

**“MOSTLY PEACEFUL”: COUNTERING LEFT-WING
ORGANIZED VIOLENCE**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT, INVESTIGATIONS,
AND ACCOUNTABILITY
OF THE
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“MOSTLY PEACEFUL”: COUNTERING LEFT-WING ORGANIZED VIOLENCE

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT, INVESTIGATIONS,
AND ACCOUNTABILITY,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:21 p.m., at Room 310, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Dan Bishop [Chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Bishop, Greene, Ezell, Strong, Crane, Ivey, Thanedar, Ramirez, and Clarke.

Also present: Representatives Thompson, Pfluger, and Goldman.

Chairman BISHOP. The Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability will come to order.

Without objection, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Pfluger, will be permitted to sit with the committee and to ask questions of witnesses.

Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare the committee in recess at any point.

Today's hearing will examine the impact of the left-wing violence that is plaguing American communities and highlight how the Department of Homeland Security has the ability to do more to support State and local law enforcement to combat interstate threats such as left-wing violence.

I now recognize Ranking Member Ivey for the purposes of seeking unanimous consent.

Mr. IVEY. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Before I begin, I ask unanimous consent that Representative Goldman be permitted to sit with the committee and question today's witnesses.

Chairman BISHOP. Without objection, so ordered.

I now recognize myself for an opening statement.

Good afternoon, and welcome to this subcommittee hearing titled “Mostly Peaceful: Countering Left-Wing Organized Violence”. Today's hearing will examine the threat of organized left-wing violence and how the Federal Government, and the Department of Homeland Security in particular, can best help State and local law enforcement understand, anticipate, prepare for, and respond to these threats.

Peaceful protests, robust debate, and civil dialog are all essential to our democratic society. The subcommittee just reaffirmed that

principle in a hearing inquiring into the Department of Homeland Security's troubling and dangerous venture into censorship of American's on-line expression, which some astute observers have termed the "censorship laundering enterprise". However, another threat to free expression is the contemporaneous phenomenon of more and more left-wing violence, organized violence, that appears designed to corrupt and suppress open debate as well.

Time and again across the Nation Americans have seen both episodic and in some cases sustained violence against people, especially law enforcement, and property damage from so-called Antifascist and anarchist groups. But it often seems that of this the Federal Government takes little notice. I anticipate that my Democrat colleagues will reply with the official line from all the security agencies that right-wing extremism represents the most lethal terroristic threat to the homeland. Certainly, that issue has received no lack of official attention. But this is not about grading extremism. Violence in public discourse is always unacceptable, no matter the ideology behind it. But mention left-wing violence and the prevarications begin. Some will claim that it is not that big a deal or that Antifa is a myth. We all remember State-aligned media's fervent effort to label fiery, violent rioting as, "mostly peaceful".

Well, it is time that Congress take a closer look at what "mostly peaceful" looks like.

Here is one of our witnesses, former collegiate swimmer who found herself on the wrong end of a mob when she appeared at San Francisco State University last month to speak her mind about the state of women's sports. She was barricaded in a room for her own personal protection for several hours before finally being able to leave. Take a look at the mob Riley Gaines encountered.

[Video shown.]

Chairman BISHOP. Our colleges and universities, once the symbol of free and open debate in our country, are increasingly scenes of violent intimidation by left-wing extremists to silence those with whom they disagree.

In another recent incident, left-wing agitators at Stanford Law School disrupted a student organized lecture from a Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Protesters shouted him down and refused to let him deliver his speech. Then the university DEI administrator who appeared didn't act to establish order and contain the heckling. Instead, she took the podium to deliver prepared remarks praising the disruptive intimidation and suggesting that Stanford re-think its commitment to free speech. The Judge eventually had to be escorted out by Federal Marshals.

But it is not just colleges and universities. In 2020, the American people watched as riots raged, causing an estimated \$2 billion in damage and chaos across our country. Minneapolis, Kenosha, other such places, we saw courthouses and police facilities in Portland and Seattle, and even the very notion of government control, targeted with months of sustained violence. Any notion that this was a phenomenon limited to a specific time or region gave way more recently to the spectre of left-wing activists carrying out a sustained, violent campaign against a public safety training center under development in Atlanta. The agitators, several of whom were

arrested on terrorism charges, attacked law enforcement with rocks, bricks, Molotov cocktails, and commercial-grade fireworks. This is not what peaceful protest looks like.

It is past time to recognize that these are not random or spontaneous outbursts of violence, far from it. Self-styled Antifascist and anarchist groups often exploit bona fide causes deliberately to organize and deploy street violence for political ends. They use sophisticated tactics to assault law enforcement officers, destroy property, and spread fear and disorder. They travel across the country to targeted locations to unleash their destructive rage. For example, 21 of the 23 people arrested in the Atlanta attack came from outside the State of Georgia. Just two were locals, including a lawyer employed by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

These groups are sophisticated, they are well-trained and -financed, they have extensive logistical support, and they are extremely clever in masking their activities. According to the FBI, groups like Antifa avoid traditional hierarchies and leadership structures. They prefer small cell activities tailored to specific events. Some use the opaque nature of groups like Antifa to excuse or to claim that Antifa is “a false issue” or a myth. But the law enforcement personnel and journalists on the ground, including our witnesses, know that the threat is real. The opaque and diffuse nature of groups like Antifa mean that local law enforcement often lack the insights they need to prepare for and counter destructive activities.

Unfortunately, it is not clear that the Department of Homeland Security is always engaging in the level of information sharing and coordination sufficient to address this threat. Part of the Department’s mission, after all, is to share timely and actionable information to enable State and local partners to keep their communities safe. The question is, does the Department sufficiently share analyses and collect lessons learned from prior instance of organized left-wing violence with State and local partners? After all, you cannot address a threat you decline to define or acknowledge.

So today’s hearing is not about whether left- or right-wing extremism is worse, they are different problems requiring different strategies. It is well past time we recognize organized left-wing violence for the threat that it is.

Earlier today, two other subcommittees on the Homeland Security Committee held a hearing about Federal efforts to support State and local law enforcement. As we celebrate National Police Week, we on the committee are reminded of the importance of these Federal and local partnerships.

This afternoon we are fortunate to have Scott Erickson, a former police officer, former high-ranking Homeland Security official, share with us his testimony on the tools and information local law enforcement needs from the Federal Government to help secure our communities. Americans like our witness today, Riley Gaines, who has the right to speak her mind, and Julio Rosas, who has the right to report the news, deserve no less than to exercise their Constitutional rights without constant fear of being violently attacked for doing so.

[The statement of Chairman Bishop follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN DAN BISHOP

MAY 16, 2023

Good afternoon and welcome to the Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability's hearing titled, "‘Mostly Peaceful’: Countering Left-Wing Organized Violence."

Today's hearing will examine the threat of organized left-wing violence and how the Federal Government, and the Department of Homeland Security in particular, can best help State and local law enforcement understand, anticipate, prepare for, and respond to these threats.

Peaceful protests, robust debate, and civil dialog are all essential to our democratic society. The subcommittee just reaffirmed that principle in a hearing inquiring into the Department of Homeland Security's troubling and dangerous venture into censorship of Americans' on-line expression, which some astute observers have termed the Censorship Laundering Enterprise. However, another threat to free expression is the contemporaneous phenomenon of more and more left-wing, organized violence that likewise appears designed to co-opt and suppress open debate. Time and again, across the Nation, Americans have seen both episodic and in some cases sustained violence against people, especially law enforcement, and property damage from so-called anti-fascist and anarchist groups. But it often seems that, of this, the Federal Government takes little notice.

I anticipate that my Democratic colleagues will reply with the official line from all the security agencies that right-wing extremism represents the most lethal, terrorist threat to the homeland. Certainly, that issue has received no lack of official attention. But, this is not about grading extremism. Violence in public discourse is always unacceptable—no matter the ideology behind it.

But, mention left-wing violence and the prevarications begin: Some will claim that it's not that big of a deal, or that Antifa is a myth. And we all remember state-aligned media's fervent effort to label fiery, violent rioting as quote—"mostly peaceful."

Well, it's time that Congress takes a closer look at what "mostly peaceful" looks like. Here's one of our witnesses, a former collegiate swimmer who found herself on the wrong end of a mob when she appeared at San Francisco State University last month to speak her mind about the state of women's sports. She was barricaded in a room for several hours before finally being able to leave.

Take a look at the mob Ms. Gaines encountered.

Our colleges and universities—once the symbol of free and open debate—are increasingly scenes of violent intimidation by left-wing extremists to silence those with whom they disagree.

In another recent incident, left-wing agitators at Stanford Law School disrupted a student-organized lecture from a judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Protesters shouted him down and refused to let him deliver his speech. Then the University DEI administrator who appeared didn't act to establish order and contain the heckling; instead she took the podium to deliver prepared remarks praising the disruptive intimidation and suggesting that Stanford rethink its commitment to free speech. The judge eventually had to be escorted out by Federal marshals.

But it's not just colleges and universities. In 2020, the American people watched as riots raged, causing an estimated \$2 billion dollars in damages and chaos across our country. Minneapolis, Kenosha, . . . We saw courthouses and police facilities in Portland and Seattle, and even the very notion of government control, targeted with months of sustained violence.

Any notion that this was a phenomenon limited to a specific time or region gave way more recently to the specter of left-wing activists carrying out a sustained, violent campaign against a Public Safety Training Center under development in Atlanta. The agitators—several of whom were arrested on terrorism charges—attacked law enforcement with rocks, bricks, Molotov cocktails, and commercial-grade fireworks. This is not what peaceful protest looks like:¹

It's past time to recognize that these are not random or spontaneous outbursts of violence. Far from it. Self-styled anti-fascist and anarchist groups, often exploit bona fide causes deliberately to organize and deploy street violence for political ends. They use sophisticated tactics to assault law enforcement officers, destroy property, and spread fear and disorder.

They travel across the country to targeted locations to unleash their destructive rage. For example, 21 of the 23 people arrested in the Atlanta attack came from

¹<https://nypost.com/2023/03/06/international-group-involved-in-attack-on-atlantas-cop-city/>.

outside the State of Georgia. Just two were locals—including a lawyer employed by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

These groups are sophisticated. They are well-trained and -financed. They have extensive logistical support. And, they are extremely clever in masking their activities. According to the FBI, groups like Antifa avoid traditional hierarchies and leadership structures. They prefer small-cell activities tailored to specific events.

Some use the opaque nature of groups like Antifa as an excuse to claim Antifa is a “false issue”,² or a myth.³

But, the law enforcement personnel and journalists on the ground, including our witnesses, know the threat is real. And, the opaque and diffuse nature of groups like Antifa means local law enforcement often lack the insights they need to prepare for and counter destructive activities.

Unfortunately, it is not clear that the Department of Homeland Security is always engaging in the level of information sharing and coordination sufficient to address this threat.

Part of the Department’s mission is to share timely and actionable information to enable State and local partners to keep their communities safe. The question is—Does the Department sufficiently share analyses and collect lessons learned from prior incidents of organized left-wing violence with State and local partners?

After all, you cannot address a threat you decline to define or acknowledge.

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Americans like our witnesses today, Riley Gaines—who has the right to speak her mind—and Julio Rosas—who has the right to report the news—deserve no less than to exercise their Constitutional rights without the constant fear of being violently attacked for doing so.

Chairman BISHOP. I now recognize the Ranking Member, the gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Ivey, for his opening statement.

Mr. IVEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You are absolutely right. I am going to talk a little bit about the very violent aspects of right-wing violence. Right-wing extremism that we have here in the United States, not in a me-too-ism, one-up-ism, but because it is significantly greater threat than the Antifa scenario that was just discussed.

I want to present two things to the committee, this chart, and we will come back to it, I want to give the witnesses a chance to discuss it, but I believe it is the blue shows left-wing extremism, and this is obviously 100 percent. These are killings and incidents, and this is from 2013 to 2022. As you can see, with respect to the incidents, the red part of the doughnut is right-wing extremism—and we will talk about what that means later—but it is almost from an incident standpoint, the entire circle. Then with respect to the killings from 2013 to 2022, three quarters of it is right-wing extremism. So that is not to say that there is no left-wing extremism issue or that there aren’t solutions that we should take or steps that we should take to address them, but it is to say that from a standpoint of violence and the risk of death to citizens here in the United States, right-wing extremism is a greater problem.

² <https://twitter.com/RepCohen/status/1276271227200569347>.

³ <https://nypost.com/2020/07/27/jerry-nadler-calls-violence-from-antifa-in-portland-a-myth/>.

I wanted to back up and talk about sort-of the roots of this. I will come to these issues with the left in a moment. But of course, the largest act of home-grown terrorism is the Oklahoma City bombing. I think we lost 168 civilians in that bombing. That was Timothy McVeigh acting in conjunction with two others—I think Terry Nichols—I forget the name of the third gentleman—but he decided that he was upset about the Waco issue and then 2 years later to the day, he put a bomb inside a truck that he designed from fertilizer and drove it into the Oklahoma City Federal office building. I think it was the second floor of that building had a kindergarten and daycare in the bottom, so many of the deaths were to children. I saw some of the clips of people who were survivors of that bombing. I think some worked for the IRS, some were just Federal people who worked trying to be public servants and help their community. They were really unconnected, uninvolved, had no relationship with the Waco scenario at all. But it certainly set a gigantic tone, because we have had a lot of right-wing extremism that has tried to imitate McVeigh or followed along the ideological tracks that he laid out. In fact, I believe it was Mr. Nichols who was connected to the Michigan militia, which was also connected to the same group that tried to kidnap Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. We have had some discussions about that at previous hearing, but I think it is clear that that was an effort to kidnap her, and I think apparently to assassinate her. That was based on their views with respect to COVID, feeling that she had gone too far in imposing COVID restrictions.

