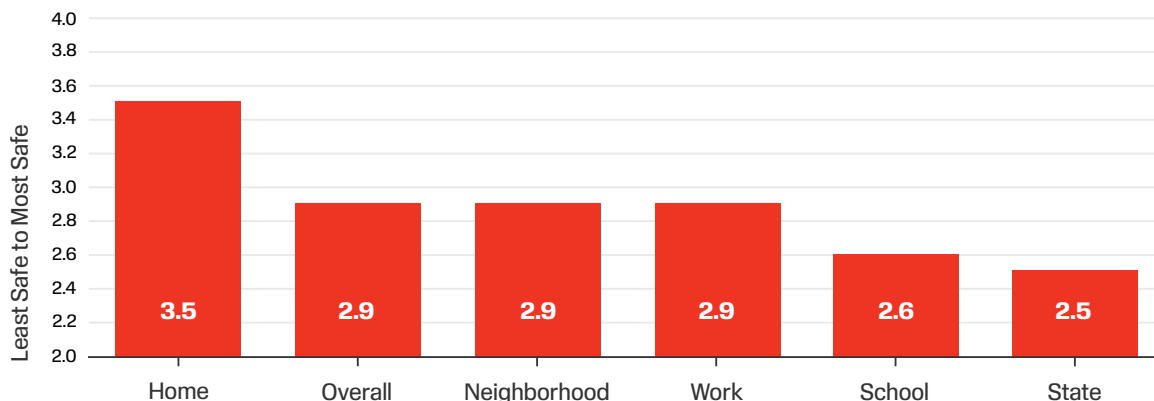
Pictured Above: Jennifer Hoppe, Senior Director of National Programs at Everytown for Gun Safety

Feelings of Safety Among Young Adults in the U.S.

How safe do you feel in your...

Average scores based on a 0-4 scale.

Safety scores with lower than the average of 2.92 indicate lower feelings of personal safety.



Source: SPLC/Everytown/PERIL survey used a sample recruited from the NORC AmeriSpeak Panel and supplemented using online survey platform Lucid. The survey is based on a nationally representative, weighted sample of 4,156 participants aged 14-30. Portions of the sample were recruited in-person. The survey fielding period was from September 16, 2022 – October 13, 2022.

racist fears about the need for protection to appeal more to young white men and boys.

“Youth have always been a vulnerable population for both radicalization and mobilization to violence,” Dr. Cynthia Miller-Idriss, founding director of the Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Laboratory at American University (PERIL) explains, “in part because they are still figuring out who they are and who they want to be. This means it’s also an ideal time to intervene in ways that build resilience to manipulative propaganda and harmful online content. Parents, caregivers, and the broader network of trusted adults in communities can help build resilience by modeling kindness, empathy, and developing strategies to give youth a sense of control and efficacy in their lives.”

In responding to this critical moment, Everytown, PERIL and SPLC found shared concerns. Together, in the winter of 2021, we launched an innovative project to identify and study these radicalizing narratives related to firearms. With that research, our objective is to produce safe, effective resources designed to inoculate young people against such harm and manipulation.

At the project midpoint we’ve concluded a groundbreaking survey of over 4,100 young people between the ages of 14 and 30 (due out late Spring). Our findings from this nationally representative sample address knowledge gaps regarding young

people’s attitudes and will serve as the scientific foundation for our resources to come. In January 2023, we spoke to our strategic partners at Everytown and PERIL about these findings, what they found most concerning and hopeful, and about existing and future solutions to help safeguard our communities against these dangerous narratives.

Why was it important to conduct this groundbreaking survey? What results do you feel others urgently need to understand?

Everytown: Too often discussions about extremism, racism and misogyny leave out gun violence, despite the crucial role that guns play in violent extremism. Guns have become the leading cause of death for kids and teens in this country, and yet there is very little research of this quality and depth on youth attitudes toward firearms. This study provides us with critical information on how young people view and think about guns, which will in turn allow us to better understand the steps we can take to potentially disrupt the nexus between extremism and gun violence and to educate young people about guns and gun culture.

PERIL: Gun violence is both a cause and an outcome of radicalization to violent extremism. The trauma, precarity and general state of fear produced

How easy or difficult is it for you to access a gun?

Under 18 Aged 18-30

Very/Somewhat Easy

24.5%

46.9%

Neither Easy Nor Difficult

21.0%

28.5%

Very/Somewhat Difficult

54.4%

24.7%

Source: SPLC/Everytown/PERIL survey used a sample recruited from the NORC AmeriSpeak Panel and supplemented using online survey platform Lucid. The survey is based on a nationally representative, weighted sample of 4,156 participants aged 14-30. Portions of the sample were recruited in-person. The survey fielding period was from September 16, 2022 – October 13, 2022.

by a society overflowing with weapons produces so many of the key conditions that help to prime young people for radicalization to political violence. At the same time, we see how chronic structural injustices like white supremacy and patriarchy are themselves motivators for the spread of gun ownership and gun violence. This is a dynamic that we have to understand better, especially as it affects young people who are the most vulnerable to it.

A range of our partnership’s survey findings demonstrate that a majority of youth and younger people feel unsafe in their schools. Given our findings about the fear, worry and trauma related to gun violence that young people live with, what are the long-term effects on the mental health of young people having to live with such negativity?

PERIL: It can’t be overstated how damaging it is to young people to live with this kind of mental distress. Watching repeated mass shootings covered in the news and on social media can engender feelings of fear, hypervigilance and hopelessness. Students and young people are responding rationally

to the very real threat of violence in their schools, in their local shopping centers and in their neighborhoods. On average, youth know at least one person who has been injured or killed by guns, over 25% of young people in our study have been in a live active shooter lockdown, and 69% have been trained in how to mitigate these threats and protect themselves via active shooter drills. These experiences can lead to depression, anxiety, post-traumatic distress and a general sense that they are not safe in their state, in their school and in public. Seeing adults in their lives and politicians in their government ignoring or failing to adequately respond to these threats can lead young people to conclude that they are not safe now and that this will not change any time soon.

Which public places are youth and younger people feeling most at-risk for gun violence, and what policies do you think would best support them in mitigating these feelings of fear?

Everytown: Gun violence occurs in public and private places, and young people are at-risk of gun violence in their schools, malls, movie theaters, houses of worship, in the community and in their homes. School shootings make up a small proportion of overall gun violence but have an outsized effect on feelings of safety due to the seemingly random nature and persistent threat. The data shows how common-sense solutions can create healthy, positive school climates while reducing the risk of gun violence. School shooters are nearly always students or recent former students who showed warning signs that were observed ahead of time and accessed an unsecured firearm from the home of a family or friend. Positive school climates, tools for identifying students in crisis and developing student-centered intervention plans and ensuring guns in the home are securely stored can stop school shootings before they start. Proposals such as adding more police in schools, arming teachers, intense active shooter drills and “zero tolerance” discipline policies have not been shown to make schools safer and can actually cause harm to students of color or those with disabilities. The data shows we can meet student fear with healthy, evidence-informed solutions.

What role can adults play in spearheading conversations about responsible gun ownership, the risks associated with unsecured guns and

secure firearm storage in an effort to normalize gun safety as part of American culture?

Everytown: Data shows that secure gun storage is a proven way to reduce unintentional shootings and gun suicide among youth (which is on the rise), as well as reducing the number of guns in schools. Yet, an estimated 54% of gun owners do not lock up all of their guns. Storing guns so that they are inaccessible to kids—and any other unauthorized person—is one of the most important things a gun owner can do in the interest of safety. And whether or not one owns a gun, all adults can help to destigmatize conversations about gun safety and secure firearm storage. Simply asking friends or family members about how their guns are stored and encouraging others to practice secure storage can go a long way to reducing youth access to guns. Adults should feel empowered to have thoughtful, pragmatic conversations about the importance of securely storing firearms so that they are not accessible to kids and unauthorized people.

In our survey, we tested the “Male Supremacy Scale” developed by Dr. Pasha Dashtgard of PERIL and the “Racial Resentment Scale.” What was most concerning about the findings as they correlate to radicalizing narratives regarding ownership of firearms?

PERIL: There is a clear and intentional connection being made between gun ownership and masculinity by the National Rifle Association (NRA) and other pro-gun entities/institutions. Pro-gun organizations prey on the insecurities of boys and men who wish to affirm and display their manliness by suggesting that purchasing guns and participating in “gun culture” will grant you status as a tough, strong, real, “Alpha” man. When you combine this with the way boys and men are socialized to be “independent” (i.e. isolated, lonely and with less friends/a smaller social network than their female counterparts) and the stigma around men seeking and receiving mental health support when they are struggling, you can then begin to make sense of the shocking/tragic relationship between masculinity and gun-related suicides.

Our partnership has come together to deliver safe, effective solutions and your respective organizations work every day to help prevent violence in communities and schools across the

country. What about our findings gives you the most hope?

Everytown: There was a wide consensus among the young people interviewed for this study that gun violence is a serious problem and that gun laws can make a difference. Evidence shows that policies like background checks, assault weapons ban, extreme-risk laws, violence intervention programs, etc. can reduce gun violence. These results demonstrate that young people are aware of how serious an issue this is and that there are solutions to this crisis, which make us hopeful that young people will support commonsense solutions such as those outlined above.

PERIL: The problem of gun violence and the power of pro-gun propaganda can feel overwhelming. But this work shows that those things can be analyzed, and their key elements can be addressed in a conscious, intentional manner. This work shows that we must treat the legitimate fears of violence and victimization, which young people wrongly believe guns will solve. But this work also shows how fear can grow out of racial and gender stereotypes, which are illegitimate and need to be corrected. It’s crucial to disentangle the legitimate and illegitimate concerns that lead young people to see guns as a solution, and this work gives us hope that can be done. ●

Resources for Countering Firearm Narratives and Supporting Young People



Everytown: Armed Extremism

everytown.org/issues/armed-extremism



Impact of Gun Violence on Children & Teens Fact Sheet

everytownresearch.org/report/the-impact-of-gun-violence-on-children-and-teens



Everytown: Action Recommendations

everytown.org/actions



PERIL Research

perilresearch.com



SPLC / PERIL

splcenter.org/peril

As Militia Numbers Decline, Antigovernment Threat Persists

By Freddy Cruz

The Southern Poverty Law Center identified 61 active militia groups throughout the United States in 2022. This is a decline from the 92 active militia groups identified in 2021. This decrease in active paramilitary groups took place at a time when several antigovernment militants face charges for their roles in multiple high-profile incidents including the Jan. 6 insurrection, foiled kidnapping plots and the stockpiling of dangerous weapons.

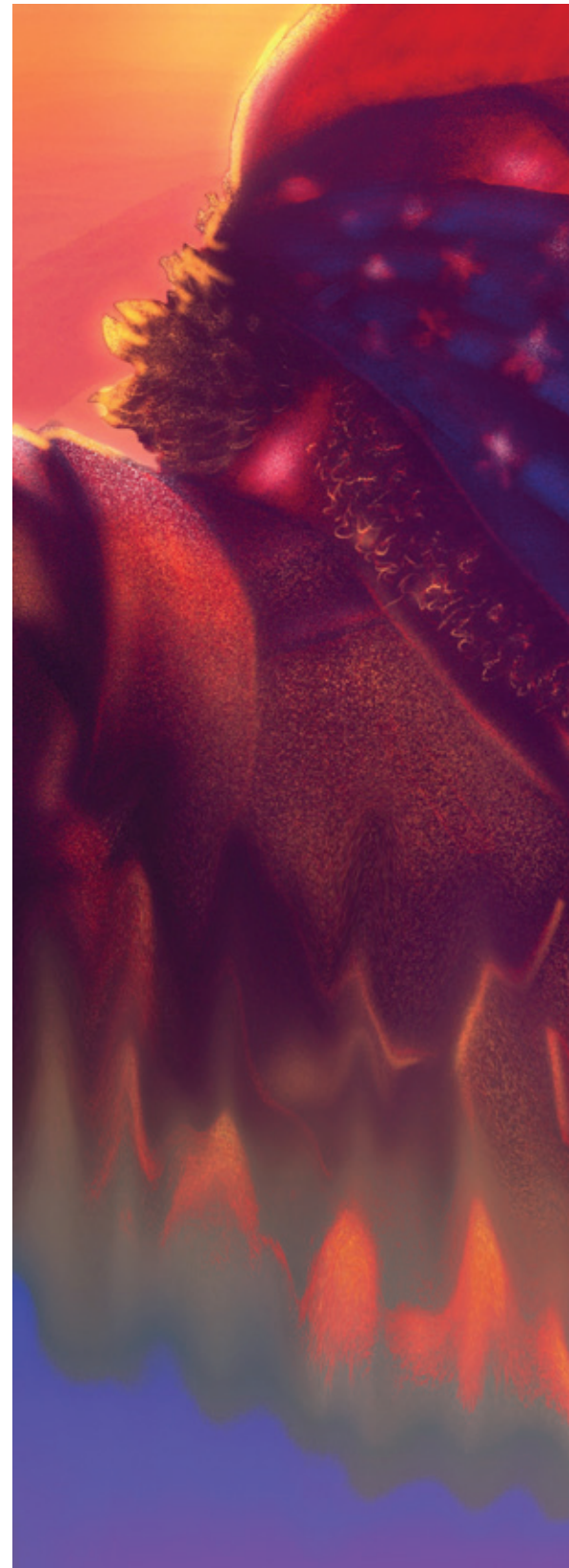
The Southern Poverty Law Center defines the antigovernment movement⁶⁰ as a conspiratorial movement focused on curtailing the powers of both state and federal governments. This movement is composed of sub-ideologies, with each propping up a different tactic to challenge government officialdom. The American militia movement acts as the paramilitary arm of the antigovernment movement.

