

**ORWELLIAN NIGHTMARE: How an Anti-Christian Smear Factory Infected Federal Law
Enforcement**

Partisan and Profitable: The SPLC's Influence on Federal Civil Rights Policy

Testimony before

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ORWELLIAN NIGHTMARE: How an Anti-Christian Smear Factory Infected Federal Law Enforcement

My name is Tyler O’Neil.¹ I write and edit commentary and investigative reporting for The Daily Signal. I wrote two books, “Making Hate Pay: The Corruption of the Southern Poverty Law Center” and “The Woketopus: The Dark Money Cabal Manipulating the Federal Government.” The views I express in this testimony are my own.

Chairman Roy, members of the subcommittee,

Imagine that an organization notorious for comparing mainstream conservatives and Christians to the Ku Klux Klan, which has ties to antifa and inspired a domestic terror attack, advised the federal government on how to counter “the domestic terrorism threat.”

This Orwellian nightmare isn’t a hypothetical. It actually happened under the Biden administration, and it’s the reason I am testifying before you today.

To understand just how horrible this nightmare was, I need to explain what’s wrong with the Southern Poverty Law Center.

The Southern Poverty Law Center

The organization’s name evokes its beginning as a noble civil rights organization, providing legal representation to poor people in the South. To the consternation of many SPLC attorneys, the organization’s co-founder, Morris Dees, turned the center’s focus toward fighting the Ku Klux Klan in the 1980s.²

Americans rightly hate the Klan, as it is the quintessential hate group. Thankfully, by the 1980s, the Klan had lost nearly all its cultural force, and SPLC lawyers compared suing Klan groups into bankruptcy to “shooting fish in a barrel.” As the public-interest lawyers tired of the Klan focus, Dees doubled down—because the donors loved it. The SPLC began to rake in millions by presenting itself as the primary monitor and organized opponent to the Klan.

Dees eventually ran out of grand dragons to slay, however, and the SPLC turned to ever more mainstream targets: first the racist-adjacent skinheads, then conservatives who oppose illegal immigration, then analysts who warn against radical Islam, and opponents of the LGBTQ agenda.

Now, the “hate map” that grew out of the SPLC’s efforts to monitor the Klan has expanded to include an ever-more diverse cast of characters, most of them united by nothing more or less than their opposition to the SPLC’s leftist agenda.

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² O’Neil, Tyler. *Making Hate Pay: The Corruption of the Southern Poverty Law Center*. New York: Bombardier Books, 2020. pp. 23-74.

Groups of moms and dads who expressed their opposition to critical race theory and transgender ideology in schools now find themselves on a map with the Klan—a map published by the same group whose education arm, Learning for Justice, works to insert those very ideologies into the classroom.

Nonpartisan groups of doctors who band together to demand better evidence and more investigation into the grotesque transgender interventions euphemistically described as “gender-affirming care” find themselves thrust into the company of Neo-Nazis.³

In one particularly revealing case, lesbians and gays who came together to oppose transgender lessons for children and adopted the name Gays Against Groomers find themselves listed as an “anti-LGBTQ hate group,” suggesting that the group these people supposedly hate is themselves.⁴

Violence

Some conservatives mock the SPLC for examples like this, but the “hate” accusations are deadly serious. In 2012, a terrorist used the SPLC “hate map” to target the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C., aiming to kill everyone in the building and smear a Chick-fil-A sandwich in their faces. A brave building manager foiled his attack, but got wounded in the process. The shooter pleaded guilty to domestic terrorism and is serving a 25-year prison sentence.⁵

Earlier this year, the SPLC added Turning Point USA, the largest conservative grassroots youth organization in the country, to the “hate map.”⁶ A few months later, Turning Point USA’s founder, Charlie Kirk, became a free speech martyr. The man charged with his murder reportedly texted his roommate, “I had enough of his hatred. Some hate can’t be negotiated out.”⁷

The SPLC has condemned political violence, and specifically condemned both of these violent attacks, yet it has not removed the Family Research Council or Turning Point USA from the “hate map.”