So I think we have to be sure that we sort-of separate out that sort of violence, those sorts of threats, from what we have got witnesses who will talk about today.

I particularly wanted to mention this. I think Kari Watkins, who is the director of the Oklahoma City Museum, that is a memorial to the bombing site, says that from that sacred ground, we have to work to find common ground, otherwise we cannot begin to address these problems. I think that the common ground has to be data-driven, that there has to be a focus on the significant causes of violence and right-wing extremism. I think from a homeland security standpoint, it is important for us to focus on what the roots of that are so we can try and disrupt that.

We had a hearing here a little while ago about disinformation, misinformation, malinformation—I will just say false information, just to summarize it quickly. But it is clear that a lot of the young men who get involved, and there is almost always young men, in committing these kinds of acts, buy into various types of disinformation and misinformation. I want to chat about a couple of them real quick.

Some of you may recall the Atlanta attacker from March 2021. He fatally shot 8 people at different spa locations. I think 6 of them were Asian women and he had to drive to find the 6 to kill. He had to drive, I think it was 8 miles, to get to the 3 different massage parlors. He said, I am going to kill all Asians, was the quote from that event.

With respect to—and I will just do a couple of these instead of going through all of them because we don't have time, but El Paso, August 2019. The alleged attacker killed 23 people, injured numer-

ous others using a recently purchased semiautomatic rifle. Another issue we need to talk about, the ability for these guys to buy, usually AR15s and go out and commit these mass attacks, even if they shouldn't be able to get them, even if they are under the age of 21, is another issue that I think we need to address, in addition to recognizing mental health issues. This guy expressed support for the attack on the mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand. Some of you may recall that that was another ideologically-driven attack that spawned several others here in the United States. This guy said the response was to the "Hispanic invasion of Texas". The manifesto encouraged others to conduct similar attacks and said the alleged attacker was a "white nationalist", trying to discourage Hispanic immigration to the United States.

Let me skip ahead to a couple more. Charlottesville. I think we have a tape on Charlottesville. Can we play that?

[Video shown.]

Mr. IVEY. So this gentleman, James Fields, drove a car into a crowd of people. This was at the "Unite the Right" rally. You saw a little clip of some of the things that they were chanting at the front end of that. I got to say this was a wake-up call for me. When I first heard the chant, the Jews will not replace us, I had no idea what they were talking about. In fact, I thought I was mishearing because I had never heard the concept. But this is the replacement theory stuff that animates many of these individuals who go out and commit these killings and it is carried out in multiple ways across lines that connects these gentlemen up.

The piece I saw on Timothy McVeigh said that he tried to recruit people by going to gun shows back when he was—before he committed his crime, but he wasn't able to do it. The big difference between McVeigh then and the connections now, especially between the white nationalist, white supremacist crowd, is that they don't need to go meet with each other, they just go on the internet. The internet is an instantaneous connection that links them up and shares the same ideology that motivates a lot of this activity.

I want to hit one last one of these before I stop and I will make a quick comment going forward. But in doing research for this, I came across something I had never heard of, but apparently is a very serious problem that I really think this committee should look at, it is called incel. What that is short for, involuntary celibacy. This is a group of men who are imitating a guy named Elliot Rodger who has the philosophy that men should be able to have sex with women of their choice at any time that they want. Many times they go out and they have been killing people. This guy, Elliot Rodger, who spawned this, killed 6 people and attacked 14, stabbed 3 to death, and he also used an assault weapon as well. He tried to go to a sorority house near the University of California at Santa Barbara to try and target these women.

The bottom line for me on this is—and I think there is a good hearing that we need to have on this issue of ideological violence in the United States. I don't mean any offense to the witnesses at the table, but this isn't the group to do that with.

Ms. Gaines, I respect your position. You have snapped back at me on a couple of things on the internet, and that is fine. I think college violence is important, but it is not really the same type of

issue that we should be talking about here I think. I mean, my university president, Chris Eisgruber, addressed the Stanford issue directly and gave solutions to how to fix it. I think that is an important issue that we have to have, but I don't think this is really the topic to cover it.

Mr. Erickson, I appreciate your testimony and your experience. I hope that when you testify, you will give some of the background. I think, for example, in your testimony you said something about there have been Antifas responsible for dozens of deaths. I hope you will have a chance to be more specific. Or maybe it was Mr. Rosa, I am not sure. But I hope one of you all will be able to be more specific and talk not only about at least what deaths we are talking about, but the who, the what, the where, the when, and the why, and most importantly, what are the solutions for trying to address this.

So I hope that we will be able to get to a point where we can use the Homeland Security Committee to address homeland security problems and try and meet the root causes of this issue so we can push back on it.

With that, I yield back.

[The statement of Ranking Member Ivey follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GLENN IVEY

MAY 16, 2023

What is the value of a life? My Republican colleagues are using this hearing to discuss the cost of property damage associated with left-wing violence. While I don't condone such violence or destruction, I must ask why we are focusing on left-wing violence when the data overwhelming shows that right-wing violence is significantly more likely to result in the loss of American lives.

Chairman Bishop, I know that during a Counterterrorism, Law Enforcement, and Intelligence Subcommittee hearing last month you mentioned that you've never been shown data to indicate the numbers behind the Domestic Violent Extremism threat. I'm happy to explore that data with you today.

The Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism tracks murders with ties to any extreme cause or movement. Of the 444 people killed at the hands of extremists over the past 10 years, 335 (or 75 percent) were killed by right-wing extremists. In the past 5 years alone, there have been 176 deaths linked to right-wing extremists. Deaths linked to left-wing extremists in the last 5 years totals no more than 3. The loss of American lives is simply not comparable. From non-governmental organizations to academic researchers, to Government organizations like the FBI or Government Accountability Office, there is no disagreement that far-right extremism is a far more deadly threat than left-wing violence.

While my Republican colleagues are fond of fearmongering about the Black Lives Matter movement and Antifa, again the data just doesn't support their claims. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project studied the Black Lives Matter protest movement in 2021 and found that approximately 94 percent of pro-BLM demonstrations have been peaceful, with only 6 percent resulting in reports of violence, clashes with the police, vandalism, or looting. In contrast, demonstrations involving right-wing militias have turned violent or destructive more than twice as often, nearly 14 percent of the time.

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project also found that when far-right groups engage directly with pro-BLM demonstrations that risk of violence increases again, with 26 percent of demonstrations involving both groups turning violent or destructive. Anti-fascists, or antifa, have been linked to exactly one murder in the United States in the last 25 years, according to data from the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Have there been deadly, violent, and unacceptable attacks by far-left actors? Yes. But far-right violence is considerably more common, and far more lethal, than attacks from the far left.

This trend holds true when we examine police officers killed by domestic extremists. Make no mistake, police officers were specifically targeted by far-right extremists on January 6th. One post made on TheDonald.win site ahead of the insurrection

stated: “Cops don’t have ‘standing’ if they are laying on the ground in a pool of their own blood.”

Members of the Republican Party have gone so far as to excuse or condone the violence at the Capitol on January 6th, which was one of the most organized, violent, and wide-scale attacks on law enforcement in recent memory. And while some of my Republican colleagues like to repeat disinformation about who was in that crowd, video evidence depicts that the overwhelming majority of those who participated were Trump supporters and right-wing militia groups intent on staging a violent and bloody coup at the expense of law enforcement lives.

For the remainder of my time, I’d like to commemorate the many victims of right-wing extremist attacks in recent years.

Just last week, on May 6, 9 people were killed and 7 injured in a right-wing extremist attack on a shopping mall in Allen, Texas.

In November, 5 people were killed and 25 people were injured in a right-wing extremist attack on an LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

One year ago, on May 14, 2022, 10 people were killed and 3 were injured in a right-wing extremist attack at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York.

In February 2022, 1 person was murdered and 4 injured in a right-wing extremist attack at a park in Portland, Oregon.

On January 6, 2021, 5 people were killed and over 138 were injured in a right-wing extremist attack at the U.S. Capitol.

In August 2020, Kyle Rittenhouse fatally shot 2 people during a racial justice protest in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

And in May and June 2020, 2 people were murdered and 4 injured in a right-wing extremist attack against security personnel and law enforcement officers in California.

These are just a handful of examples of violent and deadly attacks in recent years, where the perpetrator’s motives were known and clearly connected to far-right movements. Unfortunately, I don’t have the time today to go back further, but I’d ask for a moment of silence for the victims of this senseless and unacceptable violence.

Chairman BISHOP. Thank you, Ranking Member Ivey.

I now recognize the Ranking Member of the full committee, Mr. Thompson of Mississippi, for his opening statement.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I welcome our panel of witnesses today.

Before I begin, I would like to join with the people of Buffalo, New York, in observing a recent 1-year anniversary of the Tops supermarket shooting in which a far-right extremist who embraced a great replacement theory killed 10 people in a racist rampage. Marking the anniversary of the Buffalo supermarket shooting with a hearing on left-wing extremism displays a shocking lack of sensitivity to the scores of individuals harmed by far-right violence.

At best, today’s hearing is a missed opportunity to conduct meaningful oversight over how the Government is combating the disturbing trend in right-wing violence that is wreaking havoc on communities across the country. At worst, it is a shameful attempt to whitewash and deflect attention from inaction on gun violence and a threat posed by far-right extremist groups by vastly overstating the consequences of left-wing extremism. Allow me to provide some additional context to recent violent extremist events.

In 2020, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence assessed that domestic extremists motivated by white extremists and antigovernment ideologies pose the most persistent and lethal threats to the Nation. Data supports that conclusion. According to the University of Maryland’s National Consortium on the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, there have been 170 foiled mass casualty plots by right-wing extremists and 52 plots resulting in injuries or death between 1990 and 2021. During that same period, there have been 29 foiled mass casualty plots by left-wing ex-

tremists and 11 plots resulting in injuries or death. Moreover, according to the Anti-defamation League, far-right extremists committed every single one of the 25 extremist-related murders that occurred in 2022. White supremacists committed 21 of those 25 murders.

To be clear, Democrats condemn violence in every form, ideology-motivated or otherwise. That is why earlier this year, I sought to add language to the committee's oversight plan, committing to doing our part to combat domestic violent extremism and anti-semitism. Every single Republican opposed my amendment. It is also worth noting that despite Republican efforts to link left-wing extremists to Congressional Democrats, Democrats do not vote or support of far-left extremist groups.

In contrast, when he was asked to condemn white supremacist and militia, former President Trump directed the Proud Boys to stand back and stand by. Three months later, as the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, and other far-right extremists attacked the Capitol to thwart the peaceful transfer of power even as they were beating police officers, it took the former president 187 minutes, over 3 hours to direct the attackers to leave the Capitol. Not only did the former President fail to condemn far right groups and ideologies, he allowed them to flourish. Now they are emboldened.

For example, in November a white supremacist murdered 5 and shot 17 at an LGBTQ nightclub in Colorado. Last month, we learned that a low-level National Guardsman in Massachusetts, with a love of guns and a desire for a race war, leaked highly-Classified documents relating to military operations in Ukraine, jeopardizing national security and the lives of thousands. Just this month, a neo-Nazi murdered 9 and injured 10 others in a mass shooting at a mall in Allen, Texas.

Mr. Chairman, historical data makes clear that far-right extremists, particularly white supremacists, are a clear and present threat to the homeland security.

Recent events show the problem is getting worse, not better. Unfortunately, my Republican colleagues choose to ignore the threats posed by right-wing extremism in favor of playing politics. I urge my colleagues to focus on the facts and use their power and influence to combat dangerous, deadly, far-right violence.

Before I close, I would like to call attention to the disturbing connection between guns and domestic violent extremism. ADL found that guns were used in 83 percent of murders involving domestic extremists in 2021, and that 10,000 people every year are victims of hate crimes involving guns. We owe it to communities like Buffalo and Allen to do more than send thoughts and prayers. We need to take meaningful action to make people safer.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.
[The statement of Ranking Member Thompson follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER BENNIE G. THOMPSON

MAY 16, 2023 AT 2 O'CLOCK PM

Good afternoon. Before I begin, I would like to join the people of Buffalo, New York in observing the recent 1-year anniversary of the Tops supermarket shooting, in which a far-right extremist who embraced the Great Replacement theory killed 10 people in a racist rampage.

Marking the anniversary of the Buffalo supermarket shooting with a hearing on “left-wing extremism” displays a shocking lack of sensitivity to the scores of individuals harmed by right-wing violence.

At best, today’s hearing is a missed opportunity to conduct meaningful oversight over how the Government is combating the disturbing trend in right-wing violence that is wreaking havoc on communities across the country.

At worst, it is a shameful attempt to whitewash and deflect attention from inaction on gun violence and the threat posed by far-right extremist groups by vastly overstating the consequences of left-wing extremism.

Allow me to provide some additional context of recent violent extremist events. In 2021, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence assessed that domestic extremists motivated by white supremacist and anti-Government ideologies pose the “most persistent and lethal threats” to the Nation.¹

Data supports that conclusion.

According to the University of Maryland’s National Consortium of the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), there have been 170 foiled mass casualty plots by right-wing extremists and 52 plots resulting in injuries or death between 1990–2021.

During that same period, there have been 29 foiled mass casualty plots by left-wing extremists and 11 plots resulting in injuries or death.²

Moreover, according to the Anti-Defamation League, far-right extremists committed every single one of the 25 extremist-related murders that occurred in 2022.³

White supremacists committed 21 of those 25 murders.

To be clear, Democrats condemn violence in every form—ideologically-motivated or otherwise.

That is why, earlier this year, I sought to add language to the committee’s oversight plan committing to doing our part to combat domestic violent extremism and antisemitism.

Every single Republican opposed my amendment.

