

**Testimony of Lecia Brooks
Southern Poverty Law Center
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Committee on Oversight and Reform
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Confronting White Supremacy (Part II): Adequacy of the Federal Response

My name is Lecia Brooks. I am a member of the senior leadership team at the Southern Poverty Law Center. We are a civil rights organization founded in 1971 and based in Montgomery, Alabama, with offices in five Southern states. For more than three decades, the SPLC has been monitoring, issuing reports about, and training law enforcement officials on far-right extremist activity in the United States. Each year since 1990, we have conducted a census of hate groups operating across America, a list that is used extensively by journalists, law enforcement agencies and scholars, among others.

I would like to make three main points.

First, we are witnessing a surging white nationalist movement in the United States that is part of a larger, global movement linked by the idea that white people are being displaced, in part by migrants, in countries they believe should belong to them. This extremist movement represents a global terrorist threat and should be treated as such, though there is no such focus by our international intelligence agencies.¹ Unfortunately, the words and actions of our president have energized and emboldened the white nationalist movement in the United States.

Second, this movement is rooted in a toxic, anti-democratic white supremacist ideology that is metastasizing on social media networks and other websites that traffic in hate. These networks are not only radicalizing people but are, in effect, incubating new terrorists – typically young white men who are motivated to act by what they call “white genocide.”

Third, the federal government has for many years, and particularly under the current administration, neglected to commit the resources needed to adequately combat this threat.

The White Nationalist Movement Represents a Global Terrorism Threat and Has Been Energized, Emboldened in the United States by the Current Administration

On March 15 of this year, President Trump reacted to the massacre of 50 Muslim worshipers at two mosques that same day in Christchurch, New Zealand, by a white supremacist terrorist who livestreamed one of the attacks on Facebook. On the killer’s weapon was written the white supremacist slogan known as the 14 words – “We must secure the existence of our

¹ Jenna McLaughlin, “The U.S. government’s counterterrorism center doesn’t track white supremacists. Some think it should,” *Yahoo News*, March 30, 2019, at <https://news.yahoo.com/the-us-governments-counterterrorism-center-doesnt-track-white-supremacists-some-think-it-should-172820264.html>.

people and a future for white children” – and coined by the infamous neo-Nazi terrorist David Lane. The Christchurch killer also left a manifesto that bore the unmistakable fingerprints of the so-called alt-right, both in tone and reference. It celebrated the Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik as well Charleston terrorist Dylann Roof. It spoke of “invaders” who “replace” white people – the same kind of language used by Roof and other white supremacist terrorists.

When asked after the Christchurch massacre if he believed white nationalists were a growing threat, the president said, “I don’t really. I think it’s a small group of people that have very, very serious problems. It’s certainly a terrible thing.”²

The president is wrong to dismiss the significant threat of violence represented by this movement. In fact, as we have seen in recent months, one terrorist inspires another to act.

On April 27, five weeks after Christchurch, a gunman walked into the Chabad of Poway synagogue in California and opened fire. A 60-year-old woman observing Passover was killed. Many more might have been slaughtered if the gunman’s assault rifle had not jammed. The man accused of the murder, John Earnest, posted an “open letter” littered with the same racist and antisemitic tropes that other white nationalist terrorists wrote before him. He praised Brenton Tarrant, the man charged in Christchurch, writing that Tarrant “was a catalyst” for him. “He showed me that it could be done. It needed to be done.”³

The Poway shooting occurred exactly six months after 11 Jews were massacred at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh by a man who reportedly shouted “All Jews need to die” before he opened fire.

The “small group of people” that President Trump referenced has now spawned the likes of Dylann Roof, killer of nine African-American worshipers in Charleston; Anders Breivik, killer of 77 people in Norway; Robert Bowers, the accused Pittsburgh shooter; Wade Michael Page, murderer of six Sikhs at a Wisconsin temple; and James Alex Fields, killer of anti-racist protester Heather Heyer in Charlottesville, Virginia. Many other white nationalists in recent years – far too many to list – have also committed hate-inspired violence or been arrested before they could launch terror attacks.