The SPLC also has troubling ties to antifa, the loosely organized network of leftist agitators who have engaged in violent riots. An SPLC lawyer currently faces domestic terrorism charges for his

³ “Our Response to the Southern Poverty Law Center.” Society For Evidence-Based Gender Medicine. Sept. 10, 2025. <https://segm.org/SPLC-SEGM-Response-2025> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

⁴ O’Neil, Tyler. “SPLC ‘Labeled Us Anti-Ourselves’: Gays Against Groomers Founder Responds to ‘Hate Group’ Smear.” The Daily Signal. July 29, 2024. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2024/07/29/splc-labeled-us-anti-ourselves-gays-against-groomers-founder-reacts-hate-group-smear/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

⁵ O’Neil, *Making Hate Pay*. pp. 121-130.

⁶ O’Neil, Tyler. “Southern Poverty Law Center Puts Largest Conservative Grassroots Youth Group on ‘Hate Map’ With Klan Chapters.” The Daily Signal. May 24, 2025. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2025/05/24/southern-poverty-law-center-puts-largest-conservative-grassroots-youth-group-hate-map-klan-chapters/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

⁷ Upadhyay, Brajesh. “Read the text messages between Charlie Kirk accused and roommate.” BBC. Sept. 16, 2025. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c99g1e0z2ero> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

alleged role in a Molotov cocktail riot in Atlanta, and the SPLC hired a woman described as “antifa’s secret weapon.”⁸

Making Hate Pay

While the “hate map” has inspired violence, it also likely helps pay the bills. According to its most recent Form 990, the SPLC had \$786.7 million in net assets as of Oct. 2024. The SPLC also has millions in offshore accounts.⁹ As the Capital Research Center’s Robert Stilson noted, the SPLC is wealthier than the Make-a-Wish Foundation of America, the YMCA of the USA, the Special Olympics, Chicago’s Field Museum, and many colleges and universities, including Tuskegee University.¹⁰

In 2019, amid a racial discrimination and sexual harassment scandal that led the SPLC to fire its cofounder, a former employee took to *The New Yorker* to spill the beans. He said staff knew the “hate” accusations are a “highly profitable scam” aimed at scaring donors into ponying up cash by exaggerating “hate.”¹¹

Yet the SPLC isn’t just interested in Americans’ money—it also seeks to deprive its opponents from raising their own funds.

The SPLC has served as the foundation for many debanking efforts. It teamed up with the Council on American-Islamic Relations to encourage donor-advised funds to cut off “anti-Muslim hate groups.” It released a report on “extremist finance” urging donor-advised funds to cut off “hate groups.” In 2019, the Amalgamated Foundation launched a “Hate Is Not Charitable” campaign, urging donor-advised funds to blacklist “hate groups.”¹²

For years, Amazon used the map to determine which nonprofits should be ineligible for its Amazon Smile charity donation program.¹³ Benevity, which operates charity partnerships with

⁸ O’Neil, Tyler “The Disturbing Ties Between the SPLC and Antifa.” *The Daily Signal*. Sept. 22, 2025. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2025/09/22/splc-leftist-group-targeted-turning-point-usa-has-long-carried-water-antifa/> Accessed Dec. 14, 2025.

⁹ O’Neil, Tyler. “‘RAISES SUSPICION’: Why Does a Civil Rights Nonprofit Have Millions in Offshore Accounts?” *The Daily Signal*. July 9, 2025. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2025/07/09/poverty-nonprofit-smears-conservatives-has-millions-offshore-accounts-cayman-islands-irs-records-show/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

¹⁰ Stilson, Robert. “The Southern Poverty Law Center is biased—and extraordinarily wealthy.” *The Capital Research Center*. Sept. 22, 2025. <https://capitalresearch.org/article/the-southern-poverty-law-center-is-biased-and-extraordinarily-wealthy/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

¹¹ Moser, Bob. “The Reckoning of Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center.” *The New Yorker*. March 21, 2019. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-reckoning-of-morris-dees-and-the-southern-poverty-law-center> Accessed Dec. 13, 2025.