It is also worth noting that, despite Republican efforts to link “left-wing extremists” to Congressional Democrats, Democrats do not court the vote or support of far-left extremist groups.

In contrast, when he was asked to condemn “white supremacists and militia groups,” former President Trump directed the Proud Boys to “stand back and stand by.”⁴

Three months later, as the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers, and other far-right extremists attacked to Capitol to thwart the peaceful transfer of power, even as they were beating police officers, it took the former President 187 minutes—over 3 hours—to direct the attackers to leave the Capitol.

Not only did the former President fail to condemn far-right groups and ideologies, he allowed them to flourish. Now, they are emboldened.

For example, in November a white supremacist murdered 5 and shot 17 at an LGBTQ+ nightclub in Colorado.⁵

Last month, we learned that a low-level National Guardsman in Massachusetts, with a love of guns and a desire for a “race war,” leaked highly-Classified documents relating to military operations in Ukraine, jeopardizing national security and the lives of thousands.

And just this month, a neo-Nazi murdered 9 and injured 10 others in a mass shooting at a mall in Allen, Texas.⁶

Mr. Chairman, historical data makes clear that far-right extremists—particularly white supremacists—are a clear and present threat to homeland security.

Recent events show the problem is getting worse, not better.

Unfortunately, my Republicans colleagues choose to ignore the threats posed by right-wing extremism in favor of playing politics.

I urge my colleagues to focus on the facts, and use their power and influence to combat dangerous, deadly far-right violence.

Before I close, I would like to call attention to the disturbing connection between guns and domestic violent extremism.

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/National-Strategy-for-Countering-Domestic-Terrorism.pdf>.

² Memo chart.

³ <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/murder-and-extremism-united-states-2022>.

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/02/opinion/trump-proud-boys.html>.

⁵ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/colorado-lgbtq-club-shooting-suspect-ran-neo-nazi-site-testimony-reveals-rcna71754>.

⁶ <https://www.texastribune.org/2023/05/08/allen-mall-shooting-right-wing-death-squad/>.

The Center for American Progress found that guns were used in 83 percent of murders involving domestic extremists in 2021, and that 10,000 people every year are victims of hate crimes involving guns.

We owe it to communities like Buffalo and Allen to do more than send thoughts and prayers. We need to take meaningful action to make people safer.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman BISHOP. Thank you, Mr. Thompson.

Other Members of the committee are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

[The statement of Chairman Green follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MARK E. GREEN, MD

MAY 16, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Bishop, for holding today's important hearing analyzing organized violence by extreme far-left groups like Antifa that assault law enforcement, threaten freedom of speech, and create lawlessness in our cities. I also want to thank our witnesses for joining us today.

This is National Police Week. I want to take a moment to recognize the brave men and women of law enforcement who are dealing with the unprecedented crisis on our Southern Border as well as in our communities with the rise of left-wing violence. We will continue to hold President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas accountable for the situation they have created and the problems they exacerbate and ignore.

Americans watched during the summer of 2020 as far-left groups incited riots in our cities. These riots caused approximately \$2 billion dollars of destruction and contributed to a growing hostility toward the brave men and women who patrol our streets—culminating in the “Defund the Police” movement.

Three years later, left-wing street violence and mob tactics are now routine and expected. In just the past 2 months, violent protests targeted several speakers on college campuses, including Riley Gaines, a brave American who found herself victim to mob violence at San Francisco State University after she expressed her opinion about biological women in sports. It is absurd that an American would need police protection to exercise her First Amendment rights, but this is what we have come to expect under the new normal.

Or take the on-going campaign against the Atlanta Public Safety Training Center. For months on end, left-wing activists occupied land adjoining the training center's construction site, sabotaging progress with violence and threats. These left-wing agitators attacked police officers with rocks and Molotov cocktails and set fire to construction equipment. Most of the agitators arrested and charged traveled from other States, indicating the organized, national reach of the problem.

I want to say a few words about today's discussion on this often-contentious topic. I know there can be a temptation when discussing domestic violent extremism to get bogged down in arguments about comparing threats from left-wing versus right-wing groups. This is counterproductive and distracts us from focusing on how the Department of Homeland Security can provide State and local law enforcement with the tools they need to preserve law and order.

Violence by any political movement should never be tolerated in the United States. We must forcefully reject all forms of political violence regardless of their political views. The dividing line is not right versus left, but law-abiding Americans versus the mob. We cannot substitute voting with violence.

Given the alarming increase in left-wing violence, from the Portland mobs to the mass shooting at a Congressional Republican baseball practice, the focus of today's hearing is to examine the violent threat of left-wing agitators and how DHS can best support local law enforcement's efforts to counter this threat. We have seen that these agitators employ sophisticated tactics to mask their identities and activities, using decentralized national networks to organize and support operations. We need DHS to use its resources, networks, and intelligence to help law enforcement anticipate and react to these tactics and networks.

As we honor the brave men and women who put themselves in harm's way to protect and serve, we also need to make sure that we are giving them the support they need to succeed in their mission. Anti-police violence, surging crime rates, and lackluster support from State and local leaders impact morale. It's no secret that law enforcement is experiencing a crisis in recruiting and retention. As a consequence, our communities are less safe.

Close partnership among Federal, State, and local agencies is essential to countering the threat of organized left-wing violence and dismantling the networks that provide material support for the violence we have witnessed in Atlanta, Portland, and many other cities in recent years.

Effective and efficient information sharing is critical in law enforcement's preparation and response to extreme violence. DHS plays a vital role by providing useful intelligence and information to our State and local law enforcement partners. One of the roles of this committee is to evaluate and examine the Department's efforts and look for ways the Department can better serve the State and local law enforcement agencies as they seek to ensure public safety.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today, and I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman BISHOP. I am pleased to have a distinguished panel of witnesses before us today on this very important topic. I ask that our witnesses please rise and raise their right hand.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Chairman BISHOP. I would now like to formally introduce our witnesses.

Ms. Riley Gaines is a spokeswoman for the Independent Women's Forum and 12-time NCAA All-American swimmer. Mr. Scott Erickson is the former deputy chief of staff for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and a former San Jose police officer. Ms. Amy Spitalnick is the incoming chief executive officer for the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. Mr. Julio Rosas is a senior writer for Townhall and an author.

I thank all the witnesses for being here today.

I now recognize you, Ms. Gaines, for 5 minutes for your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF RILEY GAINES, SPOKESWOMAN, INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S FORUM

Ms. GAINES. Thank you, Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Ivey, and Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the committee for inviting me to speak to you today.

My name is Riley Gaines, and I'm a 12-time All-American swimmer from the University of Kentucky. Competing in the women's division of the 200 of the 2022 NCAA Championships, myself and my teammates and competitors around the country were required to compete and share a locker room with Lia Thomas, a biological male who competed on the men's team at University of Pennsylvania, as Will Thomas the 3 years prior.

In the 200-yard freestyle at the NCAA Championships, Thomas and I tied. Despite going the exact same time down to the hundredth of a second, the NCAA insisted on giving Thomas the trophy, as they explained, this was necessary for photo purposes, and told me that I had to go home empty-handed.

At our National championships I looked around and wondered why no one was standing up for myself and the other women in the pool and in that locker room. As I talked to my teammates and competitors at the championships, I discovered that the overwhelming majority of the girls shared the extreme discomfort of being forced to strip down in front of a male who was intact with and exposing male genitalia in that same room. After seeing how this affected every girl at that meet, I decided I would stand up and speak out. I put my plans for my future, which included dental school, on hold after graduation, and decided to fight for women and girls in sports.

Last December, I joined the Nation's most influential women's organization, making gains to stand up for women's rights and against discrimination of women in single-sex spaces, Independent Women's Forum and its C4 sister organization, Independent Woman's Voice, and I serve as a spokeswoman there. But I've spent this past year speaking about the need to keep women's sports for females only and to safeguard women's privacy, security, and access to a fair playing field.

The right to privacy and equal opportunities for women are not being protected by Title IX. Even worse than the efforts to dismantle Title IX are the efforts to silence and intimidate us through the use of every means available, whether that be fear, shame, threats, emotional blackmail, gaslighting to try to keep us from speaking out against the efforts to deprive women of their rights. I believe the coerced silencing of women and men by college administrators who will not let us speak freely about injustices now being faced by women in sports is one of the most important free speech issues of our time.

Seeing how universities were not allowing students to truthfully consider all perspectives, I found it necessary to travel to colleges all over the country to share my experience surrounding the injustices being faced by women in sports and the systemic attempt to erase women as a whole. On April 6, 2023, I traveled to San Francisco State University to speak to a campus group on the right of women to compete on a level playing field in sports. The school administration was aware of my visit and the program had been publicized on campus. I was told I would be met by the campus police and briefed on a security plan an hour-and-a-half before the event, but the police failed to show up to our scheduled meeting. I went to the classroom building where I was to speak, which was on the third floor, and I entered the room, which soon began to fill with protesters. Still, the campus officers did not show like I was told they would, and I began my speech. The protesters in the room, they were not generally disruptive, however, I could hear chanting from outside the hallway, and I sensed the situation outside was growing confrontational, which was unnerving, but no one provided any guidance to alert me that my safety was at risk. They continuously chanted outside the room, we fight back, and that's when I began to fear for my safety.

As I ended my presentation, protesters in the room opened the locked doors. In a chaotic flood of shouting angry protesters forced their way in. They rushed at me with fist raised, most shouting, and angry faces coming around me. They flickered the lights and ultimately then turned the lights off. The room filled with glares of cell phone flashlights, some in my face, and I realized I was at the mercy of the crowd and I was assaulted. A woman grabbed me and told me she was with the campus police and pulled me toward the door. But I did not believe she was with the police because she wore no clothes that indicated she was an officer and she had a face covering on, so I couldn't see her face. I resisted going with her, but I recognized I really had no choice because I couldn't have made it out without help. Again, I really, truly feared for my life.

But once we made it into the hallway, we were met with an even larger mob blocking the stairway exit, ultimately forcing us to bar-

ricade ourselves into an office alongside the same hallway. The small room we had found would be my prison for the next 3 hours, and in those hours I was certainly held against my will. The mob screamed vengeful, racist, violent, awful things at both myself and the officers, and I received no assurance that I would get out of that situation. When I needed consoling from the officers because I was so flustered and confused, they told me they could not provide me with that because it seemed too controversial for them. When I had expressed that I had been hit, no one asked me if I was OK, or no one asked me if I needed medical attention. When I realized I missed my flight back home due to being held hostage, I became visibly upset and told the lieutenant in the room that I just wanted to make it home. He responded back with don't you think we all want to go home?

After a while, some of these protesters began to demand a ransom for my release. They had asked for payment and threatened not to safely release me without it. I heard an adult administrator, who I learned to be the dean of students, from outside the door trying to negotiate my release with the students. They said my appearance on campus was so traumatic that they were owed something. They were under the false notion that the university paid me to be there, therefore they only thought it was fair that I should pay them if I wanted to leave.

After hours of being held against my will, the officers from the city of San Francisco Police Department finally arrived, and they were much more methodical and assertive in developing a strategy. It was around midnight that I was finally able to leave. I had to run to the car——

Chairman BISHOP. Ms. Gaines, I ask you to sum up as soon as you can.

Ms. GAINES. Thank you.

Yes, I'll just read this last paragraph here.

Free speech suffers when university administrators do not condemn violence and kidnapping on their campus, it's chilled when administrators do not adequately prepare for and protect the safety of their speakers, whether liberal or conservative, and free speech is undermined when administrators misrepresent and malign the views of those with whom they disagree.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Gaines follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RILEY GAINES

MAY 16, 2023

Thank you Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Ivey, and Members of the committee for inviting me to speak to you today. My name is Riley Gaines. I am a 12-time All-American Swimmer from the University of Kentucky. Competing in the women's division of the 2022 NCAA Championships, I and my fellow female swimmers were required to compete and share the locker room with Lia Thomas, a biological male who competed on the men's team at University of Pennsylvania as Will Thomas the 3 years prior. In the 200-yard NCAA women's final I tied Thomas. Despite going the exact same time down to the hundredth of a second, the NCAA gave Thomas the trophy as they explained this was necessary for "photo purposes" and told me I had to go home empty-handed.

At our National Championships, I looked around and wondered why no one was standing up for me and all the other women in the pool and in the locker room. As I talked to my teammates and competitors at the NCAA Championships, I dis-

covered that the overwhelming majority of the girls shared extreme discomfort being forced to strip down in front of a male who was intact with and exposing male genitalia in the same room. After seeing how this affected every girl at that meet, I decided I would stand up and speak out. I resolved to do everything I could do to ensure that no other girls feel alone in the fight for their right to compete on a level playing field.

I put my plans for dental school on hold after graduation and decided to tell my story. Last December, I joined the Nation's most influential women's organization making gains to stand up for women's rights and against discrimination of women in single-sex spaces—Independent Women's Forum (IWF) and its C4 sister organization Independent Women's Voice (IWV).

I serve as the organizations' Stand With Women spokeswoman, and have been fortunate to have a bigger platform from which to share my experiences—in the media, before elected officials, among the public, and alongside a bipartisan coalition of organizations and individual athletes driving advocacy efforts to let rule-making bodies like the NCAA and the White House know America won't stand for unjust and discriminatory policies that hinder women's rights. I have spent this past year speaking about the need to keep women's sports female and to safeguard women's privacy, security, and access to a fair playing field. What a year it has been!

My experience certainly did not feel like our privacy and equal opportunities were being protected by administrators who were legally responsible to uphold Title IX. Even worse than the efforts to dismantle Title IX are the efforts to silence and intimidate us through the use of every means available—fear, shame, threats, emotional blackmail, gaslighting—to try to keep us from speaking out against the efforts to deprive women of their rights.