According to the SPLC’s analysis, at least 81 people in the United States and Canada have been killed in attacks committed by extremists linked to the white supremacist movement – or alt-right – since 2014. All of the 17 men responsible for these attacks were radicalized online.⁴

² Colby Itkowitz, “Trump says white nationalism is not a rising threat after New Zealand attacks: ‘It’s a small group of people,’” *The Washington Post*, March 25, 2019, at https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-offers-us-assistance-after-horrible-massacre-in-new-zealand/2019/03/15/931833d2-4712-11e9-aaf8-4512a6fe3439_story.html?utm_term=.24c80ecba2b9.

³ Ebony Bowden, “Synagogue shooting suspect’s parents say son is part of ‘history of evil,’” *New York Post*, April 29, 2019, at <https://nypost.com/2019/04/29/synagogue-shooting-suspects-parents-say-son-is-part-of-history-of-evil/>.

⁴ Bill Morlin, “On Our Radar: Violence and the Movement,” *Intelligence Report*, Southern Poverty Law Center, February 20, 2019, at <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2019/our-radar-violence-and-movement>.

In our view, the most important factor driving this movement and its violence is the fear and resentment over the nation's changing demographics. The U.S. Census has projected that sometime in the 2040s white people will no longer be a majority in the United States.

This nativist fear is not new. We began to see sharp increases in the number of U.S.-based hate groups around the turn of the century, following a decade in which the unauthorized immigrant population doubled, rising from 3.5 million to 7 million.⁵

In 1999, we counted 457 hate groups. That number more than doubled – to 1,018 – by 2011, two years into the Obama administration. But, after that peak, the number began to decline steadily, to a low 784 by 2014.

Then Donald Trump began his campaign for president with a speech at Trump Tower in which he claimed that immigrants from Mexico were bringing drugs and crime, and were “rapists.”⁶ Since that day, he has continued to use dehumanizing language to refer to immigrants from Mexico and Central America. He has vilified them “criminals,” “animals,” and “bad hombres” who “infest our country.”⁷ He has claimed that immigrant gang members “take a young, beautiful girl, 16, 15 and others and they slice them and dice them with a knife because they want them to go through excruciating pain before they die.”⁸ Along the border, he has claimed without any evidence at all, “[w]omen are tied up, with duct tape on their faces, put in the backs of vans.”⁹

White nationalists were electrified by Trump's campaign.

Eleven days after Trump's election, white nationalist leader Richard Spencer spoke to a conference of the alt-right in the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C., just blocks from the White House. He told his audience that “America was until this past generation a white country designed for ourselves and our posterity.” He added, “It is our creation. It is our inheritance. And it belongs to us.” Spencer punctuated his speech with these words: “Hail Trump! Hail our people! Hail victory!” Members of the audience stood and gave Spencer the Nazi salute.¹⁰

⁵ Marc R Rosenblum and Ariel G. Ruiz Soto. August 2015. “An Analysis of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States by County and Region of Birth,” Migration Policy Institute, at <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/analysis-unauthorized-immigrants-united-states-country-and-region-birth>.

⁶ “Here's Donald Trump's Presidential Announcement Speech,” *TIME*, June 16, 2015, at <http://time.com/3923128/donald-trump-announcement-speech/>.

⁷ Sarah Jones, “Why Tyrants Dehumanize the Powerless,” *The New Republic*, June 20, 2018, at <https://newrepublic.com/article/149232/tyrants-dehumanize-powerless>.

⁸ Graham Lanktree, “Trump Says Immigrant Gang Members ‘Slice and Dice’ Young, Beautiful Girls,” *Newsweek*, July 26, 2017, at <https://www.newsweek.com/trump-says-immigrant-gang-members-slice-and-dice-young-beautiful-girls-642046>.

⁹ Quinn Owen and Matt Gutman, “Fact Check: No evidence for Trump's tales of duct-taped women, prayer rugs at border,” *ABC News*, January 30, 2019, at <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/fact-check-trumps-ales-duct-taped-women-prayer/story?id=60723806>.

¹⁰ Daniel Lombroso and Yoni Appelbaum, “‘Hail Trump!’: White Nationalists Salute the President-Elect,” *The Atlantic*, November 21, 2016, at <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/11/richard-spencer-speech-npi/508379/>.

