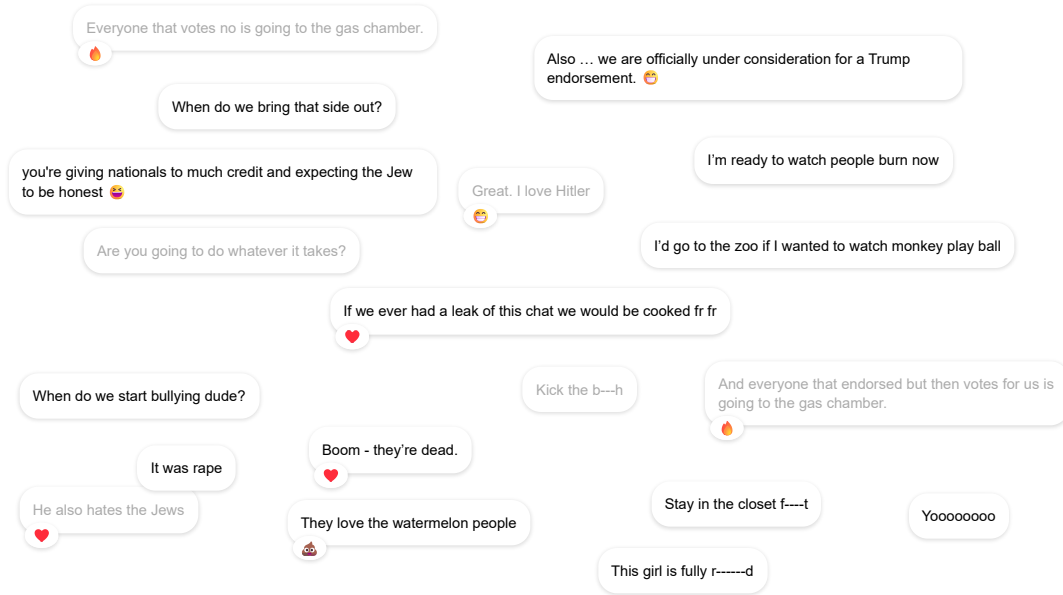


EXCLUSIVE

# 'I love Hitler': Leaked messages expose Young Republicans' racist chat

Thousands of private messages reveal young GOP leaders joking about gas chambers, slavery and rape.



Texts and reactions from Young Republicans. | Design and Development: Jade Cuevas and Claudine Hellmuth

By **JASON BEEFERMAN** and **EMILY NGO**  
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**NEW YORK** — Leaders of Young Republican groups throughout the country worried what would happen if their Telegram chat ever got leaked, but they kept typing anyway.

They referred to Black people as monkeys and “the watermelon people” and mused about putting their political opponents in gas chambers. They talked about raping their enemies and driving them to suicide and lauded Republicans who they believed support slavery.


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William Hendrix, the [Kansas Young Republicans' vice chair](#), used the words “n-ga” and “n--guh,” variations of a racial slur, more than a dozen times in the chat. Bobby Walker, the vice chair of the New York State Young Republicans at the time, referred to rape as “epic.” Peter Giunta, who at the time was chair of the same organization, wrote in a message sent in June that “everyone that votes no is going to the gas chamber.”

Giunta was referring to an upcoming vote on whether he should become chair of the Young Republican National Federation, the GOP's 15,000-member political organization for Republicans between 18 and 40 years old.

“Im going to create some of the greatest physiological torture methods known to man. We only want true believers,” he continued.

Two members of the chat responded.

PG  
Everyone that votes no is going to the gas chamber. And everyone that endorsed but then votes for us is going to the gas chamber.  
 RH

BW  
When do we start bullying dude?


AK  
We have a solid 3 people who can prob have them want to jump



BW  
If they vote for us why would they be gassed?

AK  
When do we bring that side out?



Im going to create some of the greatest physiological torture methods known to man.

( in reply to  
“If they vote for us why would they be gassed?”