The Militia Movement on Jan. 6

Of the major incidents that have stained the concept of unregulated militias, one of the most notable in recent history is the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection. It was then that several antigovernment militants stood side by side with radicalized citizens to take part in what was an attempt to stop the certification of electoral votes that would cement Joe Biden's position as the 46th president. Included in this mob of insurrectionists was Stewart Rhodes⁶¹, leader and founder of the Oath Keepers⁶², along with other members of his organization.

Since its founding in 2009, the Oath Keepers have peddled wild conspiracy theories that allege the federal government will confiscate firearms from law abiding citizens, force the American population into concentration camps, attempt to control the population through forced vaccinations and help usher in what Rhodes deemed the next "civil war." Rhodes and the Oath Keepers have backed their extreme rhetoric with real-world demonstrations, often facing off against law enforcement agencies or antiracist activists.

After the attempt to overthrow the government, the United States House Select Committee on the January 6 Attack took on the responsibility of investigating all parties





involved in the assault. Following a law enforcement investigation and eight-day trial, on Nov. 29, 2022, a federal jury found Rhodes, along with the Florida chapter leader of the Oath Keepers, Kelly Meggs, guilty of seditious conspiracy. The jury convicted a total of five Oath Keepers, Rhodes, Meggs, Kenneth Harrelson, Jessica Watkins and Thomas Caldwell of obstruction of an official proceeding.

As Rhodes and some of the Oath Keepers deal with ramifications for storming the Capitol, the overall size of the organization has dwindled. Over the past three years, the number of active Oath Keepers chapters has declined to 15 chapters in 2021 from approximately 79 active chapters in 2020, to just 61 active groups in 2022. Although there has been a decline in active Oath Keepers chapters, according to the Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs,⁶⁵ threats from white supremacists and antigovernment extremists have increased in recent years.

When it comes to the Jan. 6. insurrection, many of those facing legal charges had ties to various antigovernment militia groups and movements. Days after the insurrection, the FBI identified Guy Wesley Reffitt as a Jan. 6 participant and linked him to the Texas-based militia extremist group,⁶⁴ This is Texas Freedom Force. As Texas Public Radio later confirmed⁶⁵, Reffitt was a dues-paying member of This is Texas Freedom Force, although the organization members distanced themselves from Reffitt, saying he did not attend meetings or events.

On August 1, 2022, Reffitt was sentenced to more than seven years in prison for his role in the insurrection. In a news release, the Department of Justice highlighted Reffitt's trial from March 2022, where a jury found him guilty on two counts of civil disorder, one count of obstruction of an official proceeding, one count of entering and remaining in a restricted building or grounds with a firearm and one count of obstruction of justice.

Michigan Fights Back

This past year, high-profile legal battles did not revolve around the insurrection only. In October 2020, local Michigan law enforcement and the FBI teamed up to arrest 14 individuals who were allegedly planning to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. The men were allegedly members of the Wolverine Watchmen, an antigovernment militia group hell-bent on overthrowing the state government.

In 2022, three of the Wolverine Watchmen were sentenced to multi-year terms in state prison for their material support for the individuals conspiring to kidnap Whitmer. Of the 14 individuals arrested in connection with the plot, six of the men faced charges in federal court and eight in state court. The three men, Joseph Morrison, Paul Bellar and Pete Musico, were charged under Michigan's Anti-Terrorism Act of 2022⁶⁶. Adam Fox, Barry Croft Jr., Ty Garbin, Kaleb Franks, Daniel Harris and Brandon Caserta were alleged to be the six core members of the group. In early 2022, both Kaleb Franks⁶⁷ and Ty Gabin pleaded guilty and took a plea deal agreeing to cooperate with the government as it built a case against others in the group. Gabin was eventually handed a reduced sentence⁶⁸ of 2 ½ years for his assistance while Franks, who has faced up to life in prison, was handed four years in federal prison⁶⁹ with an additional three years of court supervision upon his release.

Following mistrials resulting from a deadlocked jury, Fox and Croft were convicted in federal court in August of kidnapping conspiracy and conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction. In late December, a court sentenced Fox to 16 years in prison⁷⁰ for his role in the attempted kidnapping. Days later, it sentenced Croft.⁷¹ to 19 ½-year in prison, labeling him the "ideas guy" of the plot.

Daniel Harris and Brandon Caserta were found not guilty of federal charges in April 2022.

Dismantling the New Mexico Civil Guard

Since the early 90's antigovernment militia groups have marketed the idea that organizing as a private military force is a protected right under the U.S. Constitution. The case against the New Mexico Civil Guard (NMCG) is an example of how existing laws can be used to hold militias accountable for their dangerous and often illegal activities.

During the 2020 protests that broke out in the wake of the death of George Floyd, the antigovernment group dubbed the New Mexico Civil Guard, showed up to an antiracist protest with the intent to police protestors near Old Town in Albuquerque, New Mexico. After protestors clashed with antiracist demonstrators, a scuffle ensued leaving one person shot. Although the shooter was not part of the NMCG, in the initial complaint filed⁷² by the state, the NMCG was described as having "exacerbated" the situation.

In the wake of the Jan. 6 insurrection, both the justice system and big tech companies have had to reevaluate their roles in helping curtail the growing threat posed by antigovernment militia groups and their ardent supporters.

The complaint also highlighted some of the links between NMCG members and known white supremacist and neo-Confederate organizations. A point of concern was NMCG's history of showing up to try and police events as a private paramilitary force. In October 2022, Second Judicial District Court Judge Elaine Lujan ruled the NMCG broke the law by organizing and trying to police the 2020 protestors in Old Town. Lujan's ruling also barred the group from publicly organizing⁷⁵ as a militia and ordered NMCG to cover \$8,350 in legal fees incurred by the Bernalillo County District Attorney's office in its attempt to obtain relevant court documents.

The district attorney's office viewed the ruling as a substantial victory. The impact is expected to extend beyond on the New Mexico Civil Guard and anticipated to prevent other militia groups in the future from organizing in a coordinated capacity to threaten and intimidate the public.

In the wake of the Jan. 6 insurrection, both the justice system and big tech companies have had to reevaluate their roles in helping curtail the growing threat posed by antigovernment militia groups and their ardent supporters. As legal cases run their courses through the justice system, militia groups have had to go underground to reorganize and recruit. In 2022, these efforts to hold militia groups accountable for their vigilante activities have resulted in stifled growth and a decline in active militia organizations. As antigovernment ideas bleed into other extremist movements, the decline in militia groups is not representative of the entire landscape of organizationally unaffiliated but hard-right inspired extremists activated over the past year.

Recommendations for positive change

As law enforcement and military agencies explore new ways to deal with the threat posed by anti-government militias, the SPLC has drafted several policy recommendations that will aid in dismantling this organized threat to democracy.

In order to confront militia violence and intimidation, federal and state authorities—including state attorneys—can actively support existing laws that make it illegal to form private militias. They should also work to educate agents on how to enforce those laws and put policies in place that prevent law enforcement agents from engaging in paramilitary training and participating in political intimidation.

To prevent antigovernment militia members and their sympathizers from infiltrating branches of the government, the Department of Homeland Security along with state and local law enforcement can make a greater effort to adopt policies that prevent the hiring, retention and promotion of personnel who actively promote white supremacy, violence or other bias against persons based on those person's personal characteristics.

In searching for policies that could help mitigate political violence, states should restrict firearms in and around state capitol and government buildings and near polling locations. In the fight against hate and extremism, the SPLC offers these recommendations as just a few of the ways that both lawmakers and law enforcement can adopt changes to continue to mitigate the growth of antigovernment militia and other extremist sentiment at both the national and local level. ●



Old Bigotries Melded With New Conspiracies Burgeon White Christian Nationalism

By Joe Wiinikka-Lydon, Emerson Hodges and R.G. Cravens

White Christian nationalism is a key ideology that inspired the failed Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection and fueled multiple failed political campaigns in 2022. Even with these major public losses, however, white Christian nationalism remains a persistent and growing threat to U.S. democracy.

The principles and values that animate white Christian nationalism are not novel. Extremist and antigovernment organizations have mobilized around the ideology before, and in 2022 many

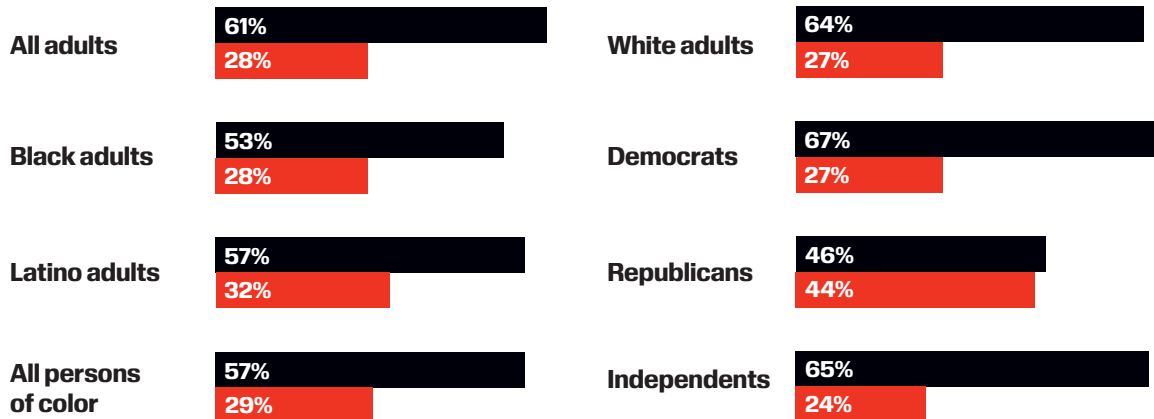
claimed the label as a badge of honor. However, white Christian nationalism threatens democracy and human rights for all.

White Christian nationalism generally refers to a political ideology and identity that fuses white supremacy, Christianity and American nationalism, and whose proponents claim that the United States is a “Christian nation.” Their ideology’s end goal is power for “true Americans” who hold their specific political and religious views. In this paradigm, the

Americans' Views About Religion and Government

■ The separation of state and church is critical to the health of our democracy so no single religion dominates and cannot be forced upon anyone.

■ The United States is a Christian country founded on Christian values, which must be upheld even if it means creating policies that protect these values and beliefs.



Source: Results for this Southern Poverty Law Center/Tulchin poll are based on an online panel survey conducted November 14-20, 2022, with 1,500 adults residing in the U.S., aged 18 and older. For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of sampling error is ± 2.53 percentage points.

nation's foundational separation of church and state contradict their conception of God's plan, and U.S. laws, policies, leaders and even culture should reflect adherents' extremely narrow interpretation of biblical values.

Anthea Butler wrote in a report⁷⁴ compiled by Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, Freedom From Religion Foundation, and Christians Against Christian Nationalism: "The scene in the Senate chamber at the [Jan 6] insurrection is the best physical description of the phenomenon. Their prayer in the chamber—in which they began "Jesus Christ, we invoke your name"—hints at the rot at the core of religious nationalism: the assumption that Christ is at the core of efforts to establish and promote white protestant Christianity in the service of white male autocratic authority."

White Christian nationalism is exclusionary and antidemocratic. Adherents view large segments of the U.S. population as un-American and often ascribe labels such as Marxists, communists and even pedophiles to civil rights advocates who champion a pluralistic, multiracial, equitable democracy.

For decades white Christian nationalist ideas were a foundation that linked the far-right antigovernment and "religious right" movements in the U.S. In the 1990s, the antigovernment movement

self-identified as the "Christian Patriot" movement and combined support for militias, conspiracies, and "constitutionalist" reasoning with a belief in Christian prophecy applied to the U.S. The movement was rooted in antisemitic and racist Christian Identity, but over time these aspects became coded and Jewish oppressors were replaced with a tyrannical government elite.

Meanwhile, the early "religious right" movement was fronted by the efforts of Jerry Falwell's so-called Moral Majority Republican politics that skirted the edges of the more blatant white Christian nationalism of R.J. Rushdoony. Both factions of the religious right were harbingers of present-day anti-LGBTQ, anti-Muslim and male supremacist efforts. Today's white Christian nationalism has brought together these movements in its crusade against secularism and sees diversity as a problem that undermines the country's integrity and viability.

White Christian nationalism is expressed as the original form of identity politics that validates only one identity, the white Christian nationalist, as the true inheritor of the white "Founders'" nation.

Adherents of white Christian nationalism are also some of the biggest drivers of antidemocratic conspiracy theories and election denialism. Like a political rally with a splash of baptismal water,

white Christian nationalism is on exhibit at the ReAwaken America Tour—a series of rallies led by Clay Clark and Michael Flynn, former national security adviser in the Trump administration. What began as a protest against COVID-19 mandates rebranded shortly after the Jan. 6 insurrection into a touring MAGA Christian revival.

Over the last two years, ReAwaken America has visited over 15 cities and engaged thousands of people, offering participants conspiracies and baptisms, extremist sermons and misinformation, and becoming a singular force propagating the “Big Lie” that Donald Trump won the 2020 presidential election—against all evidence to the contrary. This tour’s messages reinforce the idea that there is no separation between church and state. In 2022, SPLC polling of a nationally representative sample of people in the U.S. found that nearly two-thirds of people disagree with the tour’s promoters and strongly support the separation of church and state.

The problem with this view is not Christianity. Indeed, this white Christian Nationalism is laced with inherently stark contradictions. Many mainstream Christians in communities across the country deeply value diversity, and the historical foundation of the separation of church and state. The problem, instead, is how reactionary and exclusive this ideology is.

As Jemar Tisby, an activist and scholar whose early Christian faith was shaped by his experience in a white evangelical environment has said, “This ideology’s narrow conception of who is ‘truly’ American and what constitutes Christianity is diametrically opposed to the free, equitable and multiracial society that we need to construct.”

