Written Testimony of Tony Perkins
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Before the U.S. House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Gov't
"Partisan and Profitable: The SPLC's Influence on Federal Civil Rights Policy"

December 16, 2025

Chairman Roy, Ranking Member Scanlon, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Tony Perkins, and I serve as president of Family Research Council (FRC) in Washington, D.C., a position that I have held since 2003.

On August 15, 2012, Floyd Corkins, an LGBTQ activist, entered FRC's headquarters in Washington, D.C., with a loaded semi-automatic pistol, 95 rounds of ammunition, and 15 Chick-fil-A sandwiches. In a recorded interview with the FBI, Corkins revealed that he had intended to "kill the people in the building" and smear Chick-fil-A sandwiches in their faces. Corkins described himself as a political activist who wanted to kill "as many people as [he] could."

Corkins brought the sandwiches along because, in his words: "Chick-fil-A came out against gay marriage so I was going to use that as a statement."[1] This would-be murderer was the first person convicted for an act of terrorism under the District's post-9-11 terrorism statute.

This hideous crime, in which FRC's building manager, Leo Johnson, was shot as he stopped the terrorist, is linked to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC). Two years prior, Family Research Council became the first Christian conservative public policy organization to be labeled by the SPLC as a hate group. That list is reposted annually along with a "hate map" that doxes all those listed by showing their geographical locations.

Corkins also told the FBI that he learned of FRC through the SPLC website. Despite its connection to the attempted mass murder, and requests from FRC to remove FRC from the list, the SPLC has refused to acknowledge the link between its listing of FRC and this shooting or remove FRC from the "hate map" to this day. As for Leo Johnson, to people at the SPLC, our co-worker's life-threatening gunshot was mere collateral damage—a small price to pay if his

[1] Department of Justice, "Virginia Man Sentenced To 25 Years In Prison In Shooting Of Security Guard At Family Research Council Defendant Targeted Organization In Planned Attack," press release, Sept. 19, 2013, https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/pr/virginia-man-sentenced-25-years-prison-shooting-security-guard-family-research.

example intimidated other Christians like us into silence about what the Bible says about marriage and human sexuality.

History and Trajectory of the SPLC

It was not always this way. The SPLC was founded in 1971 to advance civil rights litigation in the Deep South, but it has since evolved into an organization that has sadly lost its way, more recently engaging in Marxist and critical theory analysis to frame its own intolerance and opposition to its alternate political perspectives on the right. Also ironically, this strategy is self-defeating for the SPLC's stated aim. By labelling and marginalizing its political opponents, the SPLC is feeding the very monster it claims to want to fight. When groups and their constituents are marginalized from discourse, they will only grow more radicalized.

All of this begs the question: does the SPLC actually want to help solve the problems it says it does and bring constructive solutions? Or does it want to promote problems to justify its existence and generate financial resources? As of October 24, the SPLC had $738.4 million in endowment funds.[2]

Examining the SPLC's sad detour from civil rights defense into critical theory policeman, we see it putting much of its effort into tracking and publicizing what it calls "hate groups" on its "hate map." It also maintains and publicizes a separate "hate watch" site, and something called the "extremist files." Multiple listings contain the same groups and categories of political thought that the SPLC is opposing.

The incoherence of this must be noted. Groups and individuals are on multiple lists. Is one "hateful." Or an "extremist"? Is one able to avoid the "hate map" by avoiding certain public activities, yet harboring hatred and rage in their heart? If so, why is "hate" the proper label?

Again, it is fair for one to ask whether the real goal of the SPLC is eradicating "hate" (however that is done), or to perpetuate its existence as an organization and aid the advancement of the Left's destabilizing agenda by using their labeling to intimidate and silence.

The SPLC Is Used to Marginalize Opponents in the Eyes of Government and Media

Aside from being referenced by radicalized "lone wolf" killers and would-be killers, how is this "hate map" formally used by the government and media?

It is used by media and activists to marginalize their opponents in public debate. When FRC was placed on the SPLC list in 2010, it was immediately taken by a George Soros-funded organization, Faithful America, to start a public campaign demanding MSNBC and Chris

[2] Southern Poverty Law Center, Inc., Consolidated Financial Statements, October 31, 2024.

Matthews remove me from regular appearances from the show Hardball. Their listing is not done in a vacuum; it is designed to silence—one way or another.

While the media is used to silence opponents, government entities are utilized to do even worse.