PG  
We only want true believers.  
 RH

JM  
Can we fix the showers? Gas chambers don't fit the Hitler aesthetic  
 PG  AK

AK  
I'm ready to watch people burn now

JM  
We gotta pretend that we like them. “Hey, come on in. Take a nice shower and relax”. Boom - they're dead  
 PG  AD

Texts and reactions by: Peter Giunta, Bobby Walker, Anne KayKaty, Joe Maligno, Rachel Hope, Alex Dwyer.

“Can we fix the showers? Gas chambers don’t fit the Hitler aesthetic,” Joe Maligno, who previously identified himself as [the general counsel](#) for the New York State Young Republicans, wrote back.

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“I’m ready to watch people burn now,” Annie Kaykaty, New York’s national committee member, said.

The exchange is part of a trove of Telegram chats — obtained by POLITICO and spanning more than seven months of messages among Young Republican leaders in New York, Kansas, Arizona and Vermont. The chat offers an

unfiltered look at how a new generation of GOP activists talk when they think no one is listening.

Since POLITICO began making inquiries, one member of the group chat is no longer employed at their job and another's job offer was rescinded. Prominent New York Republicans, including Rep. Elise Stefanik and state Senate Minority Leader Rob Ortt, have denounced the chat. And festering resentments among Young Republicans have now turned into public recriminations, including allegations of character assassination and extortion.

### **A liberating atmosphere**

The 2,900 pages of chats, shared among a dozen millennial and Gen Z Republicans between early January and mid-August, chronicle their campaign to [seize control of the national Young Republican organization](#) on a hardline pro-Donald Trump platform. Many of the chat members already work inside government or party politics, and one serves as a state senator.

Together, the messages reveal a culture where racist, antisemitic and violent rhetoric circulate freely — and where the Trump-era loosening of political norms has made such talk feel less taboo among those positioning themselves as the party's next leaders.

“The more the political atmosphere is open and liberating — like it has been with the emergence of Trump and a more right wing GOP even before him — it opens up young people and older people to telling racist jokes, making racist commentaries in private and public,” said Joe Feagin, a Texas A&M sociology professor who has studied racism for the last 60 years. He's also concerned the words would be applied to public policy. “It's chilling, of course, because they will act on these views.”

The dynamic of easy racism and casual cruelty played out in often dark, vivid fashion inside the chats, where campaign talk and party gossip blurred into streams of slurs and violent fantasies.



Peter Giunta participates in a CNN-POLITICO Grill discussion at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, July 16, 2024. | Rod Lamkey Jr. for POLITICO

The group chat members spoke freely about the pressure to cow to Trump to avoid being called a RINO, the love of Nazis within their party's right wing and the president's alleged work to suppress documents related to wealthy financier Jeffrey Epstein's child sex crimes.

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"Trumps too busy burning the Epstein files," Alex Dwyer, [the chair of the Kansas Young Republicans](#), wrote in one instance.

Dwyer and Kaykaty declined to comment. Maligno and Hendrix did not return requests for comment.

But some involved in the chat did respond publicly.

Giunta claimed the release of the chat is part of "a highly-coordinated year-long character assassination led by Gavin Wax and the New York City Young

Republican Club” — an allusion to a once obscured internecine war that has now spilled into the open.

“These logs were sourced by way of extortion and provided to POLITICO by the very same people conspiring against me,” he said. “What’s most disheartening is that, despite my unwavering support of President Trump since 2016, rouge [sic] members of his administration — including Gavin Wax — have participated in this conspiracy to ruin me publicly simply because I challenged them privately.”

Wax, a staffer in Trump’s State Department, formerly led the New York Young Republican Club — a separate, city-based group that is at odds with the state organization, the New York State Young Republicans. He declined to comment.

Despite his allusions to infighting, Giunta still apologized.

“I am so sorry to those offended by the insensitive and inexcusable language found within the more than 28,000 messages of a private group chat that I created during my campaign to lead the Young Republicans,” he said. “While I take complete responsibility, I have had no way of verifying their accuracy and am deeply concerned that the message logs in question may have been deceptively doctored.”