The ReAwaken tour, and white Christian nationalists, present politics as an apocalyptic fight between “good and evil,” making it hard to imagine any possibility for the kind of political compromise that is so necessary for a functional democracy. Speakers such as Flynn cast progressives and other Americans as “globalists,” “communists” and un-American. He and others rail against antiracism curriculum and denigrate trans people.

Flynn has said, “Our children’s lives and futures are at risk when our schoolboards ... shove [critical race theory] and transgender nonsense down their throats.” He has also said publicly, “So, if we are going to have ‘one nation under God,’ which we must, we have to have one religion, one nation under God, and one religion under God.”

Groups like the ReAwaken America Tour claim that their exclusive ideology is meant to protect children and the nation, even as they scapegoat trans children and their families, demonize neighbors with different political views and help erode democratic norms and institutions.

That same exclusionary ideology is present in anti-LGBTQ extremist groups monitored by the SPLC. For example, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), which has claimed “The homosexual agenda will destroy Christianity and society⁷⁵,” contended that LGBTQ people are more likely to be pedophiles, and the organization defended laws forcing sterilization of transgender individuals.

Family Research Council (FRC) claims to advocate for “religious liberty,” yet the organization’s work to make the Bible the authoritative text of American governance would legalize discrimination, not just against LGBTQ people but also against multiple marginalized groups, and eventually drive them from public life.

FRC President Tony Perkins has called on public school teachers to proselytize⁷⁶ children, has advocated restrictive school curricula and has claimed “Christian nationalism” is a term invented to persecute Christians. At the same time, Perkins, FRC and other anti-LGBTQ hate groups reject the idea that LGBTQ people can be full participants in American society. Indeed, Perkins called LGBTQ people the “zenith of man’s rebellion against God” and regularly claims that extending civil rights protections to LGBTQ people comes at the cost of “religious liberty,” a term often used as a cover to discriminate against LGBTQ individuals.

In 2022, these old bigotries melded with new conspiracies to become a burgeoning white Christian nationalist ideology that produced an especially toxic environment for marginalized and vulnerable people in the United States.

The renewed usage of “groomer” rhetoric fueled a moral panic in 2022 that contributed to violence against LGBTQ people. Five people were murdered in the Club Q mass shooting in Colorado Springs, Colorado, simply because they were in an LGBTQ nightclub. In addition, anti-transgender extremists continue to target children’s hospitals and libraries—spaces that are integral to American civil society.

The groups who promote these views claim to protect children. In reality, they target children’s events, placing kids in harm’s way. Further, their attempts to eliminate accurate and inclusive public





Jemar Tisby, an activist and scholar whose early Christian faith was shaped by his experience in a white evangelical environment.

education reflect their desire to shape the next generation of Americans in the image of white Christian nationalism.

Christian scholars and laypersons across denominations have decried the white supremacy, heterosexism, antisemitism and nationalism espoused by white Christian nationalists. Such scholars and writers as Anthea Butler, Obery Hendricks, Jennifer Butler and networks including Christians Against Christian Nationalism and Faithful America demonstrate that white Christian nationalism is also an attack on values held by millions of Christians in the United States.

Jemar Tisby⁷⁷ is a historian, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Color of Compromise* and founder of The Witness: A Black Christian Collective, a multimedia platform where he writes about race, religion and culture. In Tisby's podcast for The

Witness, he explores white Christian nationalism and anti-racism research and work. This production offers resources and opportunities that can help communities and individuals locally push back against white Christian nationalism. ●

Resources for Countering White Christian Nationalism



Christians against Christian Nationalism
christiansagainstchristiannationalism.org



Faithful America
act.faithfulamerica.org/signup/christian-nationalism-resources



The Witness: A Black Christian Collective
thewitnessbcc.com



Antisemitism Animates the Hard Right

By Alon Milwicki and Rachael Fugardi

Antisemitism is a constant in American history; 2022 was no different.

Throughout the year, celebrities, politicians and other public figures have promoted and embraced antisemitic rhetoric. This normalization of antisemitism has boosted the profile of many extremist groups and has resulted in direct threats to the Jewish community.

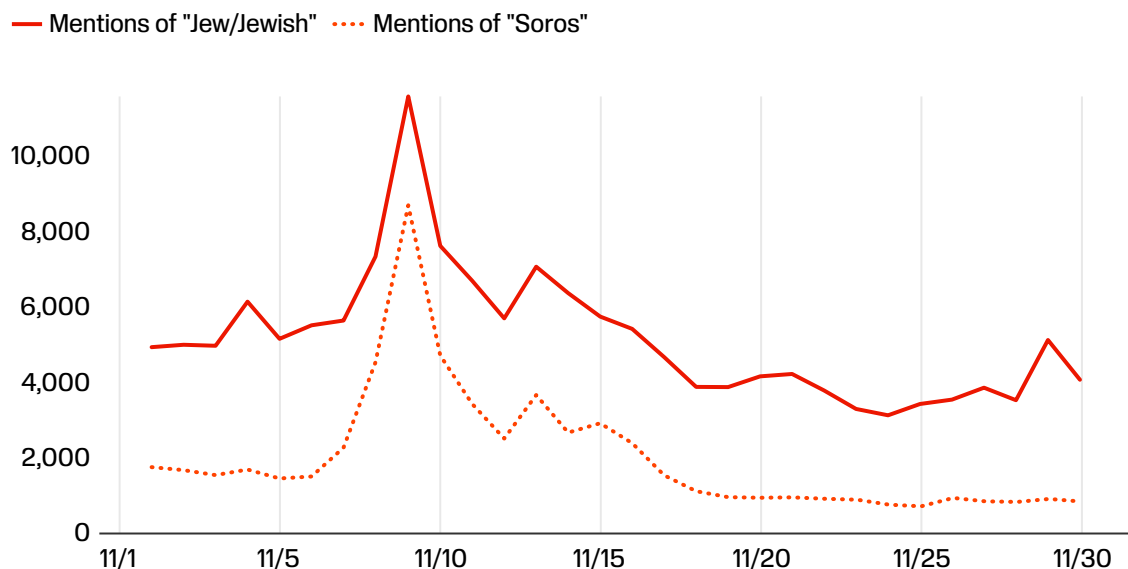
In 2022, Jewish people and spaces were regularly harassed, assaulted, vandalized and threatened. The beginning of the year was marked by an armed standoff outside a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas, when a gunman disrupted Sabbath services and took four people hostage. In December, a

man shot a pellet gun at a Jewish man and his son outside of a kosher supermarket in Staten Island, New York.

In the weeks following the takeover of Twitter by Elon Musk, the platform saw a 61% increase in discriminatory posts about Jews and Judaism according to a collective of non-profits.⁷⁸ While reports of violence and nakedly antisemitic rhetoric this year made the country's problem with antisemitism clear, the problem is far from new, and the consequences we now see were unfortunately predictable.⁷⁹

In 2022, the growth of overtly antisemitic groups, including those that ascribe to Christian

Mentions of “Jew/Jewish” or “Soros” in Election-Related Posts by Hard-Right Users on Major Social Media Platforms in Nov. 2022



Source: Southern Poverty Law Center and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue

Identity theology, remained relatively stagnant. However, key elements and beliefs were evident in the white nationalist hate group actions and rhetoric.

In a November livestream⁸⁰ white nationalist and Holocaust denier Nick Fuentes laughed about the history of violence targeting Jewish people around the world and warned, “The Jews had better start being nice to people like us because what comes out of this is going to be a lot uglier and a lot worse for them than anything that’s been said on this show.” On the ground, hate groups like Goyim Defense League targeted communities across the country with antisemitic flyers, more than tripling their propaganda efforts from 2021, according to Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt.^{81 82}

The total number of Holocaust denial groups did not grow significantly, however, new documented activity by Clemens and Blair publishing in 2022 further clarifies how interconnected Holocaust deniers and Holocaust revisionist organizations are in the U.S. These groups and publishing companies claim to be centered on open discussion, but they often blame Jewish forces for suppressing their revisionist history of Nazi Germany and for

controlling the U.S. understanding of the horrors of Nazi Germany.

Throughout the 2022 election cycle, no name was invoked more in association with dirty money, control of media and politics or the existence of shadow government and “deep state” than George Soros, the Hungarian-American Jewish businessman and philanthropist. Right-wing media and politicians have consistently positioned Soros as a boogeyman whose influence and ideas will destroy American democracy and replace it with a Marxist communist society. These attacks bare all the hallmarks of standard and persistent antisemitic tropes, including that Jews control the media and government and that a small cadre of Jewish leaders is in control of all world affairs. Soros’ name serves as a basis for the normalization of antisemitism and acts as a stand-in for more explicitly bigoted statements.

In partnership with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and CASM Technology, the SPLC found a noticeable peak in online social media posts about “Soros and Warnock” and “Jew and Warnock” when analyzing social media trends regarding the midterm runoff election in Georgia. Antisemitic activists and groups spread false ideas about Jewish influence in elections in order to discredit the

powerful, difficult and successful work of African American people and the multiracial coalition working for voting rights and representation in the South.

In early October, Ye—formerly known as Kanye West—launched into an antisemitic tirade that garnered national attention. In an interview with Fox News host Tucker Carlson, Ye made several hateful statements about Jewish control and greed and subsequently doubled down on social media, threatening to go “death con 3 On JEWISH PEOPLE.” He eventually joined far-right conspiracy theorist Alex Jones for an interview during which Ye claimed, “I like Hitler” and went on to add, “They did good things too. We have got to stop dissing the Nazis all the time.”

Ye has nearly 18.5 million followers on Instagram—a number that far exceeds the global Jewish population. This is a sizable audience that extremists are eager to tap. In mid-October, the hate group Goyim Defense League leveraged the media attention brought on by Ye’s remarks by hanging banners in Los Angeles that read “Kanye is right about the Jews.”

Ye’s online threats also appear to have had real-world consequences. In November, dozens of headstones in a Jewish cemetery outside of Chicago, Illinois, were vandalized with swastikas and the message “Kanye Was Rite.” The following month, a man was assaulted⁸³ in Central Park by someone who allegedly shouted “Kanye 2024” during the attack in addition to antisemitic comments.

Similarly, when neo-Nazi Andrew Anglin’s Twitter account was reinstated, he immediately expressed his support, posting, “I am Officially endorsing Ye For President Of America.” This support was not limited to white supremacists. In a November webcast, notorious antisemite and leader of the Nation of Islam, Louis Farrakhan, reiterated antisemitic tropes about Jewish power and influence. Farrakhan praised a film and his own book which falsely promote the antisemitic conspiracy that Jewish people initiated the transatlantic slave trade and continue to exert control over Black people.

In the lead-up to the 2022 general election, Minnesota Secretary of State candidate Kim Crockett used Soros⁸⁴ image to display a consistent and abhorrent antisemitic trope in a video played at the state GOP convention. The footage showed Soros acting as the puppet master behind the scenes and pulling the strings behind her Democratic oppo-

nents. Jews as the heads of a shadow government controlling world events is a trope traced back to World War II and earlier.

When public figures use their large platforms to endorse antisemitism, the consequences are not confined to online spaces or extremist circles; this rhetoric threatens the safety of the Jewish community. The Soros-related conspiracy theories that were popular in political advertisements this year were the same ones that Cesar Sayoc shared online prior to his conviction for sending 16 pipe bombs to 13 public figures including Soros in 2018.

On December 7, second gentleman Doug Emhoff convened a meeting in response to the increase in antisemitic rhetoric. Invited to the meeting were several prominent Jewish leaders of notable organizations dedicated to monitoring and combating antisemitism and the “epidemic of hate facing” the country.¹ This sentiment was later echoed by White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, who stated that President Biden believed antisemitism is an issue all Americans need to acknowledge, adding that he called on “all Americans” to “forcefully reject antisemitism.”⁸⁵ While administrations in the past have appealed for a more robust examination of antisemitism and anti-Jewish sentiments and hate groups in America, President Biden has put words into action.

At a conference on December 16, Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt, the Biden-appointed special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism, reflected on Emhoff’s meeting, asserting, “Antisemitism is not a niche issue” and that it cannot be fought in silos. Lipstadt’s point is supported by recent demographic estimates⁸⁶ that 12-15% of American Jews are people of color, 10% are immigrants and 20% are children of immigrants. The recognition that anti-Jewish hatred represents a core facet of other bigoted ideologies emphasizes the need for a more robust and intersectional approach to combating antisemitism in America.

As the executive director of the Atlanta-based nonprofit SOJOURN⁸⁷, Rebecca Stapel-Wax seeks to dismantle silos among civil and human rights groups and build inclusion for LGBTQ communities in harmony with her Jewish faith. “We are grounded in a faith that really uplifts and encourages and supports all community members,” Stapel-Wax said of her organization’s guiding beliefs. “We empower communities to advance and celebrate gender and sexual diversity across the South,” Stapel-Wax explained.



Rebecca Stapel-Wax, Executive Director of the Atlanta-based nonprofit SOJOURN.

“You’ll notice that there’s no ‘Jewish’ involved in that particular [mission] statement because our Jewish values are really the foundation.”

In SOJOURN’s work to build a collective movement for equality and to celebrate the multifaceted nature of people’s identities, the organization has created comprehensive and queer-inclusive sex education programs for teens, as well as materials that dismantle rigid and regressive gender stereotypes for children. SOJOURN also advocates on behalf of Jewish and LGBTQ individuals seeking to adopt and provides resources and support to parents of gender-expansive children.

SOJOURN also has become a hub for both regional and national collaboration through its partnership with Keshet⁸⁸ to “work with Jewish

organizations in the South to build or support an LGBTQ+ equality working group.” Joining with such established organizations and networks is an effective way to counter hate and build inclusive spaces in all communities. “Connect through social media,” Stapel-Wax recommends. “Get like-minded people ... people who are active [and] find the passion that you have in a formed group.”