It was a stunning moment, one that not only propelled Spencer into the national limelight but foreshadowed the white nationalist movement's surging growth.

Our latest count shows that hate groups operating across America rose to a record high in 2018. It was the fourth consecutive year of growth – a cumulative 30 percent increase that coincides roughly with Trump's campaign and presidency – following three straight years of declines.¹¹ We also found that white nationalist groups in 2018 rose by almost 50 percent – from 100 to 148 – over the previous year.¹²

Racist and antisemitic violence has followed the same escalating pattern. FBI statistics show that hate crimes increased by 30 percent in the three-year period ending in 2017 (the FBI has not released figures for 2018).¹³ This increase followed a three-year period in which hate crime incidents fell by about 12 percent.

Since the campaign, Trump has continued to energize the white nationalist movement through both his words and his policies. For example, he famously insisted there were “very fine people” among the hundreds of neo-Nazis and other white supremacists who marched in the streets of Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017, shouting slogans like “Jews will not replace us.”¹⁴ In 2018, he called Haiti and majority-black countries in Africa “shithole countries.”¹⁵ He has also implemented draconian policies at the U.S.-Mexico border, separating migrant children from their families, imprisoning tens of thousands of immigrants, and virtually shutting down the asylum system.

In some cases, violent acts by extremists appear to have been motivated by Trump's words or by support for him. In March, Cesar Sayoc, a Trump supporter, pleaded guilty to charges related to a mail bomb campaign in which he sent 16 devices to Democratic politicians, media figures, and other prominent critics of the president last October, just before the midterm elections.¹⁶ At the time, Trump was raging about the so-called caravan that was bringing an “invasion” of migrants to the United States. Sayoc's targets included George Soros, a Jewish billionaire who funds progressive causes. Soros was the subject of a false alt-right conspiracy theory – spread on social media and even parroted by mainstream politicians – that claimed he

¹¹ “The Year in Hate: Rage Against Change,” *Intelligence Report*, Southern Poverty Law Center, February 20, 2019, at <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2019/year-hate-rage-against-change>.

¹² In a clear reaction to President Trump's words and policies, black nationalist groups have also expanded their ranks, growing from 233 chapters in 2017 to 264 in 2018. These groups are typically antisemitic, anti-white, and anti-LGBT. Unlike white nationalist groups, however, they have virtually no influence in mainstream politics.

¹³ “2017 Hate Crime Statistics,” FBI, at <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017>.

¹⁴ Ashley Parker, “How Trump has attempted to recast his response to Charlottesville,” *The Washington Post*, May 7, 2019, at https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/how-trump-has-attempted-to-recast-his-response-to-charlottesville/2019/05/06/8c4b7fc2-6b80-11e9-a66d-a82d3f3d96d5_story.html?utm_term=.4d386b48cd27.

¹⁵ Eli Watkins and Abby Phillip, “Trump decries immigrants from ‘shithole countries’ coming to US,” *CNN*, January 12, 2018, at <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/11/politics/immigrants-shithole-countries-trump/index.html>.

¹⁶ Benjamin Weiser, “Trump Supporter Sobs as He Describes Mailing Bombs to Obama, Clinton and Other Democrats,” *The New York Times*, March 21, 2019, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/21/nyregion/cesar-sayoc-trump-mail-bomber.html>.

was orchestrating and funding the caravan.¹⁷ The theory dovetailed with white nationalist notions that Jews, more generally, are working to facilitate immigration.

Similarly, a study released in March 2018 found that President Trump's tweets on Islam-related subjects were highly correlated with anti-Muslim hate crimes and that a rise in anti-Muslim hate crime since Trump's campaign was concentrated in counties with a high Twitter usage.¹⁸

White Supremacist Terrorists Are Being Incubated on Both Extremist and Mainstream Social Media Sites

Trump has undoubtedly energized the white nationalist movement. But nothing has helped facilitate the process of far-right radicalization like the internet. Long before Trump entered office, white supremacists around the world began constructing a robust, online ecosystem that indoctrinates people – especially young white men – into the world of hate. The dramatic rise in white nationalist hate groups and white supremacist killers in recent years is a testament to its effectiveness. Indeed, in the manifesto he posted online prior to murdering 50 Muslim worshippers in Christchurch, the killer posed a question to himself: “From where did you receive/research/develop your beliefs?” He answered thusly: “The internet, of course. You will not find the truth anywhere else.”