At least one person in the Telegram chat works in the Trump administration: Michael Bartels, who, according to his LinkedIn account, serves as a senior adviser in the office of general counsel within the U.S. Small Business Administration. Bartels did not have much to say in the chat, but he didn’t offer any pushback against the offensive rhetoric in it either. He declined to comment.

A notarized affidavit signed by Bartels and obtained by POLITICO also sheds light on the intraparty rivalry that led the “RESTOREYR WAR ROOM” Telegram chat to be made public. Bartels references Wax as well. He wrote that he did not give POLITICO the chat and that Wax “demanded” in a phone call that he provide the full chat log.

“When I attempted to resist that demand, after providing some of the requested information, Wax threatened my professional standing, and raised the possibility of potential legal action related to an alleged breach of a non-disclosure agreement,” Bartels claimed in the affidavit. “My position within the New York Young Republican Club was directly threatened.”

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Walker, who now leads the New York State Young Republicans, touched on a similar theme, saying that he believes portions of the chat “may have been altered, taken out of context, or otherwise manipulated” and that the “private exchanges were obtained and released in a way clearly intended to inflict harm.”

He also apologized.

“There is no excuse for the language and tone in messages attributed to me. The language is wrong and hurtful, and I sincerely apologize,” Walker said. “This has been a painful lesson about judgment and trust, and I am committed to moving forward with greater care, respect, and accountability in everything I say and do.”

## 251 times

Mixed into formal conversations about whipping votes, social media strategy and logistics, the members of the chat slung around an array of slurs — which POLITICO is republishing to show how they spoke. Epithets like “f---t,” “retarded” and “n--ga” appeared more than 251 times combined.

In one instance, Walker — who at the time was a staffer for Ortt — talked about how a mutual friend of some in the chat “dated this very obese Indian woman for a period of time.”

Giunta responded that the woman “was not Indian.”

“She just didn’t bathe often,” Samuel Douglass, [a state senator](#) from northern Vermont and the head of the state’s Young Republicans, replied to Giunta.

In a separate conversation, Giunta shared that his flight to Charleston, South Carolina, landed safely. Then, he offered some advice for his fellow Young Republicans.

“If your pilot is a she and she looks ten shades darker than someone from Sicily, just end it there. Scream the no no word,” Giunta wrote.

Douglass did not respond to requests for comment.

In a statement, Ortt called for members of the chat to resign.

“I was shocked and disgusted to learn about the racist, anti-Semitic, and misogynistic comments attributed to members of the New York State Young Republicans,” Ortt said. “This behavior is indefensible and has no place in our party or anywhere in public life.”



Bobby Walker speaks at the NYSYR 2023 Winter Conference and 6th Annual Rising Stars Reception. | NYSYR

Walker had been in line to manage Republican Peter Oberacker’s campaign for Congress in upstate New York, but a spokesperson for the campaign said Walker won’t be brought on in light of the comments in the chat.

### Seeking Trump’s endorsement

The private rhetoric isn’t happening in a vacuum. It comes amid a widespread coarsening of the broader political discourse and as incendiary and racially offensive tropes from the right become increasingly common in public debate. Last month, Trump [posted an artificial intelligence-generated video](#) that showed House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries in a sombrero beside Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, whose fabricated remarks were about trading free health care for immigrant votes — a false, long-running GOP trope. The sombrero meme has been widely used to mock Democrats as the government shutdown wears on.

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In his 2024 campaign, Trump spread false reports of [Haitian migrants eating pets](#) and, at one of his rallies, welcomed [comedian Tony Hinchcliffe](#), who called Puerto Rico a “floating island of garbage” and joked about Black people “carving watermelons” on Halloween.

Liz Huston, a White House spokesperson, rejected the idea that Trump’s rhetoric had anything to do with the chat members’ language.

“Only an activist, left-wing reporter would desperately try to tie President Trump into a story about a random groupchat he has no affiliation with, while failing to mention the dangerous smears coming from Democrat politicians who have fantasized about murdering their opponent and called Republicans Nazis and Fascists,” she said. “No one has been subjected to more vicious rhetoric and violence than President Trump and his supporters.”

