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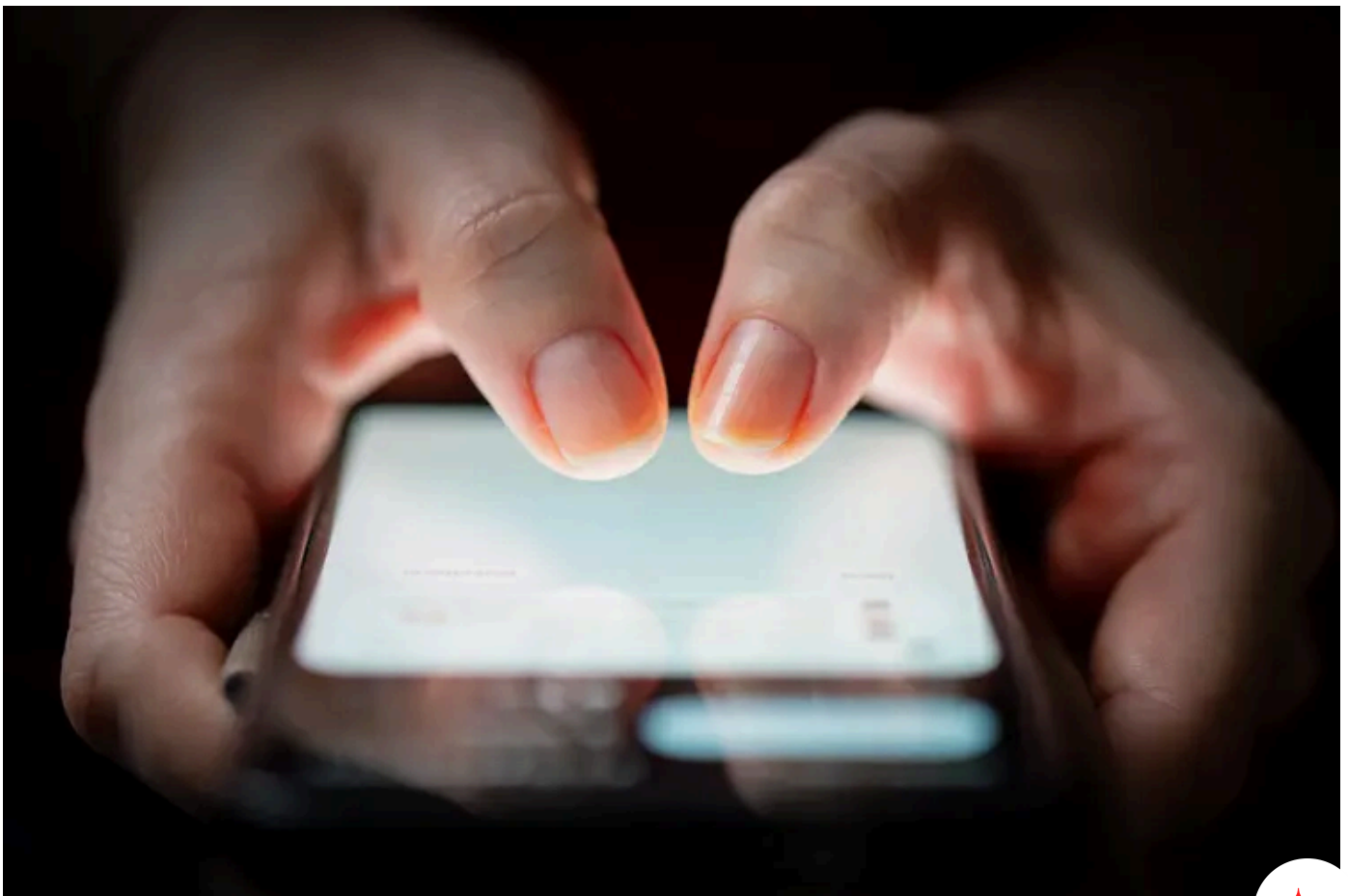
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REPUBLICANS

White House Shrugs Off Leaked Chats from Young Republicans Praising Hitler

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The messages, obtained by POLITICO, were sent by leaders of Young Republican groups across the country. *Jacque*
—*Getty Images*



by **Chantelle Lee**

REPORTER

Vice President [J.D. Vance](#) is downplaying a leak of thousands of leaked messages from Young Republican leaders that contained racist and offensive language.