¹² O’Neil, Tyler. “Group That Pushes Finance to Blacklist Conservatives Calls Debanking a ‘Conspiracy Theory.’” *The Daily Signal*. Aug. 20, 2024. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2024/08/20/group-pushes-finance-blacklist-conservatives-calls-debanking-conspiracy-theory/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

¹³ O’Neil, Tyler. “Conservatives, Christians Systematically Excluded From Benefits of Christmas Shopping on Amazon.” *The Daily Signal*. Dec. 14, 2022. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2022/12/14/conservative-christians-systematically-excluded-benefits-christmas-shopping-amazon/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

nearly 1,000 companies, has used the “hate map” to exclude some nonprofits from these relationships—though Benevity claims it only does so at the request of its company clients.¹⁴

In 2017, the company Vanco Payments abruptly ceased providing payment services to the Ruth Institute, an organization dedicated to helping the victims of the Sexual Revolution.

Anti-Christian Animus

The SPLC’s attack on the Ruth Institute reveals a hostility to Catholic teaching and to traditional Christian doctrine on sexuality. When justifying putting the institute on the “hate map,” the SPLC repeatedly cited as evidence of “hate” a quote *directly from the Catechism of the Catholic Church*.¹⁵ The catechism is the binding statement of faith for 1 billion Catholics across the globe.

If this claim is enough to make the Ruth Institute a “hate group,” then the SPLC should call the entire Catholic Church a “hate group.” Otherwise, it is being intellectually dishonest. If the church representing more than one eighth of the world’s population is a “hate group,” it doesn’t get much more mainstream than that.

So many critics have called the SPLC anti-Christian that the center at one point decided to clear up the “major misconception.” The SPLC claimed that it doesn’t put people on the “hate map” for holding to traditional Christian doctrine that marriage is between one man and one woman and that sex should be reserved to that context. The SPLC noted that it does not put some organization that “oppose homosexuality on strictly biblical grounds,” on the “hate map.” It presented evidence for this claim: the fact that it does not put Focus on the Family on the map.

The language supposedly clearing up the “major misconception” mysteriously disappeared from the website, however. This year, the SPLC put Focus on the Family on the “hate map,” removing all doubt about its anti-Christian position.¹⁶

R.G. Cravens, manager of research and analysis at the SPLC’s Intelligence Project, defended the decision to place Focus on the Family on the “hate map” by saying that it is “patently false” to say that “LGBTQ people can’t be truly Christian.” This flies in the face of the Bible and 2,000 years of Christian tradition, and reveals, once again, the SPLC’s animus toward conservative Christianity.¹⁷

The SPLC provides those on the Left with a useful tool to silence opposition to their agenda. LGBTQ activists can cite the “hate map” to try to deplatform their opponents and set the terms

¹⁴ O’Neil, Tyler. “Major Software Company Stops Using Leftist Smear Factory to Blacklist Conservatives.” The Daily Signal. Nov. 26, 2025. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2025/11/26/exclusive-is-corporate-america-finally-seeing-light-southern-poverty-law-center/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

¹⁵ “Ruth Institute.” Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/extremist-files/ruth-institute/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

¹⁶ O’Neil, Tyler. “SPLC Smears Another Christian Nonprofit.” The Wall Street Journal. June 11, 2025. <https://www.wsj.com/opinion/splc-smears-another-christian-nonprofit-focus-on-the-family-hate-map-5ce9d51e> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

¹⁷ O’Neil, Tyler. “SPLC Finally Clears Up ‘Major Misconception’ About Whether It Is ‘Anti-Christian.’” The Daily Signal. June 19, 2025. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2025/06/19/unmasked-splc-leftist-group-cited-fbi-outs-itself-anti-christian/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

of the debate. They can close the Overton window to make it seem like the only disagreement with their ideas comes from “hate,” or “white supremacy.”

The SPLC knows what it is doing with the “hate map”: it is comparing conservatives, Christians, and many others who disagree with its agenda to the violent hate group it earned its reputation by suing into bankruptcy. The SPLC claims the “hate map” reveals the “infrastructure upholding white supremacy,” because the whole point is to judge its opponents guilty by forcibly associating them with the Ku Klux Klan.

This makes the SPLC more than just a partisan actor—it makes the group a threat to America’s free speech culture.

Yet the Biden administration welcomed the SPLC with open arms.