However, such intersectional movements for inclusion will not always be flawless, Stapel-Wax said. “When we get pushback from the folks that we’re trying to support, we listen, and we try to do it differently.” *Tikkun olam*—a concept in Judaism referring to various forms of action intended to repair the world—she explained, “is a constant journey of learning and humility.” ●



The Sheriffs Working to Subvert Democracy

By Rachel Goldwasser

A smattering of county sheriffs across the U.S. tested the limits of democracy in 2022, with an assist from extremist law enforcement groups.

These constitutional sheriffs⁸⁹ are devoted members of an antigovernment extremist movement that believes sheriffs are the highest authority in the country, above even the president. They usurp the duties of the Supreme Court by personally deciding which U.S. laws are legitimate and whether to enforce them.

These sheriffs are actively damaging the nation's rule of law and attempting to shape the U.S. into a country where fringe law enforcement officers deter-

mine what human, civil and property rights they will enforce.

In the U.S., where the justice system already perpetuates great inequities that disproportionately effect people of color, these members of law enforcement further undermine equal justice under the law.

In 2022, constitutional sheriffs' ideology intruded into another facet of democracy: elections. Members melded their extremist positions with their law enforcement authority to investigate rogue, conspiratorial allegations of fraud in the 2020 presidential election and brought doubt into the legitimacy of the 2022 midterm elections.

Two extremist law enforcement groups, Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA) and Protect America Now (PAN), led these efforts.

CSPOA radicalizes sheriffs and the public through law enforcement training, presentations to lawmakers and civilians, online media and books written by the group's founder Richard Mack. The organization is linked to extremists, including Oath Keepers, sovereign citizens, neo-confederates and white nationalists.

PAN was founded by political operatives and is less outspoken about their constitutional sheriff beliefs, but most of their advisory board and members are constitutional sheriffs whose ideology has shaped the organization at large. PAN has focused its attention on immigration issues, supporting the anti-immigrant hate group Federation for Immigration Reform (FAIR) in its efforts to demonize migrants and lobby for policies that reflect this.

Beginning in the summer of 2022, both organizations worked with election conspiracy group True the Vote, whose founders participated in the film *2000 Mules*, which promotes the “Big Lie,” the conspiracy theory parroted by former President Trump that the 2020 presidential election was rigged.⁹⁰

CSPOA posted a press release to its website on May 24, 2022, calling on local law enforcement agencies to investigate the 2020 election.⁹¹ The organization's leaders and member sheriffs repeated the claim on July 12 at a CSPOA press conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. Sheriffs that were investigating and those considering it spoke publicly about their efforts and repeated themselves a day later at the Libertarian Freedom Fest in Las Vegas.^{92 93}

True the Vote announced its partnership with PAN on June 22, calling it ProtectAmerica.Vote. The group advertised that the effort was intended to teach sheriffs about their state election laws and provide them with grants to investigate alleged voting violations. The partnership included a plan to build a “National Election Integrity Voter Hotline” that would be linked to sheriffs' offices and promote their cause in an informational campaign starting Aug 1.

Multiple sheriffs affiliated with CSPOA and PAN spent the year attempting to investigate the 2020 election or interfering in the 2022 midterm elections. A group of devout constitutional sheriffs from Arizona, Michigan and Wisconsin were the most egregious.

Arizona's Constitutional Sheriff Problem

Mark Lamb, sheriff of Pinal County, Arizona, and PAN leader acted as the face of the PAN True the Vote partnership. In an interview published in the right-wing media source American Greatness on July 20, Lamb claimed that he was “disturbed” by talk of a law enforcement focus on domestic violence threats, that the feds had no jurisdiction over his county and that if they tried to push what he called unconstitutional mandates, “We would stop them,” Lamb said.

David Rhodes, Sheriff of Yavapai County, Arizona, has been linked to CSPOA and the Oath Keepers, and most recently an Oath Keepers offshoot organization, the Yavapai County Preparedness Team (YCPT). YCPT and the group Lions of Liberty formulated a plan to stake out and film Arizona ballot drop boxes for cases of fraud. At a July 23 YCPT meeting, group leader Jim Arroyo told members, “We have already coordinated with Sheriff Rhodes, and he told us if we see somebody stuffing a ballot box, and we get a license plate, they will make an arrest, and there will be a prosecution. Bottom line.” YCPT and Lions of Liberty eventually halted monitoring after a lawsuit was filed against them by Protect Democracy on behalf of the League of Women Voters asserting the group was engaging in voter intimidation.⁹⁴

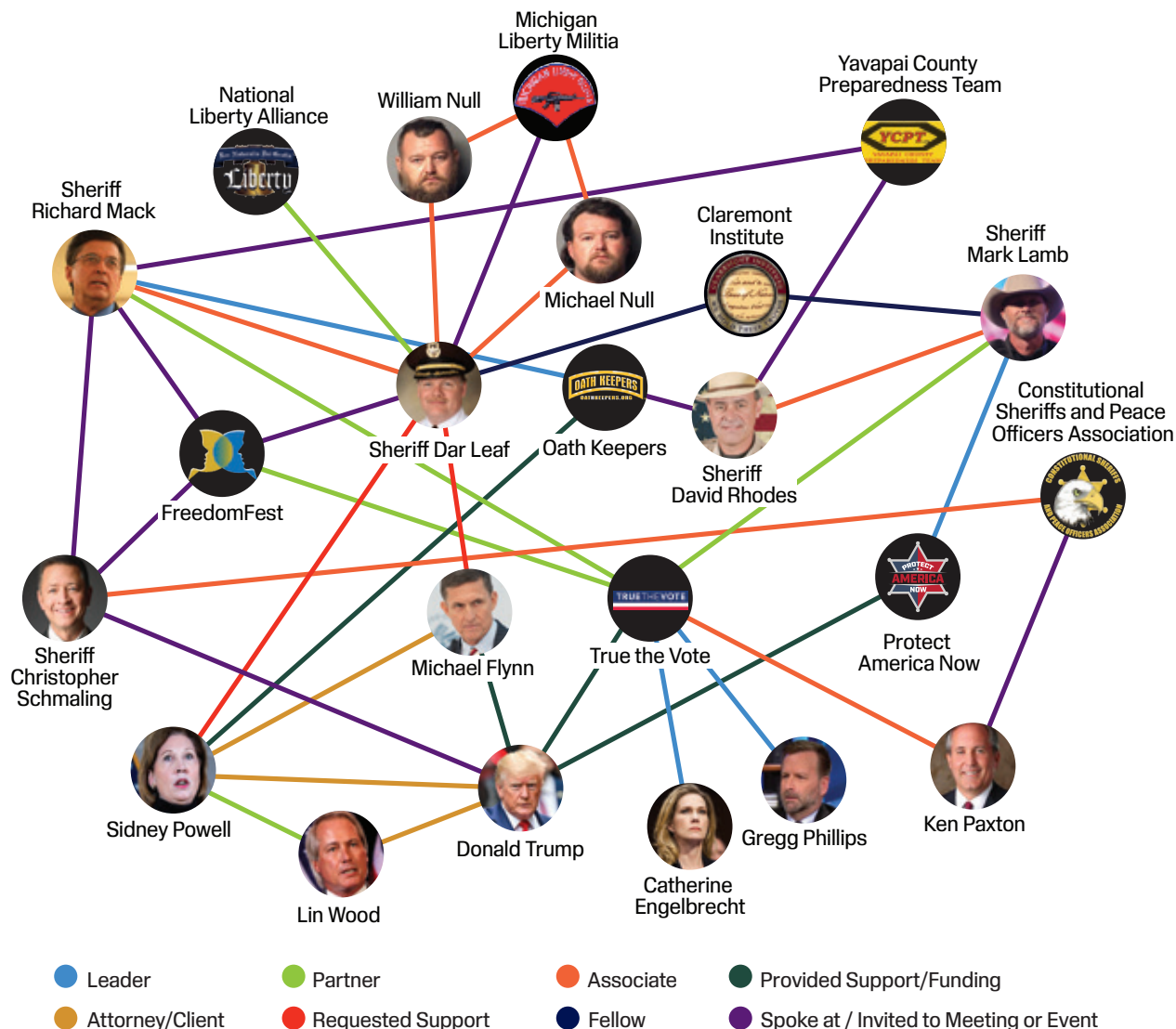
Militias, Elections and Plots in MidWest

Dar Leaf, Sheriff of Barry County, Michigan, is a lifetime member of CSPOA. He received the group's Sheriff of the Year award in 2017.⁹⁵ On May 18, 2020, Leaf appeared at a protest alongside members of the Michigan Liberty Militia (MLM), whose members were found guilty in 2022 of a 2020 plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.⁹⁶

Leaf was asked if he regretted having shared a stage with MLM members, and he replied, “It's just a charge, and they say a ‘plot to kidnap,’ and you got to remember that. Are they trying to kidnap? Because a lot of people are angry with the governor, and they want her arrested. So, are they trying to arrest or was it a kidnap attempt? Because you can still in Michigan if it is a felony, make a felony arrest.”⁹⁷

In December 2020, Leaf began his investigation into the presidential election. Leaf's attorney Carson Tucker reached out to Trump allies, including conspiracy theorist and former Trump administration national security adviser Michael Flynn, attorney Sidney Powell and Lin Wood's Fight Back Foundation asking for information regarding “counties that have been potentially compromised.” Leaf

The Sheriffs Alliance Interfering with U.S. Elections



tried to seize the voting machines from those counties to run his own investigation.⁹⁸ In 2021 Leaf also worked with a private investigator who partnered with a sheriff's deputy to question county clerks in six Michigan townships. After learning that the state was investigating his own investigation, on June 3, 2022, Leaf sued the Michigan attorney general, secretary of state, and members of the state troopers for illegal interference. His claims in his lawsuit were dismissed by a Michigan judge on Aug. 29, 2022.⁹⁹ ¹⁰⁰

Leaf's extremist election denial continued through 2022 as he made claims of voter fraud at the July CSPOA True the Vote press conference,

FreedomFest in Las Vegas and to CSPOA members after the midterms. Leaf has gone so far as to call for sheriffs to host common law grand juries on the 2018 "stolen election" conspiracy. This type of grand jury is promoted by the National Liberty Alliance, a sovereign citizen group Leaf has worked with.¹⁰¹

Christopher Schmaling, Sheriff of Racine County, Wisconsin, has also closely affiliated with CSPOA. He has appeared on Sheriff Mack's online show and presented with CSPOA at 2022 FreedomFest. Schmaling, who was once the keynote speaker at a Trump rally, launched his own investigation into alleged 2020 voter fraud.

Donald Trump: James Devaney/Getty Images; Michael Flynn: Chris Kleponis/AFP via Getty Images; Sidney Powell: Drew Angerer/Getty Images; Catherine Engelbrecht: Samuel Corum/Anadolu Agency/Getty Images; Lin Wood, Mark Lamb, Richard Mack: Gage Skidmore; Gregg Phillips: CNN Screen Shot via Texas Tribune

In 2021, Sheriff Schmaling tried to have nursing home staff and the majority of the Wisconsin Election Commission (WEC) arrested. He claimed they committed voter fraud after the WEC changed a policy during the pandemic that allowed nursing home staff to assist residents with their ballots in 2020. The Racine County District Attorney's office declined to prosecute.

Ironically, in 2022, Schmaling refused to charge Harry Wait, leader of the group H.O.T. Government, who requested multiple absentee ballots using false information. When asked about it, Wait said, "Basically, I committed a crime when I ordered them. I emailed Sheriff Schmaling, asked if he was going to arrest me, and he said, 'hell no.'" The Wisconsin attorney general's office began an investigation July 29, 2022.¹⁰²

Schmaling also presented at 2022 Freedomfest, alongside other election denying sheriffs.

Unfortunately, these men have made a significant impact, using their power as law enforcement officials to make and investigate spurious allegations and gotten their ideas in front of a wide audience. Fortunately, these men represent a fringe movement, one many law enforcement officers still refuse to participate in.

While multiple Arizona sheriffs including Sheriffs Lamb and Rhodes joined the constitutional sheriff's movement and meddled in U.S. elections, making the process more fraught for voters, another Arizona sheriff, Paul Penzone of Maricopa County, Arizona, exemplified the legitimate role of sheriffs: He chose to denounce the same extremist ideology and support democracy rather than participate in actions or groups working to damage it.

In in the run-up to the 2020 election, Penzone said in a press release, "With the same conviction we display when taking the oath of office, we must commit to practice impartial and nonpolitical actions during the course of our duties." He continued, "Denying, ignoring or refusing to recognize and apply the laws as they are written is not within the authority of law enforcement professionals. Terms such as 'Sanctuary' county become an excuse to circumvent the law and defy due process and democracy."

Then again on Nov 12, 2022, when speaking to the groups and politicians targeting elections and voting facilities, Penzone told the press he would not stand for any threat to voting, voting facilities or election workers.

"We are seeing a radical movement, including some local law enforcement, of people who are committed to destroying trust in our system for their own selfish gain," Penzone told the press in August as the 2022 midterm elections heated up. "We must fight against it, or our nation will no longer be the democratic standard."¹⁰³

Rejecting constitutional sheriffs in policy

All law enforcement can play a role in minimizing the harm from the constitutional sheriff movement. They can resist disinformation and conspiracy theories. They can resist recruitment into extremist groups like CSPOA, PAN and the Oath Keepers that actively prey on them. County sheriffs and police chiefs can push back on the notion that their function is to interpret the law rather than enforce it. The National Sheriffs Association can finally decide that there is no place for extremism among their ranks and refuse membership to sheriffs who actively promote antigovernment ideologies, including constitutional sheriffs.