I believe the coerced silencing of women and men by college administrators who will not let us speak freely about injustices now being faced by women in sports is one of the most important free speech issues of our time.

Seeing how universities were not allowing students to truthfully consider all perspectives, I found it necessary to travel to various college campuses to share my experience surrounding the injustices being faced by women in sports and the systemic attempt to erase women as a whole.

However, what I did not know then was how vicious the effort to silence me and other women has become. I would soon learn.

I soon learned that college administrators appear to be using another, even more dangerous technique, reliance on mob intimidation and violence. I have come to believe intimidation and compelled silence is being knowingly enforced through violent means, as college administrators silence free speech by failing to control and prevent mob tactics and mob violence.

On April 6, 2023, I traveled to San Francisco State University to speak to a campus group on the right of women to compete on a level playing field in sports. The school administration was aware of my visit, and the program had been publicized on campus. I was told I would be met by campus police and briefed on a security plan an hour and a half before the event, but the campus police failed to show up to our scheduled meeting.

I went to the building where I was to speak which was on the third floor of a classroom building. At the time, I did not think about the difficulty of exiting a third-floor room if a mob gained control of the hallways and stairways.

I entered the room which soon began to fill with protestors. Still no campus officers showed like I was told they would. I began my speech and the protestors in the room were generally not disruptive. However, I could hear chanting in the hallway outside the room. I sensed the situation outside might be growing confrontational which was unnerving, but no one provided any guidance to alert me that my safety was at risk. They continuously chanted from outside the room “we fight back.” I began to fear for my safety.

As I ended my presentation, protestors in the room opened the locked doors and a chaotic flood of shouting, angry, protestors forced their way in. The crowd rushed at me, some with fists raised, most shouting, anger contorting many faces around me. Then the lights in the room began flicking on and off in strobe-like fashion and then they went off. The room was filled with the glare of a hundred cell phone flashlights, some being shined in my face. I realized I was at the mercy of the crowd, and I was assaulted.

A woman grabbed me, told me she was with campus police and pulled me toward the door. I did not believe she was actually with the police because she wore no clothes that indicated she was an officer and had a face covering on. I resisted at first, but I recognized I had no choice because I could not have made it out without help. I truly feared for my life.

Once we made it to the hallway, we were met with an even larger mob blocking the stairway exit ultimately forcing us to barricade ourselves into an office along this same hallway. The small room we had found would be my prison for the next 3 hours. The door to the hallway, the only barrier between me and those who were yelling violent threats, demanding that the door be opened so that they could “handle me themselves.”

In those hours I was held against my will, the mob screamed vengeful, racist, violent things at both myself and the officers. I received no assurance that I would get out of that situation alive. When I needed consoling from the officers because I was so flustered and confused, they told me they could not provide me with that as it was too controversial. I expressed I had been hit, and no one asked me if I was OK or needed medical attention. When I realized I missed my flight back home due to being held hostage, I became visibly upset and told the lieutenant in the room I just wanted to make it home. He responded with “don’t you think we all want to go home?”

After a while some of the protestors began to demand a ransom for my release. They asked for payment and threatened not to safely release me without it. I heard an adult administrator from the university outside the door trying to negotiate my release. They said my appearance on campus was so traumatic, they were “owed something.” They were under the false notion that the university paid me to be there, therefore they only thought it was fair I should pay if I want to leave. The amount of \$10 for each student was suggested.

From inside the room, I heard things being said such as “If she didn’t want the smoke, she shouldn’t have came here”, “you did this to yourself, b****”, “you come on this campus and think we’re not going to start a riot?”, “let her out so we can handle her”, “we aren’t letting up.” There was even a school reporter there doxing my information and location on twitter in hopes more protestors would show up.

After hours of being held against my will, officers from the city of San Francisco Police Department finally arrived. These officers were much more methodical and assertive in developing an exit strategy. Around midnight, the officers formed a diamond around me and pushed through the mob to get outside.

My student hosts had a car waiting for me outside. I had to run to the car because we were met with more protestors outside who were also running at the car. We were able to drive away from SFSU but with no police escort or police following us to make sure we got where we needed to go safely. I was still in desperate fear for my safety the entire time I was in San Francisco and until I was eventually able to board a plane for the return flight home.

After being threatened, intimidated, assaulted, and held hostage not a day has gone by that I have not thought about these events, had flashbacks, and experienced emotional trauma at realizing how close to being seriously injured or even killed I may have come. I have had nights where I can’t fall asleep and continue to be unsettled about this whole matter knowing what these protestors wanted to do to me. At the same time, I am determined to do whatever I can do to make sure this never happens again to anybody.

A violent mob took control of a building and the campus police on the SFSU campus that evening, seeking to stamp out free speech and take a physical hostage. The mob was given free rein to do so and that certainly sent a message. The message is that those who encourage open dialog that conflict with the radical left policies that control college campuses will not be protected nor will their safety be taken seriously.

The SFSU V.P. of Student Affairs Jamillah Moore released a statement applauding students for their “tremendously brave” efforts to “peacefully protest” someone as “personally abhorrent” as myself that evening. The email claimed the school welcomes and embraces diversity, yet it was more than evident they didn’t welcome me and my perspective.

Kidnapping is not a peaceful protest. What happened to me throughout the evening of April 6 was not in any way peaceful.

Free speech suffers when university administrators do not condemn violence and kidnapping on their campus, it is chilled when administrators do not adequately prepare for and protect the safety of speakers—whether conservative or liberal—and free speech is undermined when administrators misrepresent and malign the views of those with whom they disagree.

I speak from experience when I say that free speech is under attack on college campuses around the country and many college administrators appear to only be giving aid and comfort to those who are trying to silence conservative speech on campus.

Chairman BISHOP. Thank you, ma’am, for your statement.

Now I recognize Mr. Scott Erickson for 5 minutes for his opening statement.

STATEMENT OF SCOTT G. ERICKSON, FORMER DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF AT U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, AND FORMER POLICE OFFICER, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

Mr. ERICKSON. Well, good afternoon. Thank you, Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Ivey, and Ranking Member Thompson, and Members of the committee for giving me the opportunity to speak today on the important issue of political violence and in particular, its impact on the law enforcement community.

I'd also like to take a moment to acknowledge the conclusion of Police Week here in Washington, DC, an important time of the year where we honor the police officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their communities.

I currently serve as the director of the Center for Law and Justice at the America First Policy Institute. Prior to joining AFPI, I spent 3 years at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, where I served in a variety of roles, including as deputy chief of staff during the summer of 2020, a period marred by wide-spread civil unrest and leftist-inspired violence, much of which was directed at the law enforcement community. Earlier in my career, I spent nearly 2 decades as a uniform police officer in the city of San Jose. As a second-generation police officer, law enforcement has been and remains an important part of my identity.

The integrity of the law enforcement profession is of vital importance to not just public safety, but to the maintenance of the rule of law itself. A civil society cannot function unless the institutions designed to uphold it remain intact. The rise of unchecked violence, particularly the phenomenon of anarchist or Antifascist criminal activity, has caused untold damage to communities across our Nation. It has also had a debilitating effect on law enforcement. Combined with the associated rise of anti-police rhetoric and the inane defund the police movement, these phenomena have contributed to a generational crisis in recruiting and retention within the law enforcement profession. For those officers who remain in the job, morale is the lowest it's been in a generation.

Confronting the rise of organized far-left violence poses operational and tactical challenges for law enforcement. Every department's capacity to address these challenges is unique, and each is equipped with different resources, training, expertise, and personnel. To improve the ability of departments to effectively confront these challenges often requires cross-jurisdictional collaboration and robust information sharing across the spectrum of Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies. It is here where our Federal partners can play an outsized role, particularly in the receipt, analysis, and dissemination of critical information relevant to emerging threats. Fusion centers, for instance, utilize a hub-and-spoke approach to synthesize and distribute information within and among State and local law enforcement partners. Federal law enforcement operating within the context of these information-sharing systems can often provide a more global view in emerging threats than what is available at the State or local level alone.

They often have better visibility on spatially-diffused threats, potentially coalescing toward a specific target.

Examples of ideologically-aligned violent opportunists traveling across State lines to carry out coordinated acts of violence were evident in the recent attacks on the as-yet completed Atlanta Public Safety Training Center. Of the 23 individuals arrested for crimes ranging from vandalism to assault, only two were from the State of Georgia. Two others were not even from the United States, but had ostensibly traveled to Atlanta to engage in this coordinated criminal behavior.

More information means better preparation. The sooner a law enforcement agency is aware that a coordinated act of violence may be forthcoming, the better that agency will be able to marshal the resources necessary to effectively address the threat and protect their communities. Robust collaboration is essential to the effective administration of justice. When such collaboration is absent, negative public safety outcomes become more likely. Portland over the summer of 2020 is a stark example. Local political intransigence prevented basic cooperation among Federal, State, and local partners, resulting in over 100 days of violence and chaos as Federal law enforcement personnel remained under siege within the Hatfield Federal Courthouse. The political violence that occurred in Portland and elsewhere throughout the country during the summer of 2020 was disgraceful, and it should never happen again.

Let me conclude by saying that while each citizen has a role to play in the maintenance of an orderly society, it is the men and women of law enforcement who undergird that proposition. We must empower them to do their job safely and effectively.

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss this important topic, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Erikson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SCOTT G. ERICKSON

MAY 16, 2023

Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Ivey for giving me the opportunity to speak today on the important issue of political violence and, in particular, its impact on the law enforcement community.

I currently serve as the director of the Center for Law and Justice at the America First Policy Institute (AFPI). Prior to joining AFPI, I spent 3 years at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security where I served in a variety of roles including as deputy chief of staff during the summer of 2020, a period marred by wide-spread civil unrest and leftist-inspired violence, much of which was directed at the law enforcement community. Earlier in my career, I spent nearly two decades as a uniformed police officer in the city of San Jose, California. As a second-generation police officer, law enforcement has been—and remains—an important part of my identity.

The integrity of the law enforcement profession is of vital importance to not just public safety but to the maintenance of the rule of law itself. A civil society cannot function unless the institutions designed to uphold it remain intact. The rise of unchecked violence—particularly the phenomenon of anarchist or anti-fascist criminal activity—has caused untold damage to communities across our Nation. It has also had a debilitating effect on law enforcement. Combined with the associated rise of anti-police rhetoric and the inane “defund the police” movement, these phenomena have contributed to a generational crisis in recruiting and retention within the law enforcement community. For those officers who remain on the job, morale is the lowest it’s been in a generation.

Confronting the rise of organized, far-left violence poses operational and tactical challenges for law enforcement. Every department’s capability to address these chal-

allenges is unique and each is equipped with different resources, training, expertise, and personnel. To improve the ability of departments to effectively confront these challenges often requires cross-jurisdictional collaboration and robust information sharing across the spectrum of Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies.

It is here where our Federal partners can play an outsized role, particularly in the receipt, analysis, and dissemination of critical information relevant to emerging threats. Fusion centers, for instance, utilize a hub-and-spoke approach to synthesize and distribute information within and among State and local law enforcement partners. Federal law enforcement operating within the context of these information-sharing systems can often provide a more global view on emerging threats than what is available at the State or local level alone and they often have better visibility on spatially diffuse threats potentially coalescing toward a specific target.

Examples of ideologically-aligned violent opportunists traveling across State lines to carry out coordinated acts of violence were evident in the recent attacks on the as-yet completed Atlanta Public Safety Training Center. Of the 23 individuals arrested for crimes ranging from vandalism to assault, only 2 were from the State of Georgia. Two others were not even from the United States but had ostensibly traveled to Atlanta to engage in this coordinated criminal behavior.

More information means better preparation. The sooner a law enforcement agency is aware that a coordinated act of violence may be forthcoming, the better that agency will be able to marshal the resources necessary to effectively address the threat and protect their communities.

Robust collaboration is essential to the effective administration of justice. When such collaboration is absent, negative public safety outcomes become more likely. Portland over the summer of 2020 is a stark example. Local political intransigence prevented basic cooperation among Federal, State, and local partners, resulting in over 100 days of violence and chaos as Federal law enforcement personnel remained under siege within the Hatfield Federal Courthouse.

The political violence that occurred in Portland—and elsewhere throughout the country—during the summer of 2020 was disgraceful, and it should never happen again.

Let me conclude by saying that while each citizen has a role to play in the maintenance of an orderly society, it is the men and women of law enforcement who undergird that proposition. We must empower them to do their jobs safely and effectively.

Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss this important topic. I look forward to your questions.

Chairman BISHOP. Thank you. Mr. Erickson. I now recognize Ms. Amy Spitalnick for 5 minutes for her opening statement. I hope I said your name correctly.

STATEMENT OF AMY SPITALNICK, INCOMING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, JEWISH COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS, TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST

Ms. SPITALNICK. You did.

Thank you, Chairman Bishop, Ranking Members Ivey and Thompson, Members of the committee, I'm grateful to be here today.

In addition to serving as a senior advisor on extremism at Human Rights First, I'm also the incoming CEO of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. I previously led Integrity First for America, the nonpartisan nonprofit that held accountable those responsible for the 2017 Charlottesville violence. Many of us remember the horror of neo-Nazis with torches chanting, Jews will not replace us, or the violence the next day, culminating in the car attack that claimed Heather Heyer's life and injured so many others. That violence was no accident. Rather, it was planned, meticulously on social media and other channels, down to discussions of hitting protesters with cars and claiming self-defense. As the evidence in our lawsuit made clear, and as the jury agreed, finding every single defendant liable, these extremists planned violence came to Char-

lottesville to engage in that violence, and then celebrated that violence.