The Biden Administration’s Ties to the SPLC

In the fall of 2021, after President Biden took office, then-SPLC President Margaret Huang bragged in a donor meeting that many agencies in the administration had reached out to “solicit our expertise” to “help shape the policies” to “counter the domestic terrorism threat.”¹⁸

Public records requests have fleshed out the close relationship between the administration and the SPLC.

The Biden White House hosted SPLC leaders and staff at least 18 times. Dietra Trent, executive director at the White House initiative on historically black colleges and universities, met with SPLC staff on July 5, 2022.¹⁹ The FBI cited the SPLC in its notorious memo on “radical-traditional Catholics,” before rescinding the memo after a brave whistleblower published it.²⁰

President Biden nominated Nancy Abudu, an SPLC attorney, to a federal judgeship on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit.²¹ The White House also touted the SPLC’s role in its strategy to combat antisemitism.²²

¹⁸ O’Neil, Tyler. “ORWELLIAN NIGHTMARE: Biden Admin Consulted Anti-Christian Group for ‘Domestic Terrorism’ Strategy.” The Daily Signal. Jan. 11, 2024. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2024/01/11/exclusive-biden-admin-approached-anti-christian-splc-help-shape-policies-counter-domestic-terror-threat/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

¹⁹ O’Neil, Tyler. “BREAKING: Biden Education Department Met With SPLC Before Center Put Parental Rights Groups on Its ‘Hate Map.’” The Daily Signal. Jan. 29, 2024. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2024/01/29/breaking-department-education-met-splc-center-put-parental-rights-groups-hate-map/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

²⁰ O’Neil, Tyler. “BREAKING: FBI Rescinds Memo Citing Southern Poverty Law Center After Daily Signal Report.” The Daily Signal. Feb. 9, 2023. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2023/02/09/breaking-fbi-rescinds-radical-traditionalist-catholic-ideology-document-citing-southern-poverty-law-center/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

²¹ “Senate Confirms Nancy Abudu to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.” U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary. May 18, 2023. <https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/press/releases/senate-confirms-nancy-abudu-to-the-us-court-of-appeals-for-the-eleventh-circuit> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

²² O’Neil, Tyler. “DISTORTED PICTURE: Biden Antisemitism Push Celebrates CAIR, SPLC, Ignores Left-Wing Jew Hatred.” The Daily Signal. June 1, 2023. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2023/06/01/biden-touts-cair-splc-antisemitism-push-muddies-waters-israel-hours-major-jewish-holiday/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2024.

Yet the SPLC's closest relationship in the Biden administration involved the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division.

The Civil Rights Division

Michael Lieberman, senior policy council for hate and extremism at the SPLC, appears to have had a close relationship with Robert Moossy Jr., deputy assistant attorney general at the Civil Rights Division. Lieberman sent Moossy an embargoed copy of the SPLC's "hate map" report for 2022—which included Moms for Liberty for the first time—in June 2023. Moossy returned the favor in December 2023, sending Lieberman an embargoed copy of the FBI's annual hate crimes report.²³

Lieberman also took part in a "Quarterly Civil Rights Meeting" with the DOJ involving other left-leaning activist groups and Civil Rights Division leaders, suggesting regular contact with the division.

Documents also show that Kristen Clarke, the assistant attorney general for civil rights who oversaw the Civil Rights Division, solicited advice from then-SPLC President Huang, and visited the SPLC on March 6, 2023.

Documents also show that SPLC research manager R.G. Cravens spoke at a symposium for DOJ prosecutors on Nov. 7, 2023. He gave "an overview of the disturbing trends and developments within the anti-LGBTQ movement, including the surge in threats and violence against transgender people, children, and their caregivers."

"By focusing on commonalities in rhetoric, symbols, locations, and actors involved in violent anti-LGBTQ attacks and targeted intimidation, this presentation will help investigators and prosecutors identify potential evidence and motivations for bias crime," the description added.²⁴

What Does This Mean?

The fact that a researcher who helps develop the SPLC's "hate map" advised prosecutors about the "anti-LGBTQ movement" should trouble Americans deeply. How much did the SPLC's hostility toward conservative Christians cloud this presentation? Did he urge prosecutors to investigate Christian churches or nonprofits that the SPLC brands "anti-LGBTQ hate groups?"