State leaders can ensure that board members of their state police officer trainings and certification programs (POST) are not constitutional sheriffs or affiliated with extremists. These same boards can also create rules that prevent extremists from conducting official law enforcement training in their state.

States should limit the role of sheriffs' posse members or deputized private citizens to core law enforcement functions—not election administration. And federal and state authorities should ensure that constitutional sheriffs do not engage in voter intimidation or intervene or interfere in election administration in any way.

Congress can ensure no federal funds are used for training that promotes CSPOA propaganda. Congress should investigate all law enforcement departments' links to extremism. Law enforcement officials who self-identify as constitutional sheriffs, engage in election interference or otherwise violate the Department of Justice's new Title VI protocols prohibiting discriminatory conduct, should be ineligible to receive federal funds.

Every level of government from national, state, and local law enforcement organizations should publicly reject the views and practices of constitutional sheriffs—and should not permit these individuals to serve in leadership positions. ●

Hate on Main Street

By Jeff Tischauser and Lydia Bates

Hate groups descended into public spaces across the U.S. in 2022 to protest against LGBTQ inclusive programming, reproductive rights and classroom discussions of systemic racism.

Whether hate groups were responding to calls for action from mainstream far-right groups or were directing their membership themselves, protests attacking civil rights drove public performances of hate and the circulation of hate group messaging. As the lines between hate group and mainstream political rhetoric become thinner, hate group messaging in public spaces increased across the U.S. in 2022.

Hate groups perform media spectacles as a tool to recruit, generate publicity and intimidate targeted communities. A spectacle creates a visually compelling display designed to grab public attention. In the hands of hate groups, they are crude, designed to provoke outrage and driven by a need to market their movements to new audiences.

Hate group spectacles in this sense are always transactional and involve selling hatred to the public. Hate group performances include designing and displaying banners with messages that use slurs to refer to targeted groups, participating in racist and antisemitic chants, heckling participants of inclusive events and often openly carrying firearms and other weapons—all while dressed in their organization's uniform, which often includes face coverings to conceal their identities.

Flyering, which is a relatively low-risk activity, is used to recruit and intimidate and draws media attention, decreased for the first time since 2018, dropping to 5,063 incidents in 2022 from 5,680 in 2021—a 10.8% decline. The drop is due to hate groups shifting their focus to public performances, as well as steep drop in flyering incidents from the white nationalist group New Jersey European Heritage Association, which slid dramatically to nine in 2022 from 423 in 2021. This 97.8% decrease is likely due to members joining other hate groups and a change in tactics to prioritize public performances of hatred.

However, flyering incidents have been on the rise for the last five years. Flyering incidents overall rose 291% from 2018 to 2023, which suggests flyering is still an important tactic hate groups deploy. White





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nationalist and neo-Nazi groups disseminated the most flyers in 2022, which is a trend that has remained the same since 2018. White nationalist group Patriot Front continues to produce and circulate the most hate group flyering, with 4,801 flyers distributed across all of the lower 48 states.

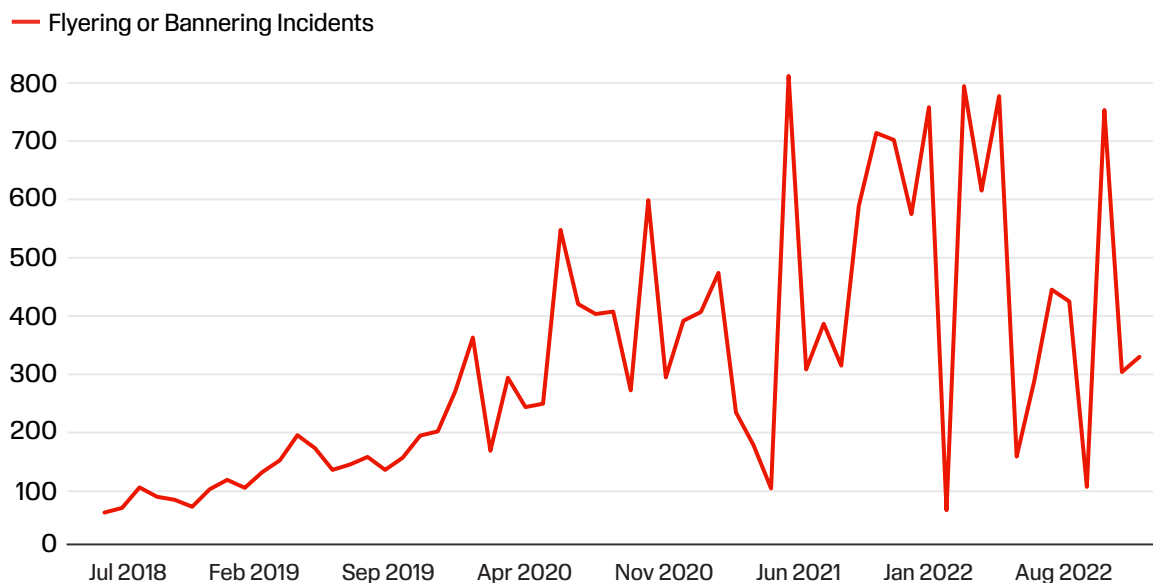
White nationalist Patriot Front, neo-Nazi National Socialist Club and neo-fascist Proud Boys performed the most hate spectacles in 2022. Patriot Front participated in six public performances of hatred across the U.S., while National Socialist Club participated in 13 performances of hatred, with the majority occurring outside LGBTQ inclusive events.

Holding small protests against LGBTQ inclusion, women's rights and perceived reverse racism have been part of the organized hate movement for decades. What is notable now is how clearly the larger far-right movement has acted in lockstep with hate groups, whose on-the-ground protests and harassment follow the path laid out by members of the GOP. When Republican officials and right-wing influencers attacked inclusive education and public health measures, hate groups were on the ground to intimidate people at schoolboard and city council meetings. And when the GOP shifted its attack to LGBTQ people, women and people who can get pregnant, hate groups like the Proud Boys and Patriot Front did the same.

In a political landscape in which messaging of hate groups is becoming increasingly indistinguishable from messaging of conservative movement influencers and elected officials, hate groups struggle to stay relevant. Creating spectacles is one way hate groups are attempting to gain attention during a period in which extremism is being routed through the conservative movement.

Public performances of hatred in 2022 also provide groups opportunities to network within the organized white power movement and from the larger conservative movement that attends protests. On many occasions, multiple hate groups have attended the same protest against LGBTQ-inclusive programming and reproductive rights. Protect Texas Kids, New Columbia Movement, Patriot Front and neo-Nazi Aryan Freedom Network participated in the same protests at least twice in Texas, one in September in Katy and another in December in Grand Prairie.

Observed Instances of Far-Right Extremist Flying and Bannering in the U.S., 2018-2022



On June 4, outside an LGBTQ inclusive event at Mr. Misster, a bar in Dallas, Texas, members of the “Groyper” movement—which is led by white nationalist Nick Fuentes—appeared alongside white nationalist New Columbia Movement and reactionary anti-student inclusion group Protect Texas Kids—two groups added to the SPLC Hate Map in 2022. About 50 protesters in total appeared with some holding placards and chanting anti-LGBTQ messaging.

In November, a chapter of the reactionary anti-student inclusion group Moms for Liberty protested a drag show event outside of the Seed Theatre in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The group was joined by Patriot Front and League of the South. After hurling insults and veiled threats at event participants, the group of about 30 protesters held a prayer circle before leaving, according to on-site accounts and photographs shared with Hatewatch.

Violence is always a possibility when hate groups perform spectacles of hatred. Members of the New Columbia Movement have joined Protect Texas Kids in at least five anti-LGBTQ protests, including one at Coffee Park, in University Park, Texas, in which a protester unconnected to the groups allegedly assaulted journalist Steven Monacelli. And in the summer, some of the roughly 100 Patriot Front members who marched in Boston,

Massachusetts, allegedly attacked a man named Charles Murrell who confronted the group about their bigotry and racism. As Murrell stood his ground, according to videos the group posted online, Patriot Front members appeared to encircle then crush him with their plastic shields. The attack came only a month after 31 members of the group were arrested on charges of conspiracy to riot after the group was stopped on their way to protest a Pride parade in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho.

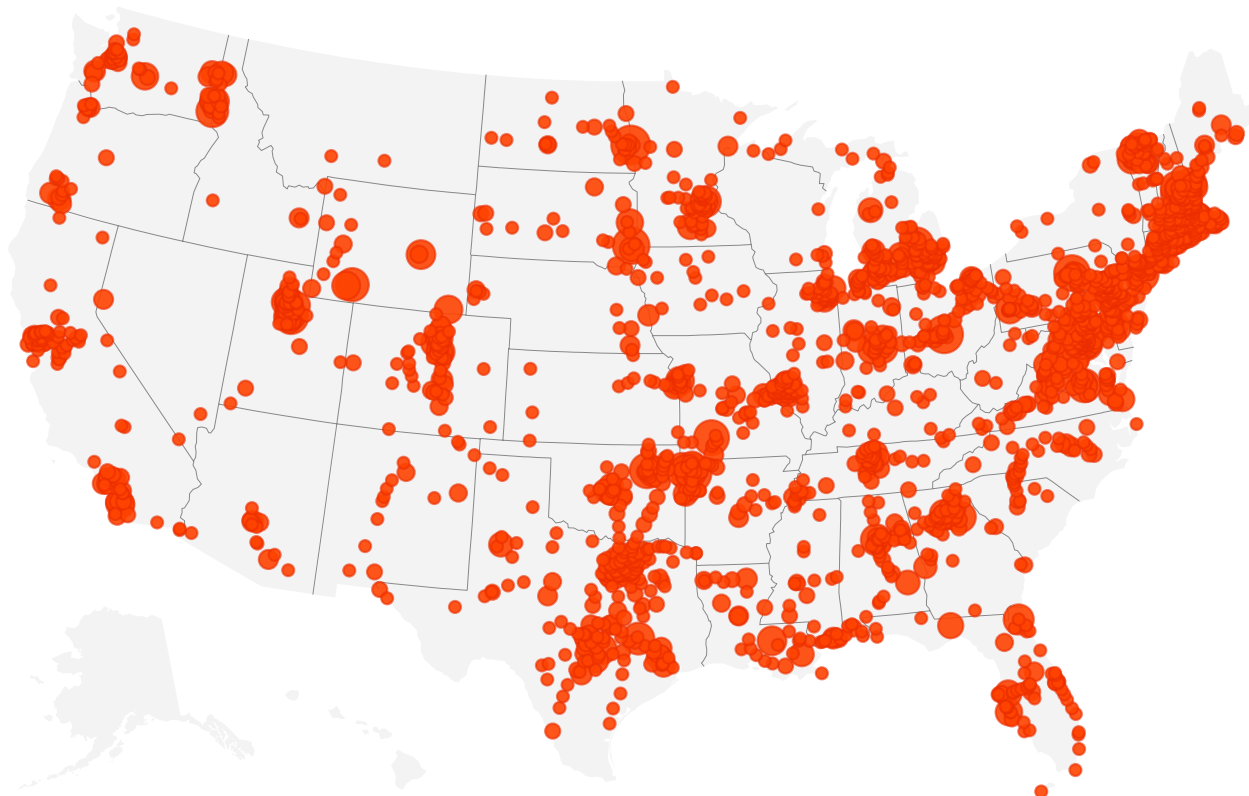
“Not only did I get called a slur, but then as I decided to walk away from this protest, feeling kind of unsafe, given that I was by myself and was being singled out by the leader of the organization ... two people followed me away, and then one of them ended up assaulting me,” said Steven Monacelli, the special investigative correspondent for the *Texas Observer*.

In video Monacelli posted to social media, a white male wearing an “Arrest Fauci” T-shirt storms past a police officer and angrily shoves Monacelli several times while repeating, “You talk all that shit about me.” Arrest Fauci refers to, Anthony Fauci who led the U.S. government response to the COVID-19 pandemic and who has become a common target for extremists who believe public health measures infringe on civil liberties.

“He’s someone I’ve seen at a number of [Protect

Observed Instances of Far-Right Extremist Leafleting in 2022

Leafleting Incidents ○ 2 ○ 8 ○ 20



**Flyering incidents
have been on the rise
for the last five years.**

**2022 incidents are
on trend with the
291% rise in flyering
incidents since 2018.**

Trans Kids] events before,” Monacelli said of his alleged attacker. “He describes himself as a Texas Nationalist and has menaced other journalists in the area as well.”

LGBTQ events and care facilities were especially targeted by hate groups and other extremists in 2022. Lies about healthcare services provided to LGBTQ communities at Boston Children’s Hospital have reportedly resulted in four bomb threats that led to the hospital and surrounding area being put on lockdown.

Across the U.S. threats of violence led venues to shut down a number of events showcasing LGBTQ inclusion, including one planned at Uprising Bakery in suburban Chicago, Illinois. The event was canceled after Joseph A. Collins, allegedly vandalized the business by breaking windows and destroying property inside. Collins was charged with vandalism and a hate crime for the incident and is awaiting trial. On Jan. 6, 2021, wearing Proud

In 2022, the SPLC
documented

155

campus incidents

4,739

public incidents

169

banner drops

Boy insignia, Collins was photographed outside the U.S. Capitol alongside a leader of the group's Illinois contingent.

As far-right propaganda assaults are becoming more aggressive and desperate, communities across the United States are seeking to stem the flow of bigoted, manipulative rhetoric. To bolster this effort, SPLC partnered with the Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL¹⁰⁴) at American University in 2020 to build resources for parents, educators, coaches, community leaders and other types of caregivers. Our most recent publication, *Building Networks & Addressing Harm: A Community Guide to Online Youth Radicalization*¹⁰⁵, seeks to provide all trusted adults with the knowledge to recognize when a young person has been exposed to manipulative rhetoric like that on hate group flyers and provides tools to help them build resilience against it.