The Christchurch killer's online radicalization narrative is now a terrifyingly common one. Before the days of the internet, far-right extremists typically had to publish and disseminate propaganda in printed form. Most Americans were simply never exposed to this material. Now, white nationalists overwhelmingly develop their views by coming into contact with extremist content online – either on social media or other sites that are fine-tuned to encourage young men to blame their real and perceived grievances on racial and religious minorities, immigrants, women, and others.

We've seen numerous examples of men who were radicalized online and went on to commit acts of terrorism.

Dylann Roof became convinced that black people pose a tremendous threat of violence to white people after he typed “black on white crime” into Google's search engine and found himself on the website of the Council of Conservative Citizens, a white nationalist hate group that has called black people “a retrograde species of humanity.” Robert Bowers' antisemitic beliefs were reinforced on Gab, a social media site crawling with references to “white genocide” and posts encouraging others to commit acts of violence against Jews. In his manifesto, John Earnest referred to his fellow users on the white-supremacist friendly forums 4chan and 8chan as his “brothers” before encouraging them to commit attacks of their own.

¹⁷ Brad Heath, Matt Wynn and Jessica Guynn, “How a lie about George Soros and the migrant caravan multiplied online,” *USA Today*, October 31, 2018, at <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/nation/2018/10/31/george-soros-and-migrant-caravan-how-lie-multiplied-online/1824633002/>.

¹⁸ Karsten Müller and Carlo Schwarz, “Making America Hate Again? Twitter and Hate Crime Under Trump,” March 30, 2018, available at SSRN: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3149103.

White supremacists hoping to disseminate their propaganda have been helped immeasurably by social media companies that are, in some cases, unwilling to moderate hateful or extremist content. Twitter, for example, allows some of the most prominent leaders of the white nationalist movement – including David Duke and Richard Spencer – to maintain accounts. YouTube is one of the most efficient radicalizing forces on the internet, one that white nationalists frequently credit with first introducing them to ethnonationalist ideas. Its algorithm serves up increasingly extreme content to users, because it keeps them on the site longer and, in turn, increases the company’s ad revenue. YouTube is, in other words, profiting off of far-right radicalization.

When tech companies do decide to act against hate, it is often only after a violent attack has occurred. They need to proactively address the problem of extremist content on their platforms rather than simply react after people have been killed.

Most people who associate with the white nationalist movement do not belong to a formal hate group but act as part of loosely organized communities of extremists who congregate around online propaganda hubs. The neo-Nazi website Daily Stormer, for instance, has cultivated a massive following of readers who daily consume content that tells them that the Holocaust was a hoax, that Jews are committing a genocide against white people, and that there is an impending race war in the United States. The site often presents this content under layers of humor that are designed to desensitize readers to grossly racist content and ease them into the world of hate. This is part of its strategy to recruit impressionable young people. Andrew Anglin, who runs the Daily Stormer, has said that his site is “mainly designed to target children.”¹⁹

Social media and sites like the Daily Stormer have helped to cultivate an enormous online white nationalist movement – one that is now actively embracing violence as a solution to “white genocide.” Though many extremists see Trump as a fellow traveler – or even as a champion of their movement – they are frustrated with the pace of political change and, therefore, increasingly believe that they can bring about their ethnonationalist vision only through acts of violence.

Violent attacks by far-right extremists are growing in frequency and becoming more deadly. In a recent report, the Anti-Defamation League found that domestic extremists killed 50 people in 2018 – up from 37 in 2017 – and that “every single extremist killing – from Pittsburgh to Parkland – had a link to right-wing extremism.”²⁰ Violence in the name of white supremacy encourages others to carry out similar attacks. A recent analysis by *The New York Times* showed that “at least a third of white extremist killers since 2011 were inspired by others who perpetrated similar attacks, professed a reverence for them or showed an interest in their tactics.”²¹

¹⁹ “Andrew Anglin brags about “indoctrinating” children into Nazi ideology,” Hatewatch, January 18, 2018, at <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/01/18/andrew-anglin-brags-about-indoctrinating-children-nazi-ideology>.