The messages, obtained by [POLITICO](#), were sent by leaders of various Young Republican National Federation groups—the political organization for Republicans between the ages of 18 and 40. They show that the leaders of those groups praised Adolf Hitler and joked about gas chambers, slavery, and rape.

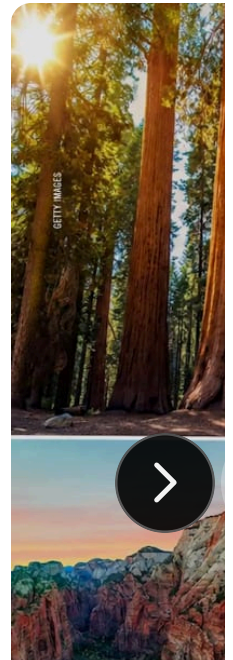
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The leaks sparked immediate backlash from several lawmakers across the political aisle. But the Vice President brushed off the messages, turning instead to criticize Democratic Virginia Attorney General candidate Jay Jones, who recently came under fire for [messages](#) he sent in 2022, in which he proposed a hypothetical scenario where he would shoot Todd Gilbert,

then the Republican Speaker of the House, and wished that Gilbert's children would be harmed.

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"This is far worse than anything said in a college group chat, and the guy who said it could become the AG of Virginia," Vance said in his social media post, referring to Jones. "I refuse to join the pearl clutching when powerful people call for political violence."

Jones has apologized for the messages he sent in 2022.

Other Republican politicians, such as Vermont Gov. Phil Scott, have condemned the leaked messages from Young Republican groups. New York Rep. Elise Stefanik, a Republican, denounced the chat, but also called POLITICO's article a "hit piece" and, like Vance, turned to criticize Jones's remarks.

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When asked if he was worried about "extremist pro-Hitler sentiment among the Party's young Republicans," Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson replied, "No. Obviously we roundly condemn any of that nonsense," then went on to say that he didn't know "who any of these people are."

Here's what to know about the messages.

What do the messages reveal?

POLITICO's reporting reveals that Young Republican leaders exchanged racist and offensive messages in Telegram chats between early January and mid-August. In the messages obtained by POLITICO, chat members referred to Black people as monkeys and "the watermelon people." When a member asked if others in the chat were watching an NBA game, one member replied, "I'd go to the zoo if I wanted to watch monkey play ball."

Chat members joked about putting their political enemies in gas chambers. They joked about rape—one member referred to it as "epic." Some praised Hitler, with one saying, "Great. I love Hitler." ✨

Members of the chats also used slurs—including “f-----,” “r-----,” and “n----”—a total of more than 251 times, POLITICO found.

One member sent a message about how a mutual friend “dated this very obese Indian woman for a period of time.” When one person replied that the woman “was not Indian,” another responded by saying, “She just didn’t bathe often.”

Who are the Young Republicans?

The Young Republican National Federation, often called the Young Republicans, has groups across the country and includes roughly 15,000 members. The chats obtained by POLITICO included messages from leaders of those groups, including in New York, Kansas, Arizona, and Vermont.

Who was in the chat?

Some members of the chat worked in politics. Peter Giunta, who at the time that the messages were sent was chair of the New York State Young Republicans, was chief of staff for New York state Assemblymember Mike Reilly. In the aftermath of POLITICO’s reporting, he lost his position. Vermont state Sen. Samuel Douglass was also in the chat; Republican lawmakers have since called for his resignation.

Some have apologized for the messages. But others declined to comment or suggested that the messages “may have been altered, taken out of context, or otherwise manipulated.”

What has the backlash been?



New York Rep. Michael Lawler, a Republican, posted on X that “the deeply offensive and hateful comments reportedly made in a private chat among members of the New York State

Young Republicans are disgusting,” calling on them to “resign from any leadership position immediately and reflect on how far they have strayed from basic human respect and decency.”

The Kansas Young Republicans was disbanded on Tuesday, after POLITICO’s reporting connected two of the group’s members to racist messages. Several members of the chats lost their jobs in the aftermath of POLITICO’s reporting.

Speaking to POLITICO, a White House spokesperson dismissed the idea that President Donald Trump’s rhetoric was at all related to the offensive messages in the trove of Telegram chats.

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“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,” the spokesperson said. “No one has been subjected to more vicious rhetoric and violence than President Trump and his supporters.”

The White House has not responded to TIME’s request for comment.

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