Similarly, to better understand the breadth

of these hate spectacles, our Map of Hate Group Flyering in the U.S.¹⁰⁶ shows where groups have been actively spreading disinformation and manipulative narratives over the past five years. When considered alongside our map of active hate groups¹⁰⁷, this information can help communities contextualize the threat of hate-filled flyers and banners within the broader landscape of far-right activity. While hateful materials are alarming and intimidating, such knowledge reassures communities that, despite the spread of such rhetoric, hate-fueled actors are in the minority.

When communities are resilient against manipulation and equipped with the facts about hate group prevalence and relevance, efforts to counter the spread of hateful messages are energized. Organized in Burlington, Vermont, the BTV Clean-Up Crew¹⁰⁸ crowdsources donations to local nonprofits based on the number of hateful stickers they remove each month. For those trying to build similar forms of resilience¹⁰⁹ in their communities, the Clean-Up Crew encourages making a strong distinction between hateful rhetoric that targets people's immutable characteristics and political campaigns. "That's the whole idea," a Clean-Up Crew member explained, "that you're supposed to love your neighbor. We're not trying to attack your political beliefs; we're just trying to help everybody who lives here feel like they're welcome." ●

To support the BTV Clean Up Crew and learn more about their efforts to make "every neighbor feel loved and welcomed," visit their Facebook page at facebook.com/btvcleanupcrew.





Alt-tech Sites Continue to Provide Safe Haven for Hard-Right Extremists

By Hannah Gais and Megan Squire

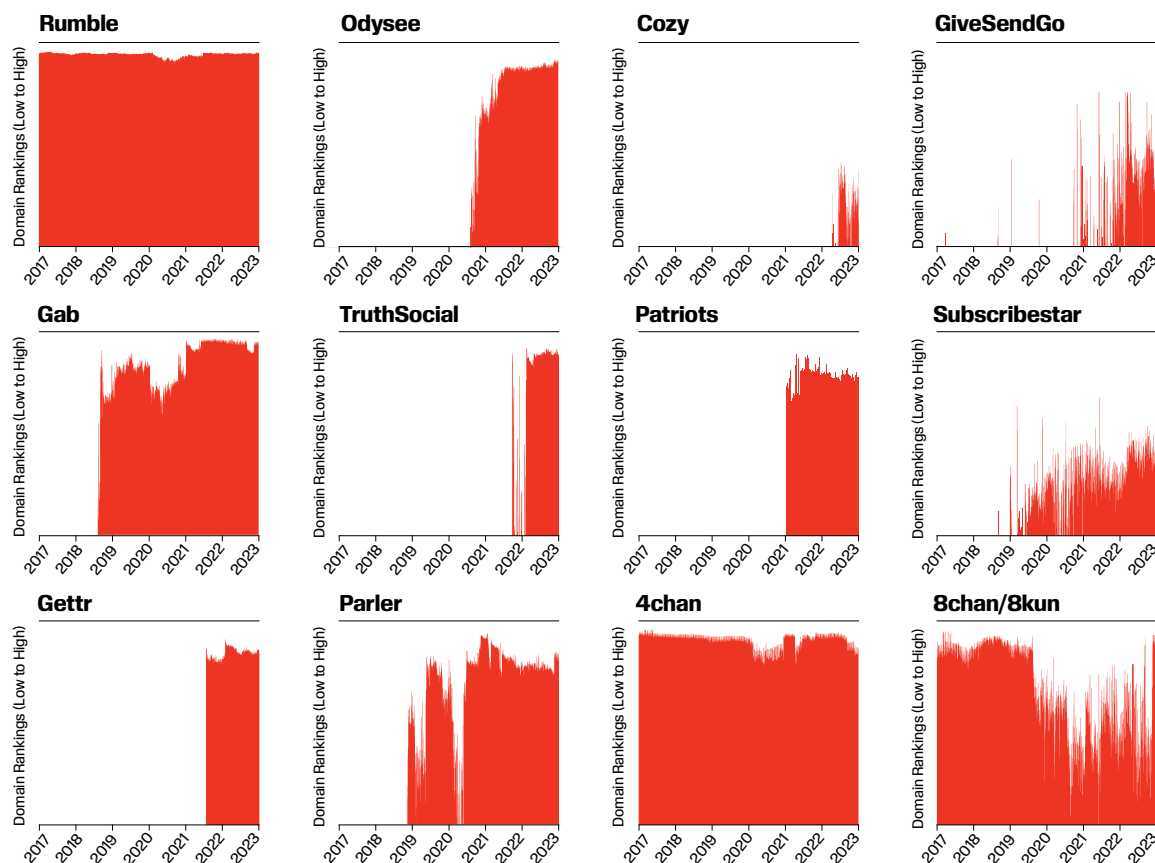
Two years since mainstream social media sites removed former President Donald Trump for using their services to incite an insurrection against the U.S. government, a growing constellation of “alt-tech” sites has continued to provide hard-right extremists safe haven for fundraising, spreading propaganda and organizing.

The Southern Poverty Law Center obtained, reviewed and analyzed data estimating the number of visitors and the popularity rankings for 12 prominent “alt-tech” sites. These websites range from

copycats of popular mainstream social media sites, such as YouTube, to message boards and fundraising services. We found that the majority of “alt-tech” sites, whose purveyors emphasize minimal or nonexistent content moderation, have developed and sustained a dedicated user base. This stability allows hard-right extremists to resist some of the repercussions, such as loss of audience or funding streams, that result from deplatforming, when tech companies act to prevent an individual or a group from using their products.

Alt Tech Platform Popularity Rankings, 2022

Alt-Tech websites rank among Cisco Umbrella's daily census of the 'Top 1 Million Domains'. The list is based on the total number of requests for that domain by internet users each day. The more users request a domain, the higher its ranking.



Source: Cisco Umbrella Daily "Top 1 Million" Domain Rankings List, Southern Poverty Law Center analysis

The websites that the SPLC analyzed represent the range of services these alternative platforms offer to users. These include fundraising sites (SubscribeStar¹¹⁰, GiveSendGo), internet message boards (4chan, 8kun and Patriots.Win), video streaming platforms that may or may not have fundraising capabilities (Rumble, Odysee, Cozy.TV) and Facebook and Twitter copycats (Gab, Parler, Truth Social and Gettr).

The entrenchment of "alt-tech" comes as a result of not only growing demand following mass deplatformings in the aftermath of the Jan. 6 insurrection but also as a result of the industry's purveyors' prominence within the right. Whether through an association with popular political figures—such as Trump or up-and-coming politicians—or courting popular right-wing content creators, the most successful "alt-tech" leaders have presented their

platforms as crucial to the right's political success and survival.

"I think a lot of ["alt-tech"] platforms are built on sand, so to speak. They tend to hype or inflate their actual usage, importance and finances," said Emmi Bevensee, co-founder of SMAT, a tool that helps journalists, activists and researchers track hate speech and misinformation online.

"But that being said, in general, gross activity is still trending upwards on many of them. Notably around disturbing topics, such as anti-trans conspiracies," Bevensee continued.

Far from gone and not forgotten

Five of the 12 sites that the SPLC analyzed regularly ranked among the top 10% of domains in the United States, according to data from the network security technology company Cisco.

“The mass murder at a Buffalo, NY grocery store in May 2022 was carried out by a man who claimed he was radicalized to violence by the propaganda he discovered on an “alt-tech” website. These sites compete fiercely with one another to peddle racist, antisemitic, misogynist tropes mixed with harmful conspiracy theories.”

Dr. Megan Squire

SPLC Intelligence Project,
Deputy Director of Data Analytics and OSINT

Each day, Cisco’s Umbrella product releases a list of the top 1 million internet sites, ranked by how many users issue requests for them through passive DNS, or “domain name system,” usage. DNS is a protocol that permits computers to translate human-readable domain names, such as google.com, to IP addresses so browsers can find internet resources. SPLC also accessed data from SimilarWeb, a website analytics company that tracks and ranks sites based on the number of visitors.

Among the top-performing sites is Rumble, a Peter Thiel-backed video streaming site¹¹¹ whose featured users include Trump and other antidemocracy, hard-right personalities. Throughout 2022 Rumble consistently ranked among the top 5% of domains in the United States. SimilarWeb ranks Rumble among the top 150 most visited sites in the country, having received 337 million visitors between September and November.

SimilarWeb also listed among the top 500 most visited sites in the country 4chan, a message board that, among other things, the white supremacist terrorist who carried out an attack in Buffalo, New York, in May cited as influential on his worldview. (As of December 2022, 4chan ranked at 349 among U.S.-based audiences.)

Other popular domains, according to Cisco data, included: Odysee, a decentralized streaming site whose vice president Julian Chandra stated that a “Nazi that makes videos about the superiority of the white race” does not warrant removal; Gab, whose former users¹¹² include Robert Bowers, the man accused of murdering 11 Jewish worshippers at a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, synagogue in 2018; and Truth Social, a social media website founded by Trump.

Finally, three websites regularly ranked in the top 20–25% of Cisco Umbrella¹¹³ 1 Million top domains. These include Patriots.Win (formerly TheDonald.Win), whose users called for violence in the run-up to the 2021 insurrection; GETTR, a Twitter-like platform founded by former Trump aide Jason Miller and Parler, another Twitter copycat that was removed from the Google Play and Apple app stores and lost its hosting infrastructure after the Jan. 6 attack.

“People are really waking up”

Capitalizing on mainstream social media outlets deplatforming hard-right users promoting hate

Five of the 12 sites that the SPLC analyzed regularly ranked among the

top 10% of domains in the United States

Source: Cisco Umbrella Daily “Top 1 Million” Domain Rankings List

speech, COVID-19 misinformation and election denialism, “Alt-tech” sites welcomed such content and leveraged midterm congressional candidates’ affiliations with their sites in order to boost their brands.

“People are really waking up to what’s going on right now. We’re just happy to be in the middle of this,” Rumble CEO Chris Pavlovski told Fox News host Tucker Carlson. The August segment focused on Rumble welcoming Andrew Tate, a former reality TV star, to the platform after he had been removed from several mainstream social media sites for hate speech. Tate has an extensive record of misogynistic comments¹¹⁴, including a claim that female rape victims ought to “bear some responsibility” for being assaulted.

The 2022 midterm elections offered “alt-tech” sites a chance to prove their centrality to the GOP establishment. However, SPLC’s review of data from both Cisco and SimilarWeb indicate that the election didn’t impact popularity rankings of GETTR, Gab or Rumble.

GETTR, the Jason Miller-run Twitter copycat, announced “wall-to-wall,” multiday coverage, including “exclusive last-minute campaign updates” from pro-Trump favorites such as failed Senate candidates Mehmet Oz and Thiel ally Blake Masters. Miller subsequently joined Trump at Mar-a-Lago as the former president announced his 2024 electoral bid.

And Gab, the one-time beleaguered social media site¹¹⁵, created a minor news cycle of its own, after the company’s CEO Andrew Torba endorsed Pennsylvania gubernatorial candidate Doug Mastriano and U.S. senate candidate Blake Masters. Mastriano used Gab, which is based in Pennsylvania, to promote his campaign and paid the platform¹¹⁶ \$5,000 for “consulting” services. However, following growing scrutiny, both Mastriano and Masters issued statements trying to distance themselves from Torba, and Mastriano ceased his use of the platform for campaign work.

“Alt-tech” stragglers

Other “alt-tech” sites demonstrated a downward decline in 2022. These include the message board 8kun (formerly 8chan), the fundraising site GiveSendGo and Patriots.Win.

8kun changed its name following several web services companies deplatforming it in 2019 in the wake of multiple white supremacist terrorist attacks, whose perpetrators used the site to distribute their racist screeds and propaganda. The message board lost its host only after a third mass shooting in El Paso, Texas, which took place in August 2019. In addition to hosting terroristic content, 8kun/8chan was the preferred platform of choice for “Q,” an anonymous figure¹¹⁷ who claimed to have insider knowledge of then-President Trump’s efforts to take down a cabal of his enemies, known as the “deep state.”

“Q” ceased posting on 8kun in November 2020. Someone claiming to be “Q” resumed posting on 8kun in June 2022¹¹⁸, but data reviewed by the SPLC indicate that this return appears to have done little to drive traffic to the site. While 8kun’s domain popularity rose between June and September of 2022, it suffered another decline between then and November. In November, around the election, 8kun briefly eclipsed 4chan in terms of domain popularity, but the site’s unstable popularity rankings since 2019 make it unclear if such momentum can last.

GiveSendGo, Parler and Patriots.Win struggled to regain their post-2020 election audiences. Patriots.Win dipped in 2022, settling in at the top 25% of Cisco Umbrella’s 1 Million list, and GiveSendGo’s highest traffic period appeared to coincide with a data breach in early 2022.

While Parler, which was deplatformed in the wake of the Jan. 6 insurrection, experienced a similar dip, an Oct. 17, 2022 announcement that “Ye” (previously known as Kanye West) planned to acquire the site caused its domain popularity to rise. However, the site’s popularity has yet to return to 2020 levels. ●

Policy Recommendations To Address Hate and Antigovernment Extremism

By Michael Lieberman

Effective and strategic policies are crucial, but we cannot legislate, regulate, tabulate or prosecute racism, hatred or extremism out of existence.

These policy recommendations are but one piece of the larger effort to counter extremism.

Speak Out and Act Against Hate, Political Violence and Extremism

It is impossible to overstate the importance of elected officials, business leaders and community officials using their public platforms to condemn and act against political violence, attacks on democratic institutions, racism, antisemitism, hate crimes and vandalism against houses of worship and other minority institutions.