²⁰ “Murder and Extremism in the United States in 2018,” ADL Center on Extremism, January 2019, at <https://www.adl.org/murder-and-extremism-2018>.

²¹ Weiyi Cai and Simone Landon, “Attacks by White Extremists Are Growing. So Are Their Connections,” *The New York Times*, April 3, 2019, at <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/04/03/world/white-extremist-terrorism-christchurch.html>.

There are entire online spaces – including the forum Fascist Forge, threads on the social media sites Gab and Telegram, and podcasts on the site Radio Wehrwolf, among many others – that exist solely to provide training and advice about how to carry out acts of violence; to disseminate polemical texts that promote racial terrorism; to encourage followers to commit their own violent attacks; and to venerate those who have carried out acts of domestic terrorism in the name of white supremacy.²² These online spaces are incubating future terrorists.

Many adherents to white nationalist ideology look upon white supremacist mass killers with a degree of religious reverence; it is not difficult to find images on social media of men like Roof, Bowers, and Earnest depicted as saints. Until the SPLC recently brought to the attention of the website Teespring, T-shirts and mugs with the images of six white supremacist killers under the words “Praise the Saints” were available for purchase on the site.²³ Men who commit acts of terrorism in the name of white supremacy are, in effect, promised they will be canonized within the movement.

These websites are not only radicalizing potential terrorists, they are injecting toxic white supremacist ideology and other extremist ideas into the mainstream. A Twitter employee who works on machine learning told *Vice* recently that Twitter has not taken an aggressive approach to removing white supremacist content from its platform because any algorithm it would use to identify objectionable content would also flag the accounts of some Republican politicians. “Banning politicians wouldn’t be accepted by society as a trade-off for flagging all of the white supremacist propaganda, he argued.”²⁴ The president himself has retweeted content that originated in white nationalist networks, such as in August 2018 when he tweeted about the “large-scale killing” of white farmers in South Africa.²⁵ He also has praised the reputation of far-right, internet conspiracy theorist Alex Jones as “amazing.”²⁶ Jones is a man who has claimed that the Sandy Hook massacre of schoolchildren was a hoax and that Hillary Clinton “has personally murdered and chopped up and raped children.”²⁷

²² “Atomwaffen and the SIEGE parallax: how one neo-Nazi’s life’s work is fueling a younger generation,” Hatewatch, February 22, 2018, at <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2018/02/22/atomwaffen-and-siege-parallax-how-one-neo-nazi%E2%80%99s-life%E2%80%99s-work-fueling-younger-generation>.

²³ Michael Edison Hayden (@MichaelEHayden), Twitter (May 29, 2019, 2:12 PM), at <https://twitter.com/MichaelEHayden/status/1133843617410424834>.

²⁴ Joseph Cox and Jason Koebler, “Why Won’t Twitter Treat White Supremacy Like ISIS? Because It Would Mean Banning Some Republican Politicians Too,” *Vice*, April 25, 2019, at https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/a3xgq5/why-wont-twitter-treat-white-supremacy-like-isis-because-it-would-mean-banning-some-republican-politicians-too.

²⁵ Julie Hirschfeld Davis and Norimitsu Onishi, “Trump’s South Africa Tweet Seems to Embrace Racist Narrative on Land Dispute,” *The New York Times*, August 23, 2018, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/23/us/politics/trump-south-africa-land.html>.

²⁶ Eric Bradner, “Trump praises 9/11 truther’s ‘amazing’ reputation,” *CNN*, December 2, 2015, at <https://www.cnn.com/2015/12/02/politics/donald-trump-praises-9-11-truther-alex-jones/index.html>.

²⁷ Right Wing Watch (@RightWingWatch), Facebook (December 8, 2016) at <https://www.facebook.com/rightwingwatch/posts/alex-jones-says-hillary-clinton-has-personally-murdered-and-chopped-up-and-raped/10154308659011748/>.