Government agencies and major corporations have used the SPLC's hate and extremist labeling and related material:

1) The SPLC has **worked closely with federal government**, including training Biden DOJ prosecutors.[3] Thankfully, under President Trump, the FBI has cut ties with the SPLC.[4] All government agencies should follow suit.
2) The SPLC touts its own work **influencing local law enforcement**, as shown in one instance with the Chicago Police Department.[5]
3) The SPLC's Learning for Justice resources, previously entitled Teaching Tolerance, are **widely distributed to public schools**,[6] with an associated magazine being sent to 450,000 educators twice a year.[7]
4) **Several corporations** have utilized SPLC's labeling to deny donations and business services to labeled organizations. Amazon has used the SPLC as a resource for who is eligible under its AmazonSmile program.[8] Others that have relied on the SPLC include Spotify,[9] GuideStar,[10] PayPal, Alphabet, Mastercard, Amazon, Meta, Salesforce and Starbucks.[11]

The efforts within government and public agencies are designed to marginalize those who will not bow to the Left's radical cultural agenda by stigmatizing them in the eyes of authorities and

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[3] Josh Christenson, "SPLC helped train Biden's DOJ prosecutors, had exclusive access to hate crimes data: bombshell records," *NY Post*, Oct. 3, 2025, https://nypost.com/2025/10/03/us-news/splc-helped-train-doj-prosecutors-under-biden-had-exclusive-access-to-hate-crimes-data-bombshell-records-show/#:~:text=14%2C%202022%2C%20meeting%20with%20high%2Dranking%20DOJ%20officials,Monaco%20and%20Associate%20Attorney%20General%20Vanita%20Gupta.

[4] Bryan Chai, "The FBI—Finally—Kicks the SPLC to the Curb," *Alliance Defending Freedom*, Oct. 14, 2025, https://adflegal.org/article/the-fbi-finally-kicks-the-splc-to-the-curb/.

[5] Michael Lieberman, "Countering Hate & Extremism Through Policy & Data," *SPLC*, June 4, 2024, https://www.splcenter.org/resources/reports/countering-hate-extremism-policy-data/#:~:text=The%20Minnesota%20Board%20of%20Peace,Illustration%20by%20McQuade%20Inc.

[6] Meg Kilgannon, The SPLC's Radical "Learning for Justice" Program, *Family Research Council*, 2021, https://www.frc.org/booklet/the-splcs-radical-learning-for-justice-program#gsc.tab=0.

[7] Zinn Education Project, accessed Dec. 15, 2025, https://www.zinnedproject.org/materials/learning-for-justice/#:~:text=Founded%20in%201991%20by%20the,free%20videos%20for%20the%20classroom.

[8] SPLC denounced as 'thoroughly disgraced' after labeling pro-life, family organizations as 'hate groups'," *Catholic Telegraph*, Feb. 3, 2021, https://www.thecatholictelegraph.com/pro-life-family-organizations-hate-groups/72488.

[9] Jessica Yarvin, "These tech companies are purging white supremacist groups from their platforms," *PBS News*, Aug. 18, 2017, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/tech-companies-purging-white-supremacist-groups-platforms.

[10] "GuideStar, website about charities, flags dozens of nonprofits as hate groups," *CBS News*, June 8, 2017, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/guidestar-charity-website-flags-nonprofits-hate-groups/.

[11] Allen Mendenhall, "Turning the Tables on the SPLC," *Heritage Foundation*, Nov. 5, 2025, https://www.heritage.org/progressivism/commentary/turning-the-tables-the-splc.

poisoning the minds of children with their intolerance. And it is used to perpetuate and extend their cultural reach by laundering their blatantly biased agenda to silence the political and cultural opponents of the Left.

Who is listed on the SPLC's websites? Ordinary people and groups with unpopular opinions. They are characterized as "haters," "bigots," "Islamophobes," and "racists." Good people who have never professed racist or other hateful beliefs are lumped together with those who have. The SPLC attempts to paint the whole group with the same brush, but upon examination, this charade is easily seen through.

Who else is listed? Public figures with whom it has policy disagreements—Ayaan Hirsi Ali ("Anti-Muslim Extremist"), David Horowitz ("Anti-Muslim Extremist"), and Charlie Kirk.

Who else? Organizations with whom it has public policy disagreements—groups like Alliance Defending Freedom, Focus on the Family, Moms for Liberty, D. James Kennedy Ministries, and TPUSA.