This matters not just because a woman was murdered and so many others grievously injured, it matters because Unite the Right was a flashpoint in the rise of deadly white supremacist extremism, a harbinger of a cycle of far-right violence that continues to claim lives around the country: Charlottesville, Pittsburgh, El Paso, January 6, Buffalo, and this month, Allen, Texas. These are just a few of many examples I could cite. We're experiencing a tidal wave of white supremacist violence. But I don't just want to share examples. I want to talk about data.

According to the ADL, every single extremist-related murder in 2022 was committed by right-wing extremists. The vast majority were white supremacists. Over the past decade, 96 percent of the events in which extremists killed someone were committed by people with right-wing ideologies. In the same period, three-quarters of extremism-linked murders were committed by right-wing actors, while only 4 percent were linked to left-wing actors. Research from the Start Center at the University of Maryland also shows that in the last 30 years far-right actors were responsible for 74 percent of planned or successful terrorist attacks by domestic extremists, while far-left perpetrators were responsible for just 13 percent.

It's not just NGO's and academic institutions tracking this disproportionate threat. In late 2020, former President Trump's Department of Homeland Security found that white supremacists were, "the most persistent and lethal threat in the United States". This isn't to say that other forms of political violence don't exist. Of course they do. That includes left-wing or anarchist violence, Islamist violence, or violence that doesn't fit neatly into one particular ideology. There was a time when left-wing extremist violence was a bigger threat, nearly 50 years ago, during the 1970's. But since the 1990's, available data show that right-wing extremism has consistently been the most violent domestic terror threat. Unless we're clear-eyed about the facts, we'll never be able to intervene and break the cycle of extremism.

It's all the more important to understand this reality, because it's not happening in a vacuum. The rise in right-wing extremism has gone hand-in-hand with an increasing normalization of right-wing extremism. Conspiracy theories, once relegated to the dark corners of the internet, like the Great Replacement, are espoused not just by mass murderers, but by elected officials, candidates, and pundits. Policies aimed at dehumanizing and stripping away the rights of certain communities are fueling attacks on those very communities. Violent extremists take this normalization of conspiracy theories and bigotry as license. It's not just a threat to our communities. It directly threatens our democracy and our national security.

So what do we do? While we should invest in responsive measures like security, we can't simply sue, prosecute, or barricade our way out of this crisis. We need comprehensive solutions with real accountability, support for targeted communities, and societal resilience. This includes investing in and protecting democratic institutions, addressing the threat of extremism in the military and law enforcement, empowering communities with tools to prevent

radicalization, like media and digital literacy, education, and resources for parents, educators, and caregivers, making it harder for violent extremists to get their hands on the deadly weapons too often used in these acts of mass violence, and building cross-community coalitions that recognize none of us are safe if one of us isn't safe.

The facts and the data are clear. We're grappling with a very real threat of right-wing extremism. Every statistic affirms that the vast majority of extremist violence is perpetrated by those motivated by white supremacist and other right-wing ideologies. Acknowledging that doesn't take away from the fact that other forms of political violence exist. But this moment requires us to be clear-eyed about our reality if we're to do something about it.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to be here today and look forward to your questions. Thank you so much.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Spitalnik follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF AMY SPITALNICK

MAY 16, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Ivey, and Members of the committee. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be here today.

My name is Amy Spitalnik and I am a senior advisor on extremism at Human Rights First, a nonpartisan organization committed to ensuring that the United States is a global leader on human rights. I am also the incoming CEO of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, a nearly 80-year-old nonpartisan organization that serves as the national convener of Jewish coalitions to build a safe, just, and inclusive democracy.

I previously led Integrity First for America, the nonpartisan nonprofit that held accountable the neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and hate groups responsible for the August 2017 violence in Charlottesville.

Many of us remember the visceral horror of watching neo-Nazis with torches storm the University of Virginia, chanting things like "Jews will not replace us" as they beat students and other community members. Or seeing the horrific images of violence the next day, culminating in the car attack that claimed Heather Heyer's life and injured so many others.

That violence was no accident. Rather, it was planned meticulously in advance—on social media sites like Discord, via text, and on other channels—down to discussions of whether they could hit protesters with cars and claim self-defense.

As the evidence in my organization's lawsuit made clear—and as the jury agreed, when they found every single defendant liable¹—these extremists planned violence; came to Charlottesville to engage in that violence; and then celebrated that violence.

This matters, not only because a young woman was murdered and so many others were grievously injured. It also matters because Unite the Right was a flashpoint in the rise of deadly white supremacist extremism—serving as a harbinger of a cycle of far-right violence that continues to claim lives around the country.

Charlottesville.

Pittsburgh, where a white supremacist murdered 11 Jews praying in synagogue.

El Paso, where a white supremacist targeted a predominately Hispanic community, killing 23 people at a Walmart.

January 6th, where extremists with Confederate flags, nooses, QAnon conspiracy theory propaganda, and even a "Camp Auschwitz" shirt attacked the seat of our Government with the intent to harm Members of Congress and law enforcement.

Buffalo, where a year ago Sunday a white supremacist drove hours in order to target a Black community, murdering 10 people at a grocery store.

And earlier this month, Allen, Texas, where a man who held neo-Nazi and white supremacist views, and sported a swastika tattoo and "Right Wing Death Squad" patch, murdered 8 people shopping at an outlet mall.

¹ Sganga, N. (2021, November 23). "Jury awards \$26 million in Charlottesville 'Unite the Right' rally civil case." CBS News. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/charlottesville-unite-the-right-rally-trial-verdict-26-million/>.

And these are just a handful of far too many examples I could cite. We are experiencing a tidal wave of white supremacist extremism in which individuals and communities are attacked based on who they are. It targets entire groups with the goal of making them feel unsafe, unwelcome, and unable to protect themselves.

But I don't just want to share examples. I want to talk about data—the hard facts that are too often missing from these conversations.

According to data released earlier this year by the ADL, every single extremist-related murder in 2022 was committed by right-wing extremists. The vast majority of those were white supremacists.²

Over the past decade, 96 percent of the events in which extremists killed someone were committed by people with right-wing ideologies. In the same time period, more than half of the murders linked to extremism were committed by right-wing actors, while only 4 percent were linked to left-wing actors.³

A 2022 University of Maryland-led study specifically looked at disparities in violence among extremist groups, concluding radical acts perpetrated by individuals associated with left-wing causes are less likely to be violent.⁴

Research from the START Center at the University of Maryland also tracks trends in mass casualty terrorist attacks and failed terrorist plots. Attacks are considered “mass casualty” when the perpetrator intended to kill or injure four or more people. Their data show that, over the last 30 years, far-right actors were responsible for 74 percent of these planned or successful terrorist attacks by domestic extremists. In comparison, far-left perpetrators were responsible for only 13 percent.⁵

It's not just NGO's and academic institutions that are tracking this disproportionate threat. In late 2020, former President Trump's Department of Homeland Security found that white supremacists were “the most persistent and lethal threat” in the United States.⁶

This isn't to say that other forms of political violence don't exist. Of course they do. That includes left-wing or anarchist violence; Islamist violence; or violence that doesn't fit neatly into one particular ideology.

There was a time when left-wing extremist violence was a bigger threat: nearly 50 years ago, during the 1970's. But since the 1990's, available data show that right-wing extremism has consistently been the most violent domestic terror threat.⁷

Unless we're clear-eyed about the facts, the data, and the reality of the current violent threat—which every indicator tells us is disproportionately emanating from the far right—we will never be able to intervene and break the cycle of violent extremism.

It's all the more important to understand this reality because it's not happening in a vacuum. Rather, the rise in right-wing violence has gone hand-in-hand with an increasing normalization of right-wing extremism.

Human Rights First is particularly focused on the mainstreaming of hate. The ideology driving far-right extremism, and the broader antidemocratic movement, in the United States has become increasingly visible in our institutions, policies, and public discourse, and represents an existential threat to our democracy. This hate and bigotry is not new but it has been given new life through the rampant spread and normalization of racist, antisemitic, misogynistic, anti-LGBTQ+, and other bigoted conspiracies.

Conspiracy theories which were once relegated to the dark corners of the internet—like the Great Replacement Theory—are espoused not just by mass murderers but by elected officials, political candidates, and pundits.

²Anti-Defamation League (ADL). (2023). “Murder and Extremism in the United States in 2022.” <https://www.adl.org/resources/report/murder-and-extremism-united-states-2022>.

³Bump, P. (2023, February 28). “Underrecognized: Extremist murders are usually from right-wing actors.” The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/02/28/extremism-right-wing-deaths/>.

⁴Jasko, K.; LaFree, G.; Piazza, J.; and Becker, M. (2022, July 18). “A comparison of political violence by left-wing, right-wing, and Islamist extremists in the United States and the world.” PNAS. <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2122593119>.

⁵National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2023). “Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS).” https://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/publications/local_attachments/PIRUS-Mass%20Casualty%20Extremist%20Offenders_0.pdf https://www.start.umd.edu/sites/default/files/publications/local_attachments/PIRUS-Mass%20Casualty%20Extremist%20Offenders_0.pdf.

⁶Sands, G. (2020, September 8). “White supremacy is ‘most lethal threat’ to the US, DHS draft assessment says.” CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/08/politics/white-supremacy-dhs-draft-assessment/index.html>.

⁷Watson, D. (2002, February 6). Testimony Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/the-terrorist-threat-confronting-the-united-states>.

Policies aimed at dehumanizing and stripping away the rights of certain communities are fueling attacks on those communities—such as the neo-Nazi organizations using anti-drag and anti-trans protests as recruitment opportunities.

Violent extremists take the normalization of conspiracy theories and bigotry as license for violence: for attacks on our democratic institutions and on vulnerable populations. It's not just a threat to our communities; it also directly threatens our democracy and our national security.

The challenge ahead of us is great because this extremism is no longer relegated to fringe actors and violent groups, it is both mainstream and it is a movement. Therefore, mitigating this threat requires an approach that includes addressing the violent and most visible components of the movement, but also the mainstream networks that build support for the movement.

It also means acknowledging the age-old bigotry this network has employed, addressing their attacks on civil and human rights across our country, and repairing and reconciling the harm it has caused.

So what can we do about it?

While we can and should invest in responsive measures like security, we also acknowledge that we can't simply sue, prosecute, or barricade our way out of this crisis.

We need comprehensive solutions emphasizing protection of our democratic institutions, processes, and values. It also requires real accountability, supporting targeted communities, and building societal resilience to mitigate the further normalization of hate and extremism. This includes:

- *Defending Election Legitimacy.*—Undermining the legitimacy of our elections, the cornerstone of our democracy, is a key goal of this extremist movement and is already under way.
- *Protecting Democratic Institutions & Civil Rights.*—Creating a concerted effort to protect our public education, health care, and voting systems—as well as communities' fundamental civil and human rights—against the antidemocratic attacks at the local, State, and Federal levels.
- *Seeking Accountability.*—Holding elected officials accountable for the impact of the extremist rhetoric they perpetuate, such as the harmful “invasion” narrative and “Great Replacement” conspiracy theory in furthering violence.
- *Confronting Extremism in the Military and Law Enforcement.*—Recognizing and addressing the threat of extremism in the military and law enforcement.
- *Empowering Civil Society.*—Empowering our society with tools to identify mis/disinformation and conspiracies and prevent radicalization: from media and digital literacy and other forms of education, to resources for parents, educators, and caregivers.
- *Combating Armed Extremism.*—Making it harder for violent extremists to get their hands on the deadly weapons too often used in these acts of mass violence.
- *Building Cross-Community Coalitions.*—Understanding that growing, mainstreamed extremism puts all of us at risk—and building cross-community coalitions rooted in the necessary idea that none of us are safe if one of us isn't safe.

The facts and the data are clear: we are grappling with a very real threat of right-wing extremism in this country. Every single statistic makes clear that the vast majority of extremist violence is perpetrated by those motivated by white supremacist and other right-wing ideologies. Acknowledging that doesn't take away from the fact that other forms of political violence exist. But this moment requires us to be clear-eyed about our reality if we're to do something about it.

Again, I'm grateful for the opportunity to be here today, and I look forward to your questions. Thank you very much.

Chairman BISHOP. Thank you, Ms. Spitalnick. I now recognize Mr. Julio Rosas for 5 minutes for his opening statement.

STATEMENT OF JULIO ROSAS, SENIOR WRITER, TOWNHALL

Mr. ROSAS. Thank you, Chairman Bishop, and this committee for having this hearing on what I believe to be an important subject that is often overlooked in the national discourse.

What has been happening in and around in Atlanta over the police training facility is part of the on-going repercussions of the BLM and Antifa riots in 2020. In my capacity as the senior writer for Town Hall, I covered many of these BLM and Antifa riots first-

hand, and I can tell you that these were very destructive events, not just in the moment into the cities in which they occurred, but also to our Nation's overall approach to law and order. During that chaotic time in our country's history, the same story repeated itself. The far left organized to attack not only police officers, but also neighborhoods and innocent bystanders, many of whom were minorities. Sometimes the anger was over justified police actions, like the riot in Kenosha, Wisconsin. I want to be clear. Yes, there were BLM protests that were peaceful. The common statistic that is cited is around 93 percent of them were peaceful. To that I say thank goodness, because in that 7 percent of violence, over \$2 billion worth of damage was done to places across the country, sometimes repeatedly in the same area. Dozens of lives were lost, and an untold number were hurt or injured, with myself being included.

I also want to make clear that Antifa is very much a real movement within the United States, and they can pose a real threat to the safety of innocent Americans. They are not, as Representative Jerry Nadler has claimed, a myth. I have seen their destructive actions first-hand. In the aftermath of so many riots I have seen the on-going decay that lawlessness brings in so many of our cities. The criminal elements saw how a fragile police force can be when they are underfunded and under supported.