None of this took place in a vacuum. The SPLC cultivated this close relationship with the Civil Rights Division while that very division was bringing charges against pro-life protesters—and largely ignoring the attacks of pro-abortion vandals targeting churches and pro-life pregnancy

²³ O'Neil, Tyler. "However Bad You Think Biden's DOJ Was, New Documents Show It Was Even Worse." The Daily Signal. Oct. 12, 2025. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2025/10/12/biden-doj-sought-direction-splc-leftist-group-that-put-turning-point-usa-hate-map-shortly-before-charlie-kirks-assassination/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

²⁴ O'Neil, Tyler. "EXCLUSIVE: Anti-Christian Group Advised DOJ Prosecutors on 'Hate Crimes,' Docs Show." The Daily Signal. June 16, 2023. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2025/06/16/exclusive-hate-filled-group-splc-advised-doj-prosecutors-hate-crimes-docs-show/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

centers.²⁵ The Biden White House also coordinated with the National School Boards Association in a since-retracted letter comparing concerned parents to domestic terrorists.²⁶

The true extent of the SPLC's impact in the Biden administration, and in particular, at the Civil Rights Division, has yet to be revealed. Organizations like America First Legal are continuing to file public records requests to access new documents. Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, chairman of this very committee, has formally asked Attorney General Pam Bondi for all related documents.²⁷

What, exactly, did R.G. Cravens tell prosecutors about the "hatred" of conservative Christians? What sort of advice did Kristen Clarke receive from Margaret Huang? Did the Civil Rights Division investigate or take action against any organization wrongly on the "hate map?"

Did the Civil Rights Division undermine the civil rights of law-abiding Americans whose only crime was to disagree with the SPLC? Even if the SPLC's influence only amounted to advice, why did the Civil Rights Division listen in the first place?

It isn't only conservatives who should be outraged by this. Even left-leaning legal scholars like former ACLU President Nadine Strossen and Military Religious Freedom Foundation Founder Mikey Weinstein have publicly disagreed with the SPLC's decision to brand Alliance Defending Freedom, a mainstream conservative Christian law firm, a "hate group."²⁸

Conservatives already know the SPLC lacks credibility, but we need to do a better job of alerting the American people. A recent YouGov poll found that, while Republicans view the SPLC negatively (giving it a -19% favorability rating), U.S. adults are more likely to view the SPLC favorably, at 8%, and Democrats gave the group a 39% favorability rating.²⁹

I believe the SPLC has every right to stand up for what it believes in, but it does not have the right to systematically defame mainstream conservatives, Christians, and others by trying to remove them from polite society by falsely comparing them to the Ku Klux Klan. FBI Director Kash Patel was right to call the SPLC a "partisan smear machine," and any use of the SPLC's "hate map" is a black mark on our government's record.

²⁵ O'Neil, Tyler. "Trump's Pardons for Pro-Life Protesters Rights the Wrongs of the Woketopus." RealClearPolicy. Jan. 25, 2025.

https://www.realclearpolicy.com/articles/2025/01/25/trumps_pardons_for_pro-life_protesters_rights_the_wrongs_of_the_woketopus_1087147.html Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

²⁶ "NSBA Announces Completion of Independent Review; Takes Action Based on Findings." The National School Boards Association. May 20, 2022. Archived May 31, 2022.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20220531004619/https://nsba.org/news/2022/independent-review> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

²⁷ O'Neil, Tyler. "EXCLUSIVE: Just How Closely Did Biden's DOJ Rely on the SPLC? Jim Jordan Is on the Case." The Daily Signal. Nov. 25, 2025. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2025/11/25/just-how-closely-did-bidens-doj-rely-on-the-splc-jim-jordan-is-on-the-case/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

²⁸ "Setting the Record Straight." Alliance Defending Freedom. <https://adflegal.org/setting-the-record-straight/> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.

²⁹ Ballard, Jamie. "What Americans think about 20 political, activist, and extremist groups." YouGov. Nov. 7, 2025. <https://today.yougov.com/politics/articles/53347-what-americans-think-about-20-political-activist-and-extremist-groups> Accessed Dec. 12, 2025.