In the “RESTOREYR WAR ROOM” chat, Giunta tells his fellow Republicans that he spoke with the White House about an endorsement from Trump for his bid to become chairman of the national federation. Trump and the Republican National Committee ultimately [decided to stay neutral](#) in the race.

A White House official said that it has no affiliation with Restore YR and that hundreds of groups ask the White House for its endorsement.

Giunta was the most prominent voice in the chat spreading racist messages — often encouraged or “liked” by other members.

When Luke Mosiman, the [chair of the Arizona Young Republicans](#), asked if the New Yorkers in the chat were watching an NBA playoff game, Giunta responded, “I’d go to the zoo if I wanted to watch monkey play ball.” Giunta elsewhere refers to Black people as “the watermelon people.”

Hendrix made a similar remark in July: “Bro is at a chicken restaurant ordering his food. Would he like some watermelon and kool aid with that?”

Hendrix was a communications assistant for Kansas’ Republican Attorney General Kris Kobach until Thursday. He also said in the chat that, despite political differences, he’s drawn to Missouri’s Young Republican organization because “Missouri doesn’t like f--s.”



William Hendrix during a portrait shoot in Topeka, Kansas, July 16, 2021. | Evert Nelson/The Capital-Journal

POLITICO reached out to Danedri Herbert, a spokesperson for the attorney general who also serves as the Kansas GOP chair, and shared with her excerpts of the chat involving Hendrix. In response, Herbert said that “we are aware of the issues raised in your article” and that Hendrix is “no longer employed” in Kobach’s office.

Yea I had some back and forth with the VC in Michigan,  
current chair is a deer in headlights

AD We have a call Wednesday  
❤️ PG

PG Many agree.

AD He did say “My delegates I bring will vote for the most  
right wing person”  
❤️ RH

PG Great. I love Hitler  
😊 AD

Texts and reactions by: Alex Dwyer, Peter Giunta, Rachel Hope.

In another exchange, Dwyer, the Kansas’ chair, informs Giunta that one of Michigan’s Young Republicans promised him the group “will vote for the most right wing person” to lead the national organization.

“Great. I love Hitler,” Giunta responded.

Dwyer reacted with a smiley face.

### Few minority groups spared

Giunta, who serves as chief of staff to New York state Assemblymember Mike Reilly, ultimately fell six points short of winning the chairship to [lead the Young Republican National Federation](#) earlier this year — despite earning endorsements from Stefanik and longtime Trump adviser Roger Stone.

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Reilly did not respond to requests for comment.

Earlier this year, Stefanik [accepted an award](#) from the New York State Young Republicans. She [lauded Giunta](#) for his “tremendous leadership” in August and

had her campaign and the political PAC [she leads](#) donate to that state organization. Alex deGrasse, a senior adviser for Stefanik, said the congresswoman “was absolutely appalled to learn about the alleged comments made by leaders of the New York State Young Republicans and other state YRs in a large national group chat.”

“According to the description provided by Politico, the comments were heinous, antisemitic, racist and unacceptable,” he continued, noting Stefanik has never employed anyone in the chat. “If the description by Politico is accurate, Congresswoman Stefanik calls for any NY Young Republicans responsible for these horrific comments in this chat to step down immediately.”

Stone also condemned the comments in a statement.

“I of course, have never seen this alleged chat room thread,” he said. “If it is authentic, I would, of course, denounce any such comments in the strongest possible terms, This would surprise me as it is inconsistent with Peter that I know, although I only know him in his capacity as the head of the New York Young Republicans, where I thought he did a good job.”

Few minority groups are spared from the Young Republican group’s chat. Their rhetoric — normalized at most points as dark humor — mirrors some popular conservative political commentators, podcasters and comedians amid [a national erosion](#) of what’s considered acceptable discourse.