Ensure that the planners and perpetrators of the deadly Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol—and those who financed and inspired them to act—are held accountable, with serious consequences.

Raise awareness and enforce federal and state laws against private militias and paramilitary training—and those restricting firearms in the state capitol/government buildings and near polling places and protecting election workers.

Make Federal and State Hate Crime Data Collection Mandatory

After 30 years of incomplete data and underreporting under the federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act (HCSA), make hate crime reporting to the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and to the appropriate state agency mandatory.

Until such legislation can be enacted, condition federal and state funds for law enforcement agencies on reporting credible data or taking meaningful steps to address hate violence.

In close coordination with community stakeholders, implement and fund programs authorized by the COVID-19 Hate Crime Act, including state hate crime hotlines to increase victim reporting and assistance.

Address Long-term Contributors to Hate and Extremism

Ensure adequate funding for the wide array of government initiatives and public-private partnerships announced at the September 2022 White House United We Stand Summit

Provide equitable access to government funds for security infrastructure to house of worship and community institutions targeted with violence, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities and LGBTQ centers.

Provide government support for civics education, digital literacy initiatives, culturally competent and linguistically accessible conflict resolution programs, and initiatives to reduce structural racism.

Confront White Supremacy in the Military and in Law Enforcement

Address extremism in the military at every stage: screening recruits, clarifying prohibitions against advocating for, or involvement in, supremacist or extremist activity for active-duty personnel, and tailored efforts for veterans to transition to civilian life, including counseling, mental health and social welfare services.

Reinstate a senior position, reporting to the Defense Secretary, to oversee and coordinate efforts to address extremism in the military.

Mandate more extensive service-wide data collection and reporting, including an annual climate survey on extremism.

Expedite the renaming of Army bases and hundreds of other military assets currently named for traitorous Confederate leaders.

Prevent the hiring, promotion or retention of law enforcement personnel who actively promote unlawful violence, white supremacy or other bias against persons because of their personal characteristics. Mandate an annual report on these actions.

Confront Reactionary Anti-Student Inclusion and Censorship Campaigns

Promote inclusive education and democracy-building school initiatives that celebrate our nation's diversity.

Fiercely oppose efforts to impose educational gag orders on teaching painful truths about our nation's racialized history.

Enforce Hate Crime Laws

Enforce existing federal and state hate crime laws—and expand training for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officials on alternative sentencing and restorative justice initiatives.

Improve Government Prevention and Response to Extremism

Expand interagency coordination for tracking and assessing the nature and magnitude of domestic extremism and require regular public reports.

Fund community-informed, immediate and long-term support services for communities targeted and impacted by bias-motivated harms. Fund and develop community-based resilience and early intervention programs for youth that center social-emotional learning and not punishment.

Fund safe, innovative academic research on promising evidence-based prevention programs that promote social cohesion and community wellness as well as help communities build resilience to radicalizing narratives and conspiracies. Ensure these programs center on communities' needs first.

Promote Online Safety and Hold Tech and Social Media Companies Accountable

Demand that social media companies should not enable the funding or amplifying of white supremacist ideas or provide a safe haven for extremists.

Require public transparency and accountability with respect to how harmful content exists on platforms.

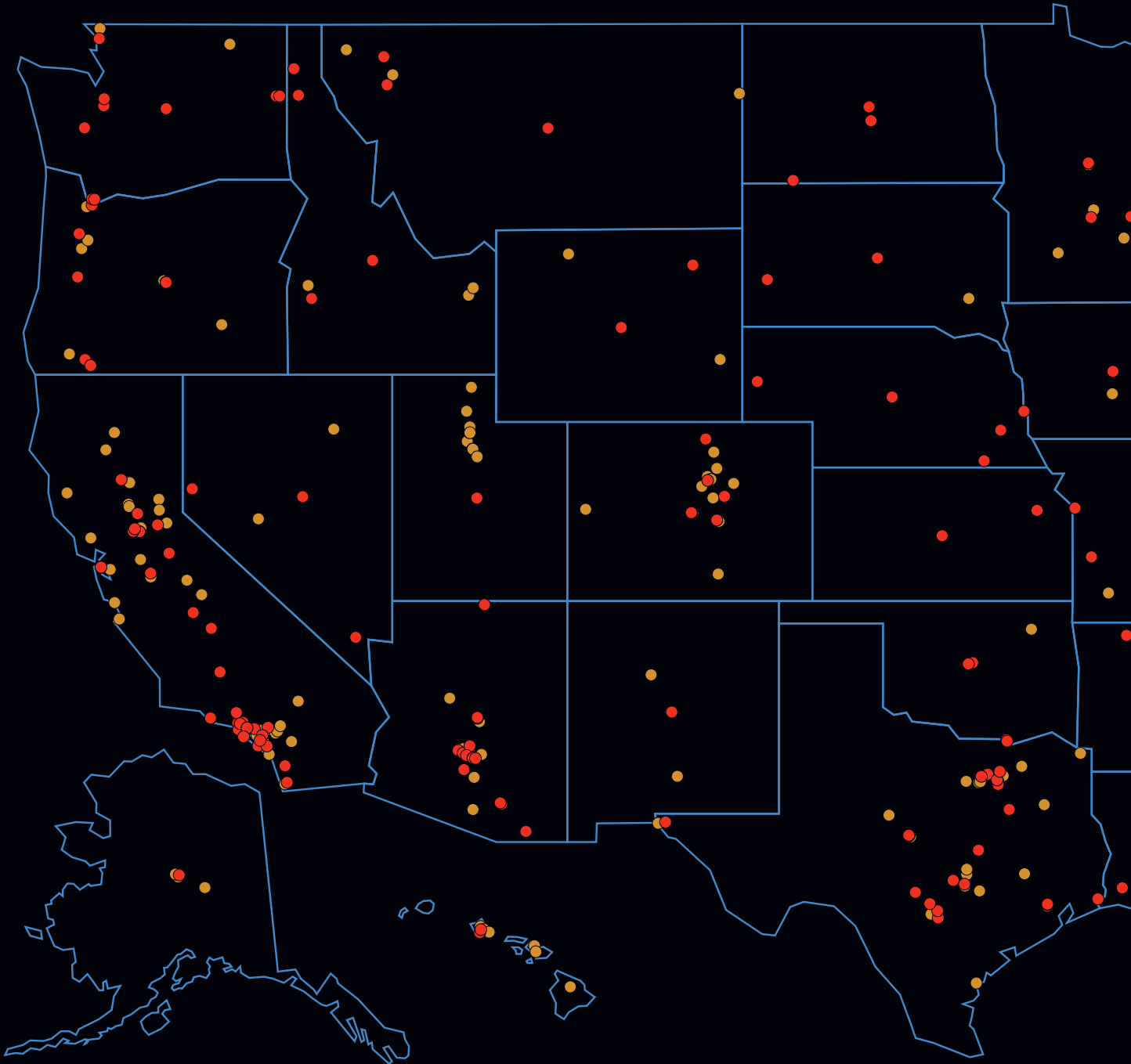
Require disclosure about who is paying for specific online political advertisements.

Provide data about who is benefiting from monetization of extremist media content including via video livestreaming, book production and merchandising, and crowdfunding campaigns.

Implement rules and regulations to prevent political violence, including election-related incitement, and ensure compliance with civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination that are consistent with the Constitution.

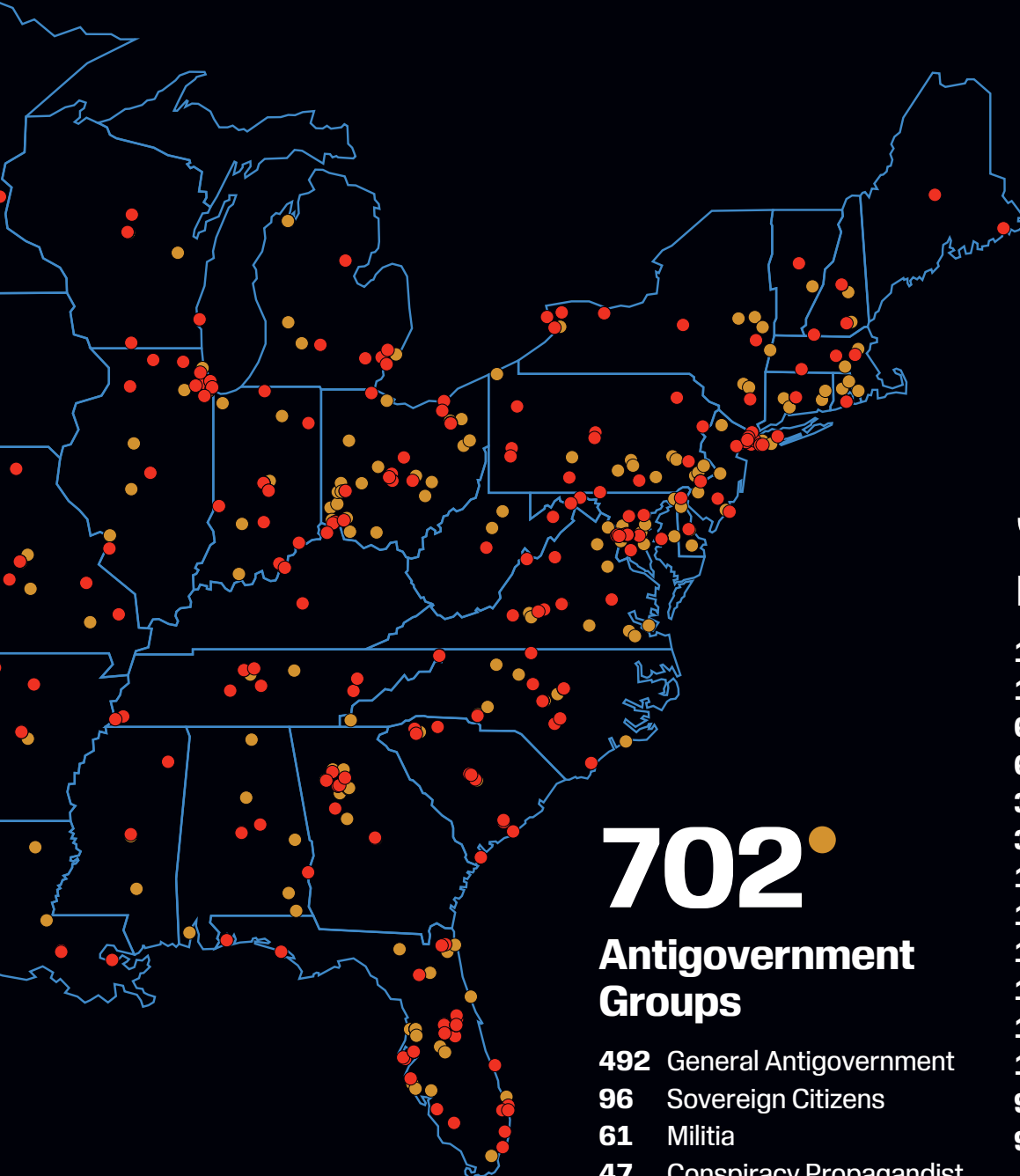
2022

Active Hate and Antigovernment Groups





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



523

Hate Groups

| | |
|------------|---------------------------------|
| 121 | General Hate |
| 109 | White Nationalist |
| 63 | Anti-LGBTQ |
| 60 | Neo-Nazi |
| 39 | Anti-Muslim |
| 37 | Neo-Völkisch |
| 17 | Anti-Immigrant |
| 14 | Neo-Confederate |
| 13 | Racist Skinhead |
| 11 | Ku Klux Klan |
| 10 | Christian Identity |
| 10 | Hate Music |
| 9 | Antisemitism |
| 9 | Radical Traditional Catholicism |
| 1 | Male Supremacy |

702

Antigovernment Groups

| | |
|------------|-------------------------|
| 492 | General Antigovernment |
| 96 | Sovereign Citizens |
| 61 | Militia |
| 47 | Conspiracy Propagandist |
| 6 | Constitutional Sheriffs |

Extremist Ideologies

Hate

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.

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 hate groups are a relatively new phenomenon in the United States, with many appearing after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. These groups broadly defame Islam and traffic in conspiracy theories of Muslims being a subversive threat to the nation. This gives rise to a climate of fear, hate and intimidation directed toward Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim.

Antisemitic hate groups seek to racialize Jewish people and vilify them as the manipulative puppet masters behind an economic, political and social scheme to undermine white people. Antisemitism also undergirds much of the far right, unifying

adherents across various extremist ideologies around efforts to subvert and misconstrue the collective suffering of Jewish people in the Holocaust and cast them as conniving opportunists.

Christian Identity is an antisemitic, racist theology that rose to a position of commanding influence on the racist right in the 1980s. “Christian” in name only, it asserts that white people, not Jewish people, are the true Israelites favored by God in the Bible. The movement’s relationship with evangelicals and fundamentalists has generally been hostile due to the latter’s belief that the return of Jewish people to Israel is essential to the fulfillment of end-time prophecy.

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.

General Hate groups 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 off their bigotry by selling a miscellany of hate materials from several different sectors of the white supremacist movement.

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.

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 groups share a hatred for Jews and a love for Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany. While they also hate other minorities, gays and lesbians and even sometimes Christians, they perceive “the Jew” as their cardinal enemy.

Neo-Völkisch groups were 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

Racist skinheads have long been among of the most violent-minded elements of the white power movement. Often referred to as the “shock troops” of the hoped-for white revolution, this movement flourished during the 1980s, 1990s and the mid-2000s,

particularly through the lucrative, international hate music scene.

“Radical traditionalist”

Catholics, who may make up the largest single group of serious antisemites in America, subscribe to an ideology that is rejected by the Vatican and some 70 million mainstream American Catholics.