The Federal Government Has Long Failed to Devote the Resources Needed to Combat the Threat of the White Nationalist Movement

Following the violence at the white supremacist “Unite the Right” rally on the weekend of Aug 11-12, 2017, in Charlottesville, Virginia – which left an anti-racist counter-demonstrator dead and more than 30 people injured – Congress unanimously passed a joint resolution urging the Trump administration to “use all available resources” to address the threat from groups that espouse white supremacy. The resolution further called on the attorney general and other federal agencies to vigorously prosecute criminal acts by white supremacists and to improve the collection and reporting of hate crimes.²⁸

Today, nearly two years after Charlottesville, it is unclear how – or if – the federal government is responding to this ongoing threat.

Clearly, little or nothing has been accomplished to improve the collection and reporting of hate crimes. (The Justice Department acknowledges that hate crimes are vastly underreported. Its Bureau of Justice Statistics estimates that there are as many as 250,000 hate crimes in our country each year.²⁹ Yet, in its 2017 report, the FBI counted just 7,175 hate crime incidents.³⁰)

In terms of addressing white supremacist terror, we know very little about what this administration is doing or whether it is taking any steps whatsoever to counter the threat.

What we do know is that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recently disbanded a group of intelligence analysts who focused on the threat of domestic terrorism. As part of the department’s Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), these analysts shared information about possible domestic terror threats with state and local officials to help protect communities.³¹ One DHS official told the *Daily Beast* for an April 2 report: “We’ve noticed I&A has significantly reduced their production on homegrown violent extremism and domestic terrorism while those remain among the most serious terrorism threats to the homeland.”³²

There are other causes for concern. In 2017, six months into the president’s term, the FBI’s Domestic Terrorism Analysis Unit, part of the bureau’s Counterterrorism Division, warned of the rise of a “black identity movement.”³³ The report was issued to law enforcement agencies across the country just a week before the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville. The reality is that no such movement exists. Federal law enforcement agencies also have shown a pattern of

²⁸ S.J. Res 49, 115th Cong. (2017) (enacted).

²⁹ Lynn Langton, “Hate Crime Victimization, 2004-2015,” Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, June 29, 2017, at <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=5967>.

³⁰ “2016 Hate Crime Statistics,” FBI, at <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016/topic-pages/incidentsandoffenses>.

³¹ Betsy Woodruff, “Homeland Security Disbands Domestic Terror Intelligence Unit,” *Daily Beast*, April 2, 2019, at <https://www.thedailybeast.com/homeland-security-disbands-domestic-terror-intelligence-unit>.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Alice Speri, “Fear of a Black Homeland,” *The Intercept*, March 23, 2019, at <https://theintercept.com/2019/03/23/black-identity-extremist-fbi-domestic-terrorism/>.

viewing anti-fascist protesters as just as problematic as the deadly white supremacist movement.³⁴

The federal government, in fact, has a long history of neglecting the threat of non-Islamic terrorism – particularly since 9/11

Following the deadly Oklahoma City bombing by domestic terrorist Timothy McVeigh in 1995, then-Attorney General Reno formed a special task force, the Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee, to coordinate the country’s response to domestic terrorism. But after 9/11, when the nation turned its attention to foreign groups like Al Qaeda, the task force did not meet again for 13 years.

At times, partisan politics also appears to have played a role in the government’s neglect of domestic terrorism. In April 2009, a DHS intelligence assessment intended for law enforcement, entitled *Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment*, was leaked to the news media.³⁵ Despite the report’s accuracy, then-DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano withdrew it following an outcry by those who claimed the report portrayed conservatives as potential domestic terrorists. In addition, the unit responsible for the report was allowed to wither. *The Washington Post* reported that DHS “cut the number of personnel studying domestic terrorism unrelated to Islam, canceled numerous state and local law enforcement briefings, and held up dissemination of nearly a dozen reports on extremist groups.”³⁶

Daryl Johnson, the former DHS senior domestic terrorism analyst who was the principal author of the 2009 report, later stated, “through reckless neglect at nearly all levels of government, domestic terrorism not tied to Islam has become a cancer with no diagnosis or plan to address it.” There are, he said, hundreds of government analysts looking for threats associated with radical forms of Islam but “mere dozens” monitoring other forms of potential threats.³⁷

In subsequent years, we did see renewed attention to the threat of domestic terrorism. In 2014, after white supremacist Frazier Glenn Miller killed three people he thought were Jewish in Overland Park, Kansas, Attorney General Holder reconstituted the domestic terrorism task force that Attorney General Reno originally established after the Oklahoma City bombing. The following year, Attorney General Lynch created a new position, the Domestic Terrorism Counsel within the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department’s National Security Division, to better address domestic terrorism issues.