Who isn't a "hate group"? Here are some not listed: known radical Islamist organizations or mosques; the Council on American Islamic Relations; Students for Justice in Palestine; radical, violent environmentalist groups; black nationalist groups; and ANTIFA (and related anarchist groups).

There are groups *not* listed on the SPLC's Hate Map that *have* been linked to violence: Jane's Revenge, Earth Liberation Front, John Brown Gun Club, and Forest Defenders. Why not put them on the "hate map?"

Renowned African American neurosurgeon and politician Ben Carson was placed on the SPLC's "extremist files" before being removed after immediate backlash. In the SPLC's own statement on its removal of Dr. Carson, what prompted it to review this classification was the "intense criticism" it came under, not the merit of the classification itself. Yet the SPLC could not let the matter rest. In discussing what it found "extreme" about Ben Carson, the first piece of evidence listed was Dr. Carson's words that "marriage is between a man and a woman."[12]

This should put to rest the idea that the SPLC is only interested in tracking truly violent and extreme groups. It is not; instead, it is interested in silencing their political opponents, one way or another.

The SPLC and Violence

In 50 years, the SPLC has become extremely adept at targeting its opponents with defamatory agitation propaganda. The "hate list" and "hate map" are designed to ostracize, shame, and dox.

[12] SPLC Statement on Dr. Ben Carson, https://www.splcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/files/d6_legacy_files/downloads/publication/splc-statement-carson.pdf.

They are designed to censor opposition speech and expression, and if necessary, to serve as a basis and justification to deploy "direct action" (a term of art for violence).

The SPLC and other groups in the left-wing ecosystem create an environment ripe for "stochastic terrorism," a form of terrorism in which influential public figures and media outlets use incendiary, but deniable, rhetoric to incite anonymous, ideologically aligned individuals to commit unpredictable and often violent acts.

The SPLC's targeting of its opponents has helped create an environment fueled by agitation-inducing propaganda leading to violence. The SPLC specializes in communicating via agitation propaganda, a method of manipulating emotions, which causes people to take action. The SPLC's messaging is meant to ostracize and demonize opponents, intimidate them into silent compliance, and if violence follows—in their minds—so be it.

This downstream violence has happened to others besides FRC. It is a feature, not a bug, of the messaging.

On June 14, 2017, GOP House Majority Leader Steve Scalise was shot and critically wounded by a politically agitated activist, Roy T. Hodgkinson, who had "liked" the SPLC on Facebook. Scalise was shot along with dozens of other Republican senators and House members at a baseball diamond in Alexandria, Virginia. He required multiple surgeries and almost died from his wounds, and hundreds of bullet fragments remain in his body. His shooter, Hodgkinson, was immersed in the online waters of agitation propaganda created by the SPLC and other leftist groups targeting conservatives and Trump supporters.

SPLC and TPUSA

The SPLC's role in producing the climate of hatred of social conservatives and the things they stand for is exhibited in its recent targeting of Turning Point USA, which was added to the SPLC "hate map" in May 2025. That same month, the SPLC released "The Year in Hate and Extremism 2024," to include a section called "Turning Point USA: A case study of the hard right in 2024." This report targeted Charlie Kirk and TPUSA. Tragically, later that same year, on September 10, 2025, Kirk was shot and killed.

The political Left has been only too happy to use the SPLC as its attack dog, hiding behind its agitation propaganda as it nudges the violence to occur under a blanket of plausible deniability. Well, what may have been plausible before is no longer. SPLC's pattern of silencing one way or another is like latent fingerprints at the scene of a crime.

The media, government agencies, and corporate entities must cease aiding and abetting the SPLC conspiracy to silence at any cost.

The SPLC's Affiliation with ANTIFA

Despite its attempt to frame its activity as academic and legitimate, the SPLC is instead bolstering vigilante anarcho-communists. Its affiliation with Megan Squire is one prominent example. Squire is a former professor at Elon University in North Carolina, who subsequently served as the SPLC's Deputy Director for Data Analytics and Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) from March 2022 to March 2025.[13] A data science researcher and expert in cyber security and database management, Squire shared her "intelligence" with ANTIFA cells and others.

ANTIFA is a militarist, anarchist enterprise that explicitly calls for the overthrow of the United States government, law enforcement authorities, and our system of law. It uses illegal means to organize and execute a campaign of violence and terrorism nationwide to accomplish these goals.

ANTIFA is only one part of a nefarious web of drug cartels, human traffickers, their financiers, associated non-governmental organizations, designated foreign terrorist organizations, and designated domestic terrorist organizations.