White nationalist groups espouse white supremacist or white separatist ideologies, often focusing on the alleged inferiority of nonwhite persons. 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.

Antigovernment

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 the past this movement was referred to as the “Patriot” movement by adherents and critics.

Conspiracy propagandist groups spew assertions that aim to delegitimize government institutions or government officials. A few of these

beliefs include fears around door-to-door gun confiscations, martial law, supposed takeover of the U.S. by the New World Order and anxieties around the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The origins of **constitutional sheriff** ideology are in the two concepts of the county supremacy movement: the county and 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 1970’s and described as “Posse Comitatus.”

Militia groups are characterized by their obsession with FTX’s (field training exercises), 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 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 and violent.

Definitions

What is a hate group?

The Southern Poverty Law Center defines a hate group as an organization or collection of individuals that—based on its official statements or principles, the statements of its leaders, or its activities—has beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics. An organization does not need to have engaged in criminal conduct or have followed their speech with actual unlawful action to be labeled a hate group. We do not list individuals as hate groups, only organizations.

Hate groups vilify others because of their race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity—prejudices that strike at the heart of our democratic values and fracture society along its most fragile fault lines.

What is an antigovernment group?

An antigovernment group is an organization or collection of individuals that—based on its official statements or principles, the statements of its leaders, or its activities—believes the federal government is tyrannical and traffics in conspiracy theories about an illegitimate government of leftist elites seeking a “New World Order.” In the past this movement was referred to as the “Patriot” movement by adherents and critics.

Although many elements of the movement were originally rooted in white supremacy and antisemitism, the movement has attempted to distance itself from these ties since the mid-1990s, following the Oklahoma City bombing. In recent years, however, antisemitic and anti-Muslim sentiments have permeated the movement’s conspiracy theories.

For more information, see
splcenter.org/hate-groups-FAQ

Hate and Antigovernment Groups by State and Region

Each year since 1990, the SPLC publishes an annual census of active hate and antigovernment groups. Tracking extremist activity is difficult. Some groups do everything they can to obscure their activities, others grossly over represent their operations. The SPLC uses a variety of deep methodologies, including reports from impacted communities.

South

Alabama

| Hate | 5 |
|-------------------------|---|
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| Neo-Confederate | 2 |
| White Nationalist | 2 |
| Antigovernment | 8 |
| Antigovernment General | 4 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 2 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 2 |

Kentucky

| Hate | 6 |
|------------------------|---|
| Christian Identity | 1 |
| General Hate | 2 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 3 |
| Antigovernment General | 2 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

Mississippi

| Hate | 3 |
|------------------------|---|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 4 |
| Antigovernment General | 4 |

Louisiana

| Hate | 4 |
|------------------------|---|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| Anti-Muslim | 1 |
| Neo-Confederate | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 3 |
| Antigovernment General | 2 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

Georgia

| Hate | 11 |
|-------------------------|----|
| Anti-Immigrant | 1 |
| Anti-LGBTQ | 2 |
| Christian Identity | 1 |
| General Hate | 2 |
| Neo-Confederate | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 3 |
| Antigovernment | 13 |
| Antigovernment General | 7 |
| Militia | 1 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 4 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Tennessee

| Hate | 21 |
|-------------------------|----|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 2 |
| Christian Identity | 1 |
| General Hate | 3 |
| Neo-Confederate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 3 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| Skinhead | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 4 |
| Antigovernment | 12 |
| Antigovernment General | 11 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Florida

| Hate | 35 |
|-------------------------|----|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 6 |
| Anti-Muslim | 5 |
| Christian Identity | 1 |
| General Hate | 11 |
| Neo-Confederate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 4 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| Skinhead | 3 |
| White Nationalist | 3 |
| Antigovernment | 54 |
| Antigovernment General | 44 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 5 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 5 |

North Carolina

| Hate | 16 |
|------------------------|----|
| Anti-Immigrant | 2 |
| General Hate | 5 |
| Ku Klux Klan | 1 |
| Neo-Confederate | 3 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| Skinhead | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 2 |
| Antigovernment | 27 |
| Antigovernment General | 17 |
| Militia | 6 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 4 |

South Carolina

| Hate | 12 |
|-------------------------|----|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| Antisemitism | 1 |
| General Hate | 2 |
| Neo-Confederate | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 2 |
| White Nationalist | 5 |
| Antigovernment | 18 |
| Antigovernment General | 17 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Mid-Atlantic

District of Columbia

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Hate | 10 |
| Anti-Immigrant | 4 |
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| Anti-Muslim | 2 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 2 |
| Antigovernment | 1 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Maryland

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Hate | 10 |
| Anti-Muslim | 1 |
| Antisemitism | 1 |
| General Hate | 4 |
| Ku Klux Klan | 1 |
| Neo-Confederate | 1 |
| Radical Traditional Catholicism | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 15 |
| Antigovernment General | 14 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

Delaware

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Hate | 2 |
| Anti-Muslim | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 5 |
| Antigovernment General | 5 |

New York

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Hate | 28 |
| Anti-LGBTQ | 2 |
| Anti-Muslim | 4 |
| Antisemitism | 1 |
| General Hate | 12 |
| Hate Music | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| Radical Traditional Catholicism | 2 |
| White Nationalist | 4 |
| Antigovernment | 25 |
| Antigovernment General | 17 |
| Militia | 4 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 2 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 2 |

Virginia

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Hate | 15 |
| Anti-Immigrant | 1 |
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| General Hate | 3 |
| Ku Klux Klan | 1 |
| Male Supremacy | 1 |
| Neo-Confederate | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 2 |
| White Nationalist | 5 |
| Antigovernment | 28 |
| Antigovernment General | 19 |
| Militia | 6 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 2 |
| Constitutional Sheriff | 1 |

New Jersey

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Hate | 6 |
| Anti-Immigrant | 1 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| Skinhead | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 2 |
| Antigovernment | 16 |
| Antigovernment General | 11 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 4 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Pennsylvania

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Hate | 21 |
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| Antisemitism | 1 |
| General Hate | 2 |
| Hate Music | 1 |
| Ku Klux Klan | 2 |
| Neo-Nazi | 3 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| Radical Traditional Catholicism | 1 |
| Skinhead | 2 |
| White Nationalist | 7 |
| Antigovernment | 51 |
| Antigovernment General | 38 |
| Militia | 8 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 3 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 2 |

West Virginia

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Hate | 6 |
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 3 |
| Antigovernment | 3 |
| Antigovernment General | 3 |

New England

Connecticut

| Hate | 4 |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Anti-Muslim | 1 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 7 |
| Antigovernment General | 4 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 2 |

Massachusetts

| Hate | 5 |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 2 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 6 |
| Antigovernment General | 4 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Maine

| Hate | 5 |
|------------------------|----------|
| General Hate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 2 |
| Antigovernment | 4 |
| Antigovernment General | 3 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

New Hampshire

| Hate | 7 |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Anti-Muslim | 1 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 2 |
| Radical Traditional Catholicism | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 2 |
| Antigovernment | 8 |
| Antigovernment General | 6 |
| Militia | 1 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

Rhode Island

| Hate | 3 |
|-------------------------|----------|
| General Hate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 4 |
| Antigovernment General | 2 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Vermont

| Hate | 1 |
|------------------------|----------|
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 2 |
| Antigovernment General | 1 |
| Militia | 1 |

Midwest

North Dakota

| Hate | 5 |
|------------------------|----------|
| General Hate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 2 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 3 |
| Antigovernment General | 2 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

Nebraska

| Hate | 8 |
|------------------------|----------|
| Anti-Muslim | 1 |
| Christian Identity | 1 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| Hate Music | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 3 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 4 |
| Antigovernment General | 4 |

South Dakota

| Hate | 4 |
|------------------------|----------|
| General Hate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 2 |
| Antigovernment | 4 |
| Antigovernment General | 3 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

Iowa

| Hate | 2 |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 10 |
| Antigovernment General | 7 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 2 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Missouri

| Hate | 10 |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-Muslim | 1 |
| Christian Identity | 1 |
| General Hate | 4 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 2 |
| Antigovernment | 12 |
| Antigovernment General | 8 |
| Militia | 1 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 2 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Arkansas

| Hate | 7 |
|------------------------|----------|
| Anti-Immigrant | 2 |
| Neo-Confederate | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 3 |
| Antigovernment | 9 |
| Antigovernment General | 9 |

Indiana

| Hate | 13 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 2 |
| General Hate | 2 |
| Neo-Nazi | 2 |
| neo-Völkisch | 2 |
| Ku Klux Klan | 1 |
| Radical Traditional Catholicism | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 3 |
| Antigovernment | 16 |
| Antigovernment General | 12 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 3 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Wisconsin

| Hate | 8 |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| Hate Music | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 2 |
| neo-Völkisch | 2 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 13 |
| Antigovernment General | 9 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 3 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

Minnesota

| Hate | 8 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| General Hate | 2 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 2 |
| Radical Traditional Catholicism | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 2 |
| Antigovernment | 11 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 2 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Michigan

| Hate | 10 |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| Anti-Muslim | 1 |
| General Hate | 2 |
| Neo-Nazi | 3 |
| White Nationalist | 3 |
| Antigovernment | 19 |
| Antigovernment General | 15 |
| Militia | 3 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

Illinois

| Hate | 18 |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 4 |
| Anti-Muslim | 1 |
| Antisemitism | 1 |
| Christian Identity | 1 |
| General Hate | 4 |
| Hate Music | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| Skinhead | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 3 |
| Antigovernment | 17 |
| Antigovernment General | 14 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 2 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Ohio

| Hate | 20 |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 4 |
| Anti-Muslim | 1 |
| Christian Identity | 1 |
| General Hate | 4 |
| Hate Music | 1 |
| Ku Klux Klan | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 3 |
| neo-Völkisch | 2 |
| White Nationalist | 3 |
| Antigovernment | 35 |
| Antigovernment General | 21 |
| Militia | 12 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Kansas

| Hate | 3 |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 3 |
| Antigovernment General | 2 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Mountain West

Idaho

| Hate | 11 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| Anti-Muslim | 1 |
| Antisemitism | 1 |
| General Hate | 2 |
| Ku Klux Klan | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| Radical Traditional Catholicism | 1 |
| Skinhead | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 12 |
| Antigovernment General | 7 |
| Militia | 1 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 2 |
| Constitutional Sheriff | 1 |

Nevada

| Hate | 6 |
|------------------------|----------|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| General Hate | 2 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 6 |
| Antigovernment General | 3 |
| Militia | 1 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 2 |

Utah

| Hate | 2 |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| General Hate | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 16 |
| Antigovernment General | 13 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 2 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Wyoming

| Hate | 3 |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 6 |
| Antigovernment General | 5 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Montana

| Hate | 6 |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Anti-Muslim | 1 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 2 |
| White Nationalist | 2 |
| Antigovernment | 6 |
| Antigovernment General | 3 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 2 |

Colorado

| Hate | 14 |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-Immigrant | 1 |
| Anti-LGBTQ | 4 |
| Christian Identity | 1 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 4 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 2 |
| Antigovernment | 17 |
| Antigovernment General | 11 |
| Militia | 1 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 4 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 1 |

Southwest

Texas

| Hate | 33 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-Immigrant | 2 |
| Anti-LGBTQ | 5 |
| Anti-Muslim | 4 |
| Antisemitism | 1 |
| General Hate | 10 |
| Hate Music | 1 |
| Neo-Confederate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 4 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| Radical Traditional Catholicism | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 3 |
| Antigovernment | 39 |
| Antigovernment General | 23 |
| Militia | 3 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 5 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 7 |
| Constitutional Sheriff | 1 |
| New Mexico | |
| Hate | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 4 |
| Antigovernment General | 3 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

Arizona

| Hate | 18 |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-Immigrant | 2 |
| Anti-LGBTQ | 5 |
| General Hate | 2 |
| Hate Music | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 3 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 4 |
| Antigovernment | 21 |
| Antigovernment General | 8 |
| Militia | 6 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 2 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 3 |
| Constitutional Sheriff | 2 |

Oklahoma

| Hate | 4 |
|------------------------|----------|
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| General Hate | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 9 |
| Antigovernment General | 7 |
| Militia | 1 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

Pacific

California

| Hate | 46 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-Immigrant | 1 |
| Anti-LGBTQ | 7 |
| Anti-Muslim | 8 |
| General Hate | 15 |
| Hate Music | 2 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| Radical Traditional Catholicism | 1 |
| Skinhead | 2 |
| White Nationalist | 6 |
| Antigovernment | 57 |
| Antigovernment General | 35 |
| Militia | 3 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 16 |
| Conspiracy Propagandist | 2 |
| Constitutional Sheriff | 1 |

Oregon

| Hate | 10 |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-Immigrant | 1 |
| Anti-LGBTQ | 1 |
| General Hate | 4 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 3 |
| Antigovernment | 14 |
| Antigovernment General | 10 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 4 |

Washington

| Hate | 16 |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Anti-Immigrant | 1 |
| Anti-LGBTQ | 3 |
| Anti-Muslim | 2 |
| General Hate | 3 |
| Neo-Nazi | 3 |
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| Skinhead | 1 |
| White Nationalist | 2 |
| Antigovernment | 13 |
| Antigovernment General | 10 |
| Militia | 2 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

Alaska

| Hate | 1 |
|------------------------|----------|
| neo-Völkisch | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 3 |
| Antigovernment General | 2 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 1 |

Hawaii

| Hate | 2 |
|------------------------|----------|
| General Hate | 1 |
| Neo-Nazi | 1 |
| Antigovernment | 6 |
| Antigovernment General | 3 |
| Sovereign Citizen | 3 |

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