These days, it does not even take a controversial police action to spark riots. We saw this recently in Chicago and Los Angeles just a few weeks ago. Today the issue is not necessarily police funding. Because of the increase in crime, localities who did take away money in the name of social justice have put the money back, but the damage was done. Today's criminals have no fear, because why would they? Law enforcement is understaffed, and even when arrests are made, pro-criminal DAs give them sweetheart deals so they can go back out and commit crimes again. What is being done under the guise of antiracist measures has led to minority communities being terrorized by this encouraged criminal element.

Because of what happened 3 years ago, the far left is emboldened to occupy a force to attack police, the construction company, and the downtown area. It is a forced version of the autonomous zone created in Seattle that was allowed to exist despite its dangers, for almost a month in 2020. I do not know where this country is headed, but I anticipate that intentions are not lowered and action is not taken, events like the outcome of the 2024 Presidential election may spark another wave of violence that the country might not come back from.

The anger and breakdown of order is real. It is visceral. I have seen it for myself in both our inner cities and at our Southern Border, where I just recently returned from in El Paso. The law enforcement agencies and the judicial system must take steps now if they want to prevent a continuation of the recent violence. If they do not, then I suspect I will be as busy as I was in 2020.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Rosas follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JULIO ROSAS

Thank you Chairman Bishop and this subcommittee for having this hearing on what I believe to be an important subject that is often overlooked in the national

discourse. What has been happening in and around Atlanta over the police training facility is part of the on-going repercussions of the BLM and Antifa riots in 2020.

In my capacity as the senior writer for Townhall, I covered many of these BLM and Antifa riots first-hand and I can tell you these were very destructive events, not just in the moment and to the cities in which they occurred, but also to our Nation's overall approach to law and order. During that chaotic time in our country's history, the same story repeated itself: the far left organized to attack not only police officers but also neighborhoods and innocent bystanders, many of whom were minorities. Sometimes, the anger was over justified police actions, like in the riot in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

I want to be clear, yes, there were BLM protests that were peaceful. The common statistic cited is around 93 percent of them were peaceful and to that I say, thank goodness, because in that 7 percent of violence, over \$2 billion worth of damage was done to places across the country, sometimes repeatedly in the same area. Dozens of lives were lost and an untold number were hurt or injured, myself included.

I also want to be clear that Antifa is very much a real movement within the United States and they can pose a real threat to the safety of innocent Americans. They are not, as Rep. Jerry Nadler claimed, a myth. I have seen their destructive actions first-hand. They go by different names, such as Rose City Antifa or the DC Youth Liberation Front, but they are united in their radical beliefs to take down not just their local police department, but the United States as we know it.

In the aftermath of so many riots, I've seen the on-going decay that lawlessness brings in so many of our cities. The criminal element saw how fragile a police force can be when they are unfunded and under-supported. These days, it does not take a controversial police action to spark riots. We saw this in Chicago and Los Angeles just a few weeks ago.

Today, the issue is not necessarily funding. Because of the increase in crime, localities who did take money away in the name of social justice have put the money back, but the damage was done. Today's criminals have no fear, because why would they? Law enforcement is understaffed and, even when arrests are made, pro-criminal DAs give them sweetheart deals so they go back out and commit crimes again. What is being done under the guise of anti-racist measures has led to minority communities being terrorized by this encouraged criminal element.

Because of what happened 3 years ago, the far left is emboldened to occupy a forest to attack police, the construction company, and the downtown area. It's a forest version of the "autonomous" zone created in Seattle that was allowed to exist, despite its dangers, for almost a month in 2020.

I do not know where this country is headed, but I anticipate if the tensions are not lowered, events like the outcome of the 2024 Presidential election may spark another wave of violence that the country might not come back from. The anger and the breakdown of order is real, it's visceral. I have seen it for myself, in both our inner cities and at our Southern Border, where I have just come from. The law enforcement agencies and the judicial system must take steps now if they want to prevent a continuation of the recent violence. If they do not, then I suspect I will be as busy as I was in 2020. Thank you.

Chairman BISHOP. Thank you, Mr. Rosas.

Members will be recognized by order of seniority for their 5 minutes of questioning. An additional round of questioning may be called after all Members have been recognized.

I now recognize myself for 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. Rosas, as you note in your book, we have seen this phenomenon where Members of Congress—you just made reference to Mr. Nadler referring to Antifa as a myth, that it is a false issue, the FBI director said that Antifa is, "not a group or an organization, it is a movement or an ideology", Secretary Mayorkas insists that Antifa should not be called domestic terrorists. It seems to me we have got to distinguish between ideological movements and those who lapse over into something beyond that.

You made a distinction talking about BLM protests, that 93 percent were peaceful, but the 7 percent were remarkably destructive and violent. Speak to that. Isn't it important for all of us to draw those distinctions clearly and not slough them over, not blur them?

Mr. ROSAS. Absolutely. Just because Antifa is—they have—as you mentioned, they very much operate on a decentralized small unit level, and that's on purpose so that local law enforcement has a harder time trying to take action and take it down, because if they take down one cell, there's another one in the same area, particularly Portland and the Pacific Northwest. There's even some here in the D.C. area. So, yes, I mean, this isn't complicated. This is a real movement that people identify with, and they have historically, even before 2020, taken violent action against innocent people.

Chairman BISHOP. As best I have been able to see, Antifa in particular, and just observations I have made, they are organized around the motion of violent protest.

Mr. ROSAS. Yes.

Chairman BISHOP. I guess I would ask you if that is an accurate understanding. So if they exist in these small cells, maybe linked by this ideology of some sort, how are they organized and led and how do they interact and coordinate with each other and how do they get their funds? If you have insight about that.

Mr. ROSAS. So, I mean, just how any other group kind-of organizes today. I mean, they all use social media. Half the reason why I knew where to be in 2020 is because they advertise freely on social media sites like Twitter. Now, this is pre-Elon Musk Twitter. Some of them have been taken down in the time since he took over. But they organize on social media, they organize in encrypted chats as well. When it comes to funding, I mean they openly solicit donations on their PayPals, Venmos, Cash App. That's kind-of how they, at least publicly, are able to sustain themselves.

I mean just from personal experience—you know, I used to live in the D.C. area, unfortunately, and I would see some of the same people over and over again at these protests, and I would kind-of wonder how you're able to hold down a job if you're constantly at these things. Of course, I'm there because that's my job to cover what they're doing. So it's not really complicated. They organize openly on social media and more discrete ways, and they raise money openly too.

Chairman BISHOP. Thank you, Mr. Roses.

Mr. Erickson, and somewhat quickly, because I got a limited amount of time left, from your perspective, your experience, Homeland Security. Is Antifa, groups like that, a real threat that needs to be attended to by Congress and by the Department?

Mr. ERICKSON. Absolutely, it's a real threat.

During the summer of 2020, when I was at Homeland Security, I traveled with the then-Secretary to Portland to visit with our Federal law enforcement officers who were at that time in the midst of well over a month of continued, sustained, violent assault. It's a very real phenomenon. It's a very real danger, and we should deal with it.

Chairman BISHOP. Ms. Gaines, toward the end of your statement, I sort-of had to hurry you along at the end, but I want to get to that in particular.

I was troubled, and it was just spoken of outside the hearing before that, the vice president for student affairs at San Francisco sort-of lauded what happened to you, or at least said that it was—

people who attacked you demonstrated “the value of free speech and the right to protest peacefully”. What is your reaction to statements like that about the mob that you confronted?

You got about 45 seconds. You can take it all.

Ms. GAINES. What I saw was not peaceful by any means. The vice president releases an email to their student body applauding—word for word—I applaud the tremendously brave students who behaved the way they did. Which, when I read this, knowing what I know, what I went through, seeing what I saw, that was not peaceful. To applaud that behavior from an institution of higher education is chilling. It’s terrifying that that is something we’re encouraging or encouraging, we’re celebrating. By no means did they say we uphold the freedom of speech or condemn violence.

Chairman BISHOP. I think that is a critically important point, and I appreciate you making it.

My time has expired.

I now recognize Ranking Member Ivey for 5 minutes for questions he may have.

Mr. IVEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Gaines, this is the topic that is a little off-topic for the hearing, I think, but wasn’t the Stanford official who made those comments removed from her position?

Ms. GAINES. This was at the San Francisco State University, so I’m not entirely sure about Stanford, but she was not removed. Her name is Dr. Jamillah Moore and she’s the vice president of student affairs.

Mr. IVEY. Right, but the praising of these kinds of activities on college campuses, do you know about some of the steps other universities have taken to try and address this?

Ms. GAINES. I’m just here to talk about what happened at San Francisco State University.

Mr. IVEY. Fair enough, fair enough.

Let me ask this—let me read this piece here. Just over 27 years ago, the prominent white supremacist, Louis Beam, Jr. published a now-infamous essay titled “Leaderless Resistance”. Extremist organizations being argued were too vulnerable to government disruption, the future of white supremacy was individual. Lone actors and small, self-organized groups that could take action at their own initiative was the way to go.

Mr. Rosas, let me ask you if you are familiar with this lone-actor approach that has been taken by some of the right-wing extremists, especially the ones who are committing massive attacks that are killing multiple people. Have you seen any of those activities on the news?

Mr. ROSAS. On the news, yes.

Mr. IVEY. OK. Have you researched or studied any of those activities?

Mr. ROSAS. Well, which one specifically? Like, are we talking about El Paso, Buffalo, or?

Mr. IVEY. Pick one. I mean, unfortunately, there are dozens of these. Yes, take Charlottesville. I mean, what do you—

Mr. ROSAS. I was there covering it. I was there. OK. Yes, I’m acutely aware of what happened there.

Mr. IVEY. OK. Did you find that troubling and disturbing?

Mr. ROSAS. Of course.

Mr. IVEY. OK.

Mr. ROSAS. I also found it troubling that a majority—a big reason for the violence was how ill-prepared local law enforcement was.

Mr. IVEY. Right.

Mr. ROSAS. They were not separating the two sides. I walked through the crowd and I found myself in between the two sides fighting. There were State police on the other side of the road.

Mr. IVEY. All right. So you are not blaming the police for the—you are not blaming the police for the killing of Ms. Heyer?

Mr. ROSAS. I'm blaming the poor planning. Because when there's big events like that, you want to make sure that no vehicles are able to drive in those areas to prevent exactly what happened later on that afternoon. So there was multiple failures. Just like January 6, there's multiple failures to adequately prepare.

Mr. IVEY. I will come back to January 6. But the killing of Ms. Heyer, you agree with the neo-Nazi, Mr. Fields, who drove the car and hit her with that right?

Mr. ROSAS. I'm sorry, can you repeat the question?

Mr. IVEY. The neo-Nazi who drove the car that killed Ms. Heyer, you will agree was responsible for her death?

Mr. ROSAS. Oh, directly, absolutely. Yes.

Mr. IVEY. Right. He was convicted? I think he pled guilty to two different sets of charges, has a double life sentence he is serving. Do you agree with that?

Mr. ROSAS. Yes.

Mr. IVEY. All right. Then there was a civil suit. Actually, you might be some connected to that, Ms. Spitalnick, in which leaders of the organization which helped to support this Unite the Right rally were held to be liable, and there were damages imposed. I don't remember the amount. But you understand that that happened as well, right?

Mr. ROSAS. Yes.

Mr. IVEY. OK, and there were civil rights violations that were connected with those activities, right?

Mr. ROSAS. Oh, yes, sure.

Mr. IVEY. OK. With respect to January 6, I guess I will come to mute you, Mr. Erickson. You mentioned that Portland was disgraceful and should never happen again, and I certainly agree with that position.

Mr. ERICKSON. Right.

Mr. IVEY. Would you agree that January 6 was disgraceful and should never happen again?

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes, I would.

Mr. IVEY. OK. One of the things I wanted to ask you with respect to the solutions, you talked a little bit about some of the activities, but this committee has had a hearing with respect to—well, one of the issues we could have considered at that hearing was countering false information, disinformation that pushes these kinds of ideologies forward. When you were at Homeland Security, did you pursue any of those activities, or do you think that that would be useful in some of these scenarios to try and address—whether you

think it is right- or left-wing violence, that we should try and address it in those ways?

Mr. ERICKSON. I don't think it's the Government's place to necessarily be in the business of deciding what is or is not appropriate speech. I think that obviously, there's plenty of misinformation and disinformation floating around on the internet. I think people have to be mature consumers of that information.

Mr. IVEY. Let me give you an example that is a little off-topic for this, but false allegations about active shooters at elementary schools and communities. We now have a scenario where people, rather than pulling the fire alarm for whatever reason, now are making calls saying there is an active shooter at elementary school X even though there isn't one. Would you agree that that is something that the Government should take steps to respond to and denounce so that parents don't go crazy, police don't go down with weapons drawn and accidentally shoot somebody, teachers don't freak out. Do you think that would be appropriate to address that kind of misinformation?

Mr. ERICKSON. Of course.

Mr. IVEY. OK. My time has expired.

I yield back.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentleman yields back. Thank you.

I now recognize the Ranking Member of the full committee, Mr. Thompson, for his 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

Mr. Erickson, what was your position at DHS?

Mr. ERICKSON. I held a number of positions. I was there from February 2018 until January 2021. So I was the law enforcement advisor in the Office of Partnerships and Engagement, I was law enforcement counselor to three Secretaries, I was deputy chief of staff, and very briefly, acting chief of staff at the end.

Mr. THOMPSON. So, are you familiar with the data produced by DHS relative to domestic terrorism?

Mr. ERICKSON. It depends what data you're speaking of.

Mr. THOMPSON. The Office of Intelligence and Analysis publishes an annual report on domestic terrorism.

Mr. ERICKSON. I'm familiar with the Office of Intelligence and Analysis, I am not familiar with the specific data points that you may be referencing.