On September 22, 2025, President Trump designated ANTIFA a "domestic terror organization." Three days later, the president issued National Security Presidential Memorandum 7 (NSPM/7), titled "Countering Domestic Terrorism and Organized Political Violence."[14]

NSPM/7 recognized that "[t]his political violence is not a series of isolated incidents and does not emerge organically. Instead, it is a culmination of sophisticated, organized campaigns of targeted intimidation, radicalization, threats, and violence designed to silence opposing speech, limit political activity, change or direct policy outcomes, and prevent the functioning of a democratic society." Thus, "[a] new law enforcement strategy that investigates all participants in these criminal and terroristic conspiracies — including the organized structures, networks, entities, organizations, funding sources, and predicate actions behind them — is required."

It further recognized that "[t]hese campaigns often begin by **isolating and dehumanizing specific targets to justify murder or other violent action against them**. They do so through a variety of fora, including anonymous chat forums, in-person meetings, social media, and even educational institutions." After that, "[t]hese campaigns then escalate to organized doxing, where the private or identifying information of their targets (such as home addresses, phone numbers, or other personal information) is exposed to the public with the explicit intent of encouraging others to harass, intimidate, or violently assault them."

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[13] Doug Bock Clark, "Meet Antifa's Secret Weapon Against Far-Right Extremists," *WIRED*, Jan. 16, 2018, https://www.wired.com/story/free-speech-issue-antifa-data-mining/. In the article, Squire admitted that she had become a communist activist.

[14] Executive Order: Countering Domestic Terrorism and Organized Political Violence, Sept. 25, 2025, https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/09/countering-domestic-terrorism-and-organized-political-violence/.

Importantly, "[t]hese campaigns are coordinated and perpetrated by actors who have developed a comprehensive strategy to achieve specific policy goals **through radicalization and violent intimidation."**

The Way Ahead

We must also stop characterizing people in a way that dehumanizes them and sends the message that it is okay to attack or kill them.

The SPLC's refusal to acknowledge its role in contributing to the violence taking place in our nation does not change the fact that it is involved.

To that denial, I would say: Take down the hate map and associated posts. If their goal is to stop the hate and violence—then I would say: drop the gun—take down the list.

The cost of further incitement to violence far outweighs any cost in taking down their money-making list.

When groups are marginalized to the edges of society by being excluded from debate, it results in the disenfranchisement of those groups and the people they represent. This does not help heal division in our land; it exacerbates it.

Such legitimization *of marginalization* by both the government and media is a recipe for disaster.

You can be sure the energy, thoughts, feelings, and views of people being silenced will be channeled somewhere. Given the Bible's moral teachings, it is unlikely that Bible-believing Christians are going to resort to mass violence, but what about those who do not have a moral code? And not everyone walking under the banner of Christianity is following the Scripture's teachings.

Marginalization is not a recipe for healing our land. It is a recipe for further poisoning the well. We should seek to engage in dialogue, in public dialogue, in discussions—and yes, in disagreement—over how to move our nation forward. This "coming together" dialogue is the only way for our nation to survive.

We must also reflect on the fact that information like the SPLC's "hate map" not only fails to provide a constructive solution for the traumas our society is facing but also compounds and worsens them. Instead of offering Floyd Corkins a resource to help him heal his wounds, it offers him a supposedly legitimate justification for taking out his internal anger by trying to take the lives of those around him.

This cycle has been repeated, most recently in the death of Charlie Kirk.

Conclusion

This issue is not new. The topic of the SPLC's demonization of its opponents has been raised before Congress multiple times. Our organization has briefed government leaders on this issue numerous times.

The U.S. government should cease using the SPLC for any reason, and the media should stop referring to it as a supposedly neutral source of information. It is not neutral; rather, it seeks to marginalize and silence its political opponents.

Corporate leaders should cease aiding SPLC's agenda by using their lists, and the thousands of **public schools** SPLC claims are using their intolerant propaganda **should stop poisoning the minds of children**—parents should demand it.

Let me be clear. I support the SPLC's right to its opinions, as wrong as they may be. I am not going to create an un-American list and put SPLC's Alabama address on a map. I don't want anyone going by their office, unless it is to pray for them. Violence against our political opponents is not the answer for our country—now or at any time.

Near midnight on August 15, 2012, I stood in the hospital waiting for our wounded building manager Leo Johnson to emerge from a long and complicated surgery. When he did, I went into the recovery room to see him and pray with him. Then I asked Leo a question that had swirled in my mind all day: Why did you not shoot Corkins when you had taken his gun and had it trained on him as you were bleeding? Leo said, "Because God told me not to."