³⁴ Josh Meyer, “FBI, Homeland Security warn of more ‘antifa’ attacks,” *Politico*, September 1, 2017, at <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/09/01/antifa-charlottesville-violence-fbi-242235>.

³⁵ Southern Poverty Law Center, pdf at http://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/downloads/resource/DOJ_rwextremism2009.pdf.

³⁶ “Homeland Security Department Curtails Home-Grown Terror Analysis,” *The Washington Post*, June 7, 2011, at http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/homeland-security-department-curtails-home-grown-terror-analysis/2011/06/02/AGOEaDLH_story.html.

³⁷ “For Domestic Hate, Apply the Vigor and Strategy Used for Muslim Terror,” Daryl Johnson, *The New York Times*, June 24, 2015, at <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2015/06/24/charleston-and-the-threat-of-homegrown-hate-groups/for-domestic-hate-apply-the-vigor-and-strategy-used-for-muslim-terror>.

I do not want to leave the impression that federal law enforcement agencies across the board have not taken domestic terrorism seriously. To be clear, the FBI and its joint terrorism task forces have thwarted numerous white supremacist terror plots in recent years. In February, for example, the FBI arrested U.S. Coast Guard Lt. Christopher Hasson, a self-avowed white nationalist who worked at the Coast Guard's headquarters in Washington, D.C., on charges related to what authorities said was a terrorist plot to attack politicians and journalists.³⁸ In Kansas, three men who called themselves "the Crusaders" were convicted in April 2018 for plotting to blow up an apartment complex where Somali refugees lived.³⁹ There are many other examples. (Indeed, the numerous examples of these plots reinforce the danger of this movement.)

But, there has not been the kind of sustained, coordinated focus at the highest levels to fight this growing threat. Since 9/11, our country has spent hundreds of billions of dollars to fight groups like Al Qaeda and ISIS. Comparatively, very little has been spent on domestic terrorism. Yet, since President Trump took office, there has not been a single death in the United States attributed to an attack by Islamist extremists, while dozens have been killed by homegrown extremists.

Congress Must Act to Combat White Nationalism and Racist Violence

To battle this metastasizing threat, Congress must act.

The SPLC is on record supporting several bills that are currently being proposed. We support the bill being put forward by Rep. Benne Thompson, tentatively called the Domestic Terrorism Data Act, which would help to determine what resources are actually being applied to this threat and would improve interagency coordination.

We also support the NO HATE Act, which would help to better collect information on hate crimes, which in many cases – such as the attacks on the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston and the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh – are just a form of domestic terrorism.

It is also long past time that lynching become a federal crime, a bill for which was already passed by the Senate in 2018.

Finally, in order to help communities deal with the impact of hate-inspired violence, we urge Congress to fully fund the Community Relations Service within the Justice Department. The administration's proposed 2020 budget recommends that the program, which cost just \$15.5 million in 2019, be eliminated.

Thank you.

³⁸ Justin Jovenal and Lynh Bui, "Coast Guard officer accused of terror plot remains in custody, but judge will consider terms of a release," *The Washington Post*, April 25, 2019, at https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/coast-guard-officer-accused-of-terror-plot-remains-in-custody-but-judge-will-consider-terms-of-a-release/2019/04/25/78a04a20-66c1-11e9-a1b6-b29b90efa879_story.html?utm_term=.7ca98c72dcf3.

³⁹ Mitch Smith, "Kansas Trio Convicted in Plot to Bomb Somali Immigrants," *The New York Times*, April 18, 2018, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/18/us/kansas-militia-somali-trial-verdict.html>.