Mr. THOMPSON. So if I told you that the director of Intelligence and Analysis and the director of the FBI annually report to this committee, would you understand that that is what happens?

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes.

Mr. THOMPSON. If I told you that in both instances, the director of Intelligence and Analysis and the FBI said the No. 1 domestic terrorist threat to the homeland was radical right-wing extremism. Are you familiar with that?

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes. You're referencing the under secretary, I assume, of I&A, Intelligence and Analysis, and the director of the FBI. Yes, I'm familiar with that. I'm also familiar with the fact that that was referenced in the 2020 Homeland Threat Assessment that was released, again, under the Trump administration.

Mr. THOMPSON. So the No. 1 threat to the homeland is radical right-wing domestic terrorism?

Mr. ERICKSON. Well, I mean, if you're saying what's the No. 1 threat to the homeland, I would say that the 100,000 lives lost to opioids, largely fueled by the fentanyl, now that's affecting the homeland.

Mr. THOMPSON. No. No, no, no, no. Based on the testimony and in that report, since you are familiar with it, just repeat for the committee what those two individuals said.

Mr. ERICKSON. If you're speaking about domestic terror threat, then that—

Mr. THOMPSON. Yes.

Mr. ERICKSON. Then yes what you said is accurate.

Mr. THOMPSON. It is, correct, right?

Mr. ERICKSON. Correct.

Mr. THOMPSON. The data says that radical right-wing domestic terrorism is the No. 1 threat to the homeland. In your report to the Department, why would you say going after a smaller percent of the threat rather than the larger percent of the threat?

Mr. ERICKSON. I'm sorry, which report? My report?

Mr. THOMPSON. No, no, the same report I just asked you about.

Mr. ERICKSON. OK. Why are we discussing left-wing domestic terrorism?

Mr. THOMPSON. You never mentioned right-wing. Everything you talked about was about left-wing.

Mr. ERICKSON. Correct.

Mr. THOMPSON. I am saying, why would you talk about a smaller component of it when the data shows just the opposite?

Mr. ERICKSON. Well, I was asked to testify in a hearing, I believe, titled Left-wing Extremism.

Mr. THOMPSON. OK. So if I ask you, in your professional opinion, what is the most serious threat to the homeland, radical right-wing extremism or left-wing extremism, based on the data?

Mr. ERICKSON. I just want to be clear, if you're talking about the greatest threat to the homeland, I would take a much larger aperture in terms of what I'm looking at other than domestic terrorism. I'd be looking at the threat from China, Russia, Southern—

Mr. THOMPSON. No, no, no.

Mr. ERICKSON. Well, that's—

Mr. THOMPSON. I understand.

Mr. ERICKSON. OK. Domestic—

Mr. THOMPSON. But you gave testimony to this committee about left-wing.

Mr. ERICKSON. Correct.

Mr. THOMPSON. So what is your testimony if I ask you a question about right-wing, which is the most documented threat based on testimony from the director of National Intelligence and the FBI?

Mr. ERICKSON. I would say that I condemn right-wing terrorism, white supremacist extremism, left-wing terrorism, I condemn all politically-motivated violence in this country.

Mr. THOMPSON. Based on the data, are you familiar with which one is the most?

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes.

Mr. THOMPSON. Which one isn't?

Mr. ERICKSON. According to the data that you cited, right-wing extremism is responsible for more deaths than left-wing extremism.

But to act like only one exists and to ignore the other does a disservice to the American people. I think that's the point of this hearing.

Mr. THOMPSON. I yield back.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize the gentlewoman from Georgia, Mrs. Greene, for her 5 minutes of questioning.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, Riley, I want to thank you for being here today. I want to recognize that you are a hero and a champion to women and little girls all over the country. Your bravery and courage is admired not only by little girls and women, but by Americans all over. This goes across the political divide. I think you probably had no idea, all the years you spent training in the pool, working out, you had no idea—earning your college scholarship, competing in the sport, women's sport, by the way, that you trained to compete in, you had no idea that you would be sitting in a committee before Congress about left-wing organized violence. But here you are today. I think that all started with having to compete with a man who is 6'1", named William Thomas, a biological male that invaded your sport, invaded your privacy, and came in to defeat, demoralize, and completely destroy the sport that you love. So, No. 1, I want to recognize that and I want to thank you.

I would also like to ask you a question here. This is in your testimony, you said that you were threatened, intimidated, assaulted, and held hostage. I would like to just give you a minute to go ahead and expand on that when you weren't able to finish. Please expand on that.

Ms. GAINES. Right. I know you guys saw a brief snippet of what I saw for hours, so I'll kind-of expand on kind-of what was being yelled and said to me to elaborate on why I'm here on behalf of condemning violence.

In this room where I was held hostage and essentially held for ransom—actually, not essentially, I was held for ransom—the protesters from outside the room were yelling at the officers who were on the outside of the door protecting me, you're only protecting her because she's a white girl. Of course, these officers then were terrified. They were terrified to do their job because who wants to be accused of that accusation? They were yelling things such as, you shouldn't have come here, you knew this was going to happen, you were asking for this. Open that door and let us at her and we'll handle her. She doesn't get to go home safely. She doesn't deserve to go home to her.

Ms. GREENE. Ms. Gaines, you were there that day, what was the topic you were speaking on?

Ms. GAINES. Let me reiterate what I was there speaking on. I was there speaking on behalf of protecting women's sports. My speech consisted of—I probably spoke for 45 minutes, to which I opened it up for question and answers afterwards, encouraging—actually only opened it to opposing questions because I wanted to have this conversation, not because I want controversy, but because I want to have that open dialog. I think that's how we create solutions. My speech consisted of—I, of course, talk about what it means to be a female athlete, the amount of training, the dedica-

tion, the sacrifices that you have to give to compete at the level I was competing at. That national championships is the fastest meet in the entire world. I talked about what that experience looked like. I talked about the locker room. I talked about the silencing, the very real silencing that we dealt with because of our universities. Of course——

Ms. GREENE. Ms. Gaines, may I ask you, any of the people that threatened your life, your safety, kidnapped you, and held you hostage in that room that day, were any of those right-wing extremists?

Ms. GAINES. No. The people who were in the room for the speech portion, it was about 50 percent protesters versus 50 percent supporters. But of course, the aftermath of really the ambush—again, I can't tell you every single one of their political affiliation, but I can almost certainly say that there were no right-leaning protesters in that room.

Ms. GREENE. OK. I want to point out, because there has been a lot lost here, let's talk about the recent four mass shootings in the past 5 years. Colorado Spring shooter identified as non-binary, Denver shooter, identified as trans, Aberdeen shooter, identified as trans, Audrey Hale, the Nashville shooter, identified as trans. But trans people only make up about one-half of 1 percent of the population. Just recently, there was a trans day of vengeance, which is definitely not right-wing extremism or violence. This looks terrifying, and it is definitely from the left, because on the right, I can assure you, we believe in two genders, it is male and female. We support Title IX women's sports, you, Riley Gaines, and any other female athlete that wants biological men to stay out of their sports dressing rooms and women's privacy areas.

This is what left-wing extremism and violence stems from, is the movement that wants to use trans terrorism against Americans, violating the whole idea of biological science that there are two genders, and that children should not be coerced and brainwashed into this sick ideology.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentlelady yields back.

I now recognize Dr. Thanedar of Michigan for his 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. THANEDAR. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the Trump administration's Homeland Threat Assessment that says that among domestic violent extremists, white supremacist extremists will remain the most persistent and lethal threat in the homeland.

Chairman BISHOP. Without objection, so ordered.*

Mr. THANEDAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

When we look at political violence, we must make a distinction between violence against people versus violence against property. As Ranking Member Ivey has pointed out, right-wing violence has been far, far deadlier than left-wing violence.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to read the names of just a handful of recent victims of right-wing political violence. Again, these are

*The information has been retained in committee files and is also available at https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2020_10_06_homeland-threat-assessment.pdf.

names of men, women, and children, neighbors, nieces and nephews, grandmas and grandpas, who were killed by right-wing violence.

Less than 2 weeks ago, on May 6, in Allen, Texas, a shooter, wearing a vest reading right-wing death squad, killed Daniel and Sophia Mendoza, age 11 and 8, Aishwarya Thatikonda, age 26, Christian LaCour, age 20, Elio Cumana-Rivas, age 32, Cindy and Kyu Cho, age 35 and 37, and their son, James Cho, age 3. On November 19, 2022, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, an anti-LGBTQ-motivated shooter killed Daniel Davis Aston, age 28, Kelly Loving, age 40, Ashley Paugh, age 35, Derek Rump, age 38, Raymond Green Vance, age 22. One year ago, on May 14, 2022, in Buffalo, New York, a white supremacist and proponent of the great replacement theory killed Roberta A. Drury, age 32. Margus D. Morrison, age 52, Andre Mackniel, age 53, Aaron Salter, age 55, Geraldine Talley, age 62, Celestine Chaney, age 65, Heyward Patterson, age 67, Katherine Massey, age 72, Paul Young, age 77, Ruth Whitefield, age 86.

I am running out of time, and I have only gotten through 1 year of victims of right-wing attacks. That doesn't include the many, many victims of mass shooting in which no political ideology was identified, but which were nonetheless enabled by Republicans refusal to pass common-sense gun reforms.

Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize Mr. Ezell for his 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. EZELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Gaines, I want to thank you for your willingness to testify and your bravery for standing up for women. One thing I would like to say as a 42-year law enforcement professional, a sheriff, a police chief, a detective, one of the hardest things these days is to get a person that is willing to testify and to stand up and tell the truth.

In your testimony, you described how you were attacked for telling your side of the story. What kind of message does this send to the young women who might be afraid of speaking up?

Ms. GAINES. This is something just based off the conversations I've had with girls. I know I briefly mentioned it in my testimony, but the overwhelming majority of those girls who were specifically at that NCAA Championships where we raced with Lia Thomas, who's, of course, a biological male, the overwhelming majority of us girls felt so uncomfortable. We felt betrayed, we felt belittled, we—it's, of course, in the locker room especially, it's awkward. It's embarrassing. Again, it's this feeling of—the best word to describe it is traumatic. No one protected us. No one stood up for us. So that's exactly why I'm doing what I'm doing. Again, I was totally thrust into this position. This is never something I wanted. It's still not something I want to be doing, yet I find it necessary.

But the message that it sends, it sends the message that we don't matter, that our feelings, our safety, our privacy, it doesn't matter. We should smile and step aside and allow these men into our spaces, or else you are a bigot.

Mr. EZELL. I want you to describe to this committee—I was reading your—in the second photograph where—and I am going to read

it—I discovered that the overwhelming majority of the girls shared extreme discomfort, being forced to strip down in front of a male who was intact with and exposing male genitalia in the same room. After seeing how this affected every girl at the meet, I decided to stand up and speak out. I resolved to do everything I could to ensure that no other girls feel alone in the fight for their right to compete on a level playing field.

Describe that locker room experience to this committee, please.

Ms. GAINES. First of all, we were not forewarned we would be sharing a changing space. No one told us. No one asked for our consent. We did not give our consent to undress in front of a male. Yet the only time we became aware of this was when it was presented in front of us and it was too late. So what that kind-of looked like in the vein of being extremely transparent, at 6'4"—he's actually taller than 6'1"—a 6'4" male walks in, disrobes and is fully intact with male genitalia, while we were simultaneously undressing as 18- to 22-year-old girls, and we could do nothing about it. I actually immediately left the locker room and I went up to one of the officials on the pool deck and I said how is this allowed to happen? I understand the guidelines for the competition, but what are the guidelines in regards to the locker room. He looks at me and, word for word, says, oh, we actually got around this by making the locker rooms unisex, so it's not a big deal.

I thought about that—unisex. So this meant that any man could have walked into our locker room, not just a self-identifying female, any man, any coach, any parent, any official, any man who wanted to, would have had full access to. Bare minimum, we weren't forewarned. Actually Lia Thomas' teammates who dealt with this every single day all year, when they expressed their discomfort to their administration and they sent an email—and I swear I have a screenshot of their response, their administration responded back with, if you feel uncomfortable seeing male genitalia, here's some counseling resources that you should seek. That's the general consensus of what's happening around the country, which is why I felt it necessary to get in front of colleges and speak. I think it's so important to engage people my age, 22 years old, to understand what's happening, because that's not what you're hearing in the media.

Mr. EZELL. Thank you for your courage. Please do not give up your fight. Please do not be afraid to share your testimony. Thank you so much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Ms. GAINES. Thank you.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize Ms. Ramirez of Illinois for her 5 minutes of questions.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Thank you, Chairman.

Recognizing that my colleague, who was just right of me, almost spent 5 minutes giving names of people who have experienced the worst of the worst threat to our democracy and to themselves through right-wing white supremacist ideas, it is clear that the replacement theory and other white supremacist ideas are leading to an increase in violence targeted toward black and brown people and immigrants specifically.

In 2019, a far-, far-right terrorist killed 23 people at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas. His hate-filled anti-immigrant manifesto referenced a Hispanic invasion of Texas. That word invasion is a word that I hear frequently in this committee room, in the U.S. Congress, by Republican Members referring to immigrants, to asylum seekers. These kind of anti-immigrant attacks have not stopped.

Less than 2 weeks ago, a man in Brownsville, Texas, drove an SUV into a group of migrants, killing 8 people. Police are investigating reports that he yelled anti-immigration rhetoric at the group. This dangerous and disgusting white supremacist rhetoric has fueled deadly violence again and again. White supremacy is antisemitic, it is xenophobic, it is racist, it is sexist, it is homophobic, and it is actively harming our communities right before our eyes with multiple instances of extreme violence.