May we all exhibit such grace and obedience to the voice of God, who alone has the authority to give and take life. When we all understand that, then we will have a freer and more just society.

Follow-Up Submission for the Record
Tony Perkins
President, Family Research Council

Before the U.S. House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Gov't
"Partisan and Profitable: The SPLC's Influence on Federal Civil Rights Policy"

January 7, 2026

I would like to provide a response to certain assertions made during the hearing on December 19, 2025. The assertions focused on defending SPLC's supposed justification for placing FRC on the Hate Map, specifically concerning public policy positions we took in the time-period around 2010.

While the SPLC cites many public statements from FRC, the reasons the SPLC placed FRC on its Hate Map primarily concern claims regarding the link between homosexual behavior and child sexual abuse. To this day, the SPLC has only maligned FRC in its editorial opinion, and has not responded to the science and research supporting FRC's statements on this subject.

For example:

FRC claim: On November 29, 2010, I debated the SPLC's Mark Potok on Chris Mathews' MSNBC "Hardball" program about their designation of FRC as a "hate" group. In countering one of Potok's assertions, I cited a key academic journal article which found that "eighty-six percent of sexual offenders against [juvenile] males described themselves as homosexual or bisexual."[1]

The SPLC response: Mr. Potok did not respond to this scholarly evidence in our debate, and as far as I know, has yet to respond to it.

FRC claim: In that same debate, I also said: "If you look at the American College of Pediatricians, they say the research is overwhelming that homosexuality poses a risk to children." This accurately describes the position of the ACP, which has declared specifically, "There is significant risk of harm inherent in exposing a child to the homosexual lifestyle. . . . This position is rooted in the best available science."[2]

SPLC response: To our knowledge, the SPLC has never refuted the basis for the ACP's claim, but has only discussed the credibility of the ACP.

[1] W. D. Erickson, "Behavior Patterns of Child Molesters," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 17 (1988): 83.
[2] M. Cretella, M.D., *Homosexual Parenting: Is It Time for Change?* (American College of Pediatricians, April 13, 2009).

It is important to emphasize what FRC is not saying when we assert such a link. We are not saying that all homosexuals are child molesters, that most homosexuals are child molesters, or that most child sexual abuse is committed by homosexuals. However, there is evidence that the relative rate of child sexual abuse among the small population of homosexual men is far higher than it is among heterosexuals.

This assertion is based on facts that are not in serious dispute among researchers:

1. The vast majority of child sexual abuse is committed by men.[3]

2. A significant percentage of their victims are also male.[4]

This seems to indicate that homosexual men are more likely to engage in child sexual abuse than heterosexual men. However, some deny this conclusion, arguing that men who molest boys are not attracted to adult men or do not identify themselves as "gay."

Our position on issues related to homosexuality is grounded in our Christian faith, and is motivated by truth and love. It is never loving to compromise the truth, but we must always do all we can to communicate that we love and desire the best for the people to whom we speak the truth. We admit that we, like all human beings, are imperfect messengers, and fall short of the perfection and glory of God.

We do not desire harm to come to those with same-sex attractions—on the contrary, we desire them to have the best, longest, healthiest, and most fulfilling lives they can. We simply do not believe that choosing to engage in sexual relations with persons of the same sex can ever serve their best interests, or that of society at large, and we believe the evidence supports this view. We cannot affirm sexual behavior that is outside the boundaries of God's design.[5]

To the extent that we are critical, we are critical of a behavior—of what people may choose to do—not of them as persons. We see homosexuals not as people who are "born gay," but as people who, like all human beings, are created in the image of God, and are to be loved, cherished, cared for, and comforted.

Thank you.

***More information on this topic is available at: "Answering the Southern Poverty Law Center's Attacks Upon Family Research Council," https://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF12H46.pdf*

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[3] A report by the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children states: "In both clinical and non-clinical samples, the vast majority of offenders are male." John Briere, et al., eds., *The APSAC Handbook on Child Maltreatment* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 52, 53.

[4] A study of 457 male sex offenders against children in *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy* found that "approximately one-third of these sexual offenders directed their sexual activity against males." Kurt Freund, et al., "Pedophilia and Heterosexuality vs. Homosexuality," *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy* 10 (1984): 197.

[5] For more on God's design, in the context of the issue of gender identity, see: Embracing God's Design, https://embracethedesign.com/.