Giunta’s line on a darker-skinned pilot, for example, [echoes one used](#) by slain conservative activist Charlie Kirk last year when he said, “If I see a Black pilot, I’m going to be like, boy, I hope he’s qualified.” [Kirk was discussing](#) how diversity hiring “invites unwholesome thinking.”

Walker also uses the moniker “eyepatch McCain” ([originally coined](#) by conservative commentator Tucker Carlson) [in an apparent reference](#) to GOP Rep. Dan Crenshaw. Crenshaw lost his eye while serving as a Navy SEAL in Afghanistan. Walker also makes the remark, “I prefer my war heroes not captured,” a repeat of a [similar 2015 line](#) from Trump.

Art Jipson, a professor at the University of Dayton who specializes in white racial extremism, surmised the Young Republicans in the chat were influenced by Trump’s language, which he said is often hyperbolic and emotionally charged.

“Trump’s persistent use of hostile, often inflammatory language that normalizes aggressive discourse in conservative circles can be incredibly influential on young operatives who are still trying to figure out, ‘What is that political discourse?’” Jipson said.

## **White supremacist symbols**

Jipson reviewed multiple excerpts of the Young Republicans’ chat provided by POLITICO. One was a late July message where Mosiman, the chair of the Arizona Young Republicans, mused about how the group could win support for their preferred candidate by linking an opponent to white supremacist groups.

But Mosiman then realized the plan could backfire — Kansas’ Young Republicans could end up becoming attracted to that opponent.

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“Can we get them to start releasing Nazi edits with her... Like pro Nazi and faciam [sic] propaganda,” he asked the group.

“Omg I love this plan,” Rachel Hope, the Arizona Young Republicans events chair, responded.

“The only problem is we will lose the Kansas delegation,” Mosiman said. Hope and the two Kansas Young Republicans in the chat reacted with a laughing face to the message. Hope did not respond to requests for comment. Mosiman declined to comment.

Jipson said the Young Republicans’ conversations reminded him of online discussions between members of neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups.

“You say it once or twice, it’s a joke, but you say it 251 times, it’s no longer a joke,” Jipson said. “The more we repeat certain ideas, the more real they become to us.”

Weeks later, someone in the chat staying in a hotel asks its members to “GUESS WHAT ROOM WE’RE IN.”

“1488,” Dwyer responds. White supremacists [use the number 1488](#) because 14 is the number of words in the [white supremacist slogan](#) “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.” H is the eighth letter in the alphabet, and 88 is often used as a shorthand for “Heil Hitler.”

In another conversation in February that appears to be about the national network of [Teen Age Republicans](#), Giunta talks approvingly about the Orange County Teenage Republican organization in New York and how he was pleased with its young members’ ideological bent.

“They support slavery and all that shit. Mega based,” he said. The term “based” in internet culture is used to express approval with an idea, often one that’s bold or controversial.

In a statement, Orange County GOP Chair Courtney Canfield Greene said the party was disappointed to learn its teen group was mentioned in the chat.

“Our teen volunteers have no affiliation with the NYSYR’s or the YRNF,” she said. “This behavior has no home within the Republican Party in Orange

County.”

Ed Cox, the chair of the New York State GOP, also condemned the remarks made in the chat.

“I was shocked and disgusted to learn about the reports of comments made by a small group of Young Republicans,” he said. “Just as we call out vile racist and anti-Semitic rhetoric on the far left, we must not tolerate it within our ranks.”

### **Vicious words for enemies**

Members of the Telegram chat speak about their personal lives, too. Extensive discussions about their everyday lives include one exchange about how devoutly Catholic some chat members are and how often they attend church.

Many of the slurs, epithets and violent language used in the chat often appear to be intended as jokes.

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Mosiman was derided by members of the chat as “beaner” and “sp-c.”

“Stay in the closet f---t,” Walker of New York also jested in July, though he is the group’s main target for the same epithet.

The group used slurs against Asians, too.

“My people built the train tracks with the Chinese,” Walker says at one point, referring to his Italian ancestors.

“Let his people go!” Maligno responds. “Keep the ch--ks, though.”