I will just mention a couple because otherwise I will run out of time. The 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, that resulted in 9 injured and the murder of Heather Heyer, the 2018 antisemitic attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh that led to 11 people dying and injuring 6 more, the 2019 mass shooting in El Paso, Texas, predominantly a Latino neighborhood, where a gunman murdered 23 people and injured 3 more, the 2022 mass shooting in Buffalo, New York, that we have heard about, where the gunman killed 10 black people and injured 3 more. This is not a complete list by any means. That is why I am honored to be co-leading a resolution that is condemning the great replacement theory that Congressman Jamaal Bowman of New York is introducing again, along with other Democratic colleagues. I strongly urge any of my Republican colleagues here to join us in opposing white supremacy. It shouldn't be hard to do so.

As a woman, I take allegations of violence against women very seriously, and as I am sure you do as well, Ms. Gaines. You said that you are a spokeswoman for the Independent Women's Forum, correct?

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Yes, correct.

Ms. GAINES. That is the same Independent Women's Forum that opposed the 1994 Violence Against Women Act because, "wives instigate violence, including severe violence against husbands, more often than husbands do against wives". Is that correct?

Ms. GAINES. What year was this?

Mrs. RAMIREZ. This was in 1994.

Ms. GAINES. I was not born yet, so I'm unsure.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. We have got to do research before we start joining organizations, because if we are going to be fighting violence against women and we are joining organizations that incite violence, that is inconsistent with who we say we are.

Mr. Chair, I would like to submit for the record Independent Women's Forum statement articulating the reasons why they oppose VAWA.

Chairman BISHOP. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information follows:]

ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY HON. DELIA C. RAMIREZ

THERE ARE REAL REASONS TO OPPOSE VAWA

*By Gayle Trotter**April 27, 2012*

You might wonder who could oppose the Violence Against Women Act. Is anybody in favor of violence against women?

Yet there are real issues here, the law's title aside. The VAWA has a sunset provision that requires Congress to reauthorize the law, which is why it is now under debate. The Senate passed a version of it on Thursday, and the House will take up another version next month, sponsored by Cong. Sandy Adams.

This issue deserves serious analysis.

Since the statute's enactment in 1994, observers have pointed out that the law: Federalizes a problem that would be better handled at the State level; embraces gender stereotypes by casting women as victims and men as abusers; and, wastes money on programs that have little to do with actually discouraging violence.

And now, bill supporters have used the occasion of the reauthorization to add unrelated and extraneous provisions, including an expansion of the prosecutorial power of American Indian courts that could deny due process to non-American Indians.

VAWA now touches hot-button immigration issues, which have the potential to encourage immigration fraud, false allegations of abuse, and denial of a rebuttal by the accused spouse, whether male or female.

Americans all want to deter violence, but we also need to protect that foundational principle of the presumption of innocence. As Frances McNinnis wrote in *Slate*: "People who are wrongly accused can face high legal fees, a ruined reputation, and even jail time." Needed resources like shelters and legal aid can be taken by false accusers, denying real victims of abuse access to these supports. That result runs directly counter to the VAWA's spirit.

"The American people deserve results, not reckless demagoguery," Senator John Cornyn wrote. IWF agrees and supports looking at the true provisions of the law, and not letting the name of the bill eliminate our faculty to critically investigate whether the law accomplishes its goals and whether it is the least intrusive and cost-effective manner of achieving the envisioned ends.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Today's hearing is about organized violence, but I am not sure how the Independent Women's Forum is relevant to today's topic other than it has opposed legislation aiming at preventing violence.

This is your first time presenting in a hearing in Congress, correct?

Ms. GAINES. At the Congressional level, yes.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Yes. So I just want to make sure that I document here that as we are talking about violence, as we are talking about left-wing violence, violence against women should be No. 1 issue for all of us. But this is your first time here, but it is not your first time in the political spotlight. I noticed that you spoke not one, but on two CPAC panels in March, and you just got off the campaign show for a matter of candidate for Kentucky Governor Kelly Craft, who said that if she were elected Governor, we would not have transgenders in our school system.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record an article from *The Nation* titled "Meet the Feminists Doing the Koch Brothers' Dirty Work."

Chairman BISHOP. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information follows:]

ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY HON. DELIA C. RAMIREZ

MEET THE “FEMINISTS” DOING THE KOCH BROTHERS’ DIRTY WORK

August 18, 2016

By Joan Walsh

The Independent Women’s Forum has leveraged its “non-partisan” brand to become an aggressive player in Republican politics.

If you watch cable news, you’ve seen someone from an outfit called the “Independent Women’s Forum” promoting a conservative take on the women’s issue of the day. It’s no secret that the group leans right; it grew out of “Women for Judge Thomas,” which formed during Anita Hill’s testimony about Clarence Thomas at his 1991 Supreme Court confirmation hearing, and was formally launched in 1992 by the late Barbara Olson and Rosalie “Ricky” Silberman, along with a cadre of powerful conservative women that included former second lady Lynne Cheney. Still, it’s always billed itself as “non-partisan” and “independent.” In its early years, it promoted IWF-affiliated author Christina Hoff Sommers’s brand of “equity feminism” and opposed the “radical feminism” of the 1990’s women’s movement, which it argued was pushing myths about sexual harassment, pay inequities, and discrimination in the workplace and widespread abuse on college campuses. For years it played no formal role in electoral politics.

But an analysis by the Center for Media and Democracy (CMD), provided exclusively to *The Nation*, reveals that since 2010, IWF and its political arm, Independent Women’s Voice, have become aggressive players in Republican politics, embedded in the network of organizations backed by Charles and David Koch, advocating for the Koch brothers’ myriad concerns, and playing on their “independent” label to elect GOP candidates. If this country is to elect its first woman president, Hillary Clinton will have to face down this powerful conservative women’s group to get there.

“Our value here . . . is taking a conservative message and packaging it in a way that will be acceptable”—Heather Higgins

Increasingly, IWF and IWV are playing a bigger and more open role in Republican politics—while boasting about the way their “independent” label gives them access to voters that groups “branded” as Republican can’t reach. As IWV president Heather Higgins told a convening at the David Horowitz Freedom Center late last year (captured in this video): “Our value here, and what is needed in the Republican conservative arsenal, is a group that can talk to those cohorts [non-Republican women] that would not otherwise listen, but can do it in a way that is taking a conservative message and packaging it in a way that will be acceptable and will get a hearing.”

And at a recent gathering of the Koch-backed American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), IWF Executive Director Sabrina Schaeffer similarly bragged about her group’s success bringing an “independent” message on issues like paid family leave to even “progressive” women. Once IWF provided (highly debatable) information about how such legislation hurts women, “we were able to drop support by a double-digit spread,” Schaeffer told the group, according to notes taken at the event obtained by CMD.

Using their “independent” label to help Republicans isn’t the groups’ only misrepresentation. Although it claims to be neutral on abortion—“The IWF has never taken a stance on abortion,” Sabrina Schaeffer told the pro-choice website Rewire last year—since 2012, all but one of the GOP congressional candidates backed by IWV have had a zero rating from NARAL Pro Choice America, or were newcomers who support strict limits on abortion (the exception was Massachusetts GOP Senator Scott Brown). And while an IWF editor blasted Donald Trump as “Todd Akin on steroids” earlier this year, IWV even spent money to help Akin’s disastrous Senate campaign in 2012.

Despite many conservative leaders’ uneasiness with Trump, Heather Higgins is now an enthusiastic supporter of the man her colleague labeled “Todd Akin on steroids.” Though she once mocked Trump as “the Kardashian of politics,” she’s done a full Kanye West and now supports him—passionately.

“Don’t let perfect be the enemy of the good,” she told a panel titled “Will Conservatives Support Trump?” at the GOP convention in Cleveland last month, according to audio taken there. “Your choice is Hillary Clinton who will be wrong on all issues . . . Trump will surround himself with principled, savvy advisers who will lead us to the best possible outcomes on a wide range of [issues] and his judicial picks.” Though conservatives may be balking now, she said, by November, Trump will win in a “landslide.” To that end, Higgins has turned her Twitter feed into a running defense of Trump, praising his call to “Second Amendment people” to “do

something” about Hillary Clinton as “brilliant,” defending his claim that calling President Obama the “founder” of ISIS was sarcasm, and attacking Trump’s detractors. Remarkably, Trump just made IWF board member Kellyanne Conway his campaign manager.

“It’s clear that IWF and IWV are in the business of saying one thing, but doing another.”—Lisa Graves

“It’s clear that IWF and IWV are in the business of saying one thing, but doing another,” said CMD Executive Director Lisa Graves, who co-authored the report, “The Not-So-Independent Women’s Forum/Voice.” “They call themselves ‘independent,’ while IWF backs policies that echo the corporate lobbying agenda and IWV tells donors it’s a crucial part of the ‘Republican conservative arsenal.’”

The Nation sent three e-mails and made two phone calls to IWF/V asking for comment. One of the e-mails wrongly stated that the group had only helped Republicans. In fact, according to CMD research, it once aided a Libertarian. Communications Director Victoria Coley sent this reply:

“It’s tough to respond to the CMD report that we haven’t yet seen, especially when one of the only things we know about it—its claim that IWV spends money politically “exclusively on behalf of Republicans”—is demonstrably false. If they can’t even get that right—especially when it’s so easy to check—we can’t help but wonder what else the report asserts that just is not so?”

I told Coley that was my mistake, not CMD’s, and sent a list of questions, but heard nothing more.

* * *

In the 1990’s, IWF was a plucky organization devoted to debunking “radical” feminism, promoting the work of IWF author Christina Hoff Summers—remember “Who Stole Feminism?” and “The War Against Boys?”—and railing against new laws prohibiting sex discrimination and sexual harassment, showing (with questionable data) how they would actually hurt women. IWF lobbied against the 1994 “Violence Against Women Act,” claiming “wives instigate violence, including severe violence, against husbands more often than husbands do against wives.” It opposed the gender integration of the Virginia Military Institute and joined with men’s sports organizations to attack Title IX education regulations that protected funding for female sports teams as unfair to men.

But with the arrival of Koch Industries lobbyist Nancy Pfotenhauer in 2001, the group began to affiliate itself more with the issues on the Kochs’ agenda, as well as with groups that the brothers fund. Since then there’s been a steady connection of IWF/V staffers and board members with various Koch affiliates. Pfotenhauer even took over as president of the Kochs’ Americans for Prosperity in 2003, running it jointly with IWF from the same office into 2005.

More than half of IWF’s current board members have either received funding from Koch groups or worked for one of them.

Today, the IWF website looks like it still shares content with Americans for Prosperity, with posts devoted to lowering corporate tax rates and ending the “death tax,” criticizing food stamps, promoting gun rights and fracking—alongside screeds against Hillary Clinton and on how Title IX hurts boys. On its website, IWV says its five core issues areas are “healthcare, responsible government, workplace regulation, energy and economic literacy,” which are all core concerns of the Kochs and their allies. “Economic literacy,” for instance, is defined as the Kochs do: by adherence to free-market principles and opposition to public-employee unions. More than half of IWF’s current board members have either received funding from Koch-affiliated groups or worked for one of them, CMD says, as have roughly half of the IWF staff.

Still, with the hiring of attorney Michelle Bernard as president in 2006, IWF made an attempt to craft a new, genuinely “independent” middle stance, at least on a few issues, to try to bring together women of more diverse points of view. Bernard, who is African-American, expanded outreach to women of different races and classes and succeeded in reaching even some liberal women with her emphasis on education reform and school choice, a cause that in those years began to attract some neoliberal Democrats and frustrated African Americans. A grant from the State Department to work on human-rights issues with Muslim women in Iraq and elsewhere also took the group beyond its normal issues. In 2008, Bernard proved her own independence by backing Obama for president.

But the election of Obama along with the elevation of pharmaceutical heiress and former investment adviser Heather Higgins to chair the IWF board and lead Independent Women’s Voice changed the group’s approach. Pfotenhauer had founded IWV, the group’s 501(c)(4), in 2004, but IWV took a back seat to the more prominent activities of IWF. But the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* ruling unleashed a tide

of dark money, and IWV became a conduit, raising and spending money, and sometimes passing it along to affiliated conservative groups.

Under Higgins, IWF and IWV joined the cadre of right-wing players devoted to blocking Obama's agenda, particularly the Affordable Care Act. IWF produced and ran an ad charging that the ACA would hurt women with breast cancer, for instance. That ad was called "really faulty" by the American Cancer Society and drew a "false" rating from Factcheck.org. Bernard left the group in October 2010. Soon the IWV, under Higgins, would out-raise and outspend IWF, the sister group, according to CMD.

Some of IWV's moves would even seem to undermine IWF's stated principles. The group has, controversially among conservatives, stayed away from the issue of abortion. "It . . . sets us apart from other organizations, because we don't talk about abortion and gay marriage and some of those social issues that are in many ways are very alienating to women," IWF director Schaeffer told *Glamour* magazine in 2013. "So many people are so discouraged when you have people on the fringe saying comments that are obviously offensive, saying things about 'legitimate rape.' I don't know what inspires anybody to say words like that."

But, in fact, CMD found that IWV spent \$850,000 in 2014 supporting GOP Senate candidates who had a zero rating from NARAL, except for Scott Brown. And though Schaeffer specifically criticized Missouri GOP Representative Todd Akin's "obviously offensive" remarks about "legitimate rape" to *Glamour* in 2013, the previous year IWV spent \$67,000 to help Akin in his unsuccessful fight to unseat Senator Claire McCaskill. IWV invested another \$177,000 in Indiana Representative Richard Mourdock's Senate race, even after he said rape "is something God intended to happen," which was also judged by many to be obviously offensive and likely cost Mourdock the election.

"Our investigation showed that Higgins uses IWV's independent brand name to reach independent or Democratic voters and