In another instance, Mosiman tells the group that, “The Spanish came to America and had sex with every single woman.”

“Sex is gay,” Dwyer writes.

“Sex? It was rape,” Mosiman replies.

“Epic,” Walker says.

Just did

JM Probably shouldn't have on my work computer 🤔🤔🤔

🤔 RH 🤔 LM

in reply to  
The Spanish came to America and had sex with every single woman

AD Sex is gay

Sex?

LM It was rape

BW Epic

Texts and reactions by: Luke Mosiman, Joe Maligno, Alex Dwyer, Bobby Walker, Rachel Hope.

There's more explicit malice in some phrases, too, especially when they turn their ire on opponents outside the chat, such as the leader of the rival Grow YR slate, Hayden Padgett, who defeated Giunta and was reelected chairman of the Young Republican National Federation this summer.

"So you mean Hayden F----t wrote the resolution himself?" Giunta asked the group about the National Young Republicans chair in late May.

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"RAPE HAYDEN," Mosiman declared the following month.

"Adolf Padgett is in the F----tbunker as we speak," Walker said in July.

Padgett responded to the chat's language in a statement.

"The Young Republican National Federation condemns all forms of racism, antisemitism, and hate," Padgett said. "I want to be clear that such behavior is entirely inconsistent with our values and has no place within our organization or the broader conservative movement."



Samuel Douglass. | Vermont Legislature

Giunta also had expletive-laden criticism for the Young Republicans in states that were supporting or leaning toward Padgett’s faction.

“Minnesota - f---ts,” he messaged, continuing: “Arkansas - inbred cow fuckers Nebraska - revolt in our favor; blocked their bind and have a majority of their delegates Maryland - fat stinky Jew ... Rhode Island - traitorous c---s who I will eradicate from the face of this planet.”

Giunta also said he planned to make one of the competing Young Republicans “unalive himself on the convention floor.”

In another instance, Douglass, the Vermont state senator, describes to the group members how one of Padgett’s Jewish colleagues may have made a procedural error related to the number of Maryland delegates permitted at the national convention.

“I was about to say you’re giving nationals to [sic] much credit and expecting the Jew to be honest,” Brianna Douglass, Sam’s wife and Vermont Young Republican’s [national committee member](#), replied to her husband’s message. Brianna Douglass did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

### **‘If we ever had a leak of this chat...’**

While reporting this article, POLITICO was examining a separate allegation: that Giunta and the Young Republicans mismanaged the New York organization’s finances and hadn’t paid at least one venue for a swanky holiday party it hosted last year. POLITICO’s report [detailed how the organization](#) was missing required financial disclosure forms and how [their subsequent efforts](#) to file the forms revealed the organization was in more than \$28,000 of debt. As of Tuesday, updated records show the organization is in more than \$38,000 of debt.

Donations to New York State Young Republicans' political account must be reported to the state Board of Elections. Expenditures must be reported too.

At the time, Giunta told POLITICO the allegations were “nothing more than a sad and pathetic attempt at a political hit job.” But in their “RESTOREYR WAR ROOM” chat, he and Walker speak flippantly about mishandling the club’s finances.

“NYSYR Account be like: \$500 - Balding cream \$1,000 - Ozempik,” Walker said in one message. “NYSYR will be declaring bankruptcy after this I just know it,” he said in another.

“I drained \$10k tonight to pay for my next vacation to Italy,” Giunta appeared to joke about the organization’s bank account.

“I spent it on massage,” he says of another check that was deposited in the account.

“Great. Can’t wait to get sued by our venue,” Walker replies.

Members of the chat occasionally appeared to be aware of its toxicity and even made remarks that considered the possibility someone outside their tight-knit group could view it.

Walker seemed to consider that possibility the most.

In one instance, he joked about bombing the Young Republican National Federation’s convention in Nashville and then remarked, “Just kidding for our assigned FBI tracker.”

In another, he considered the totality of the thousands of messages he and his peers had written, and what would happen if the public saw them come to light.

“If we ever had a leak of this chat we would be cooked fr fr,” he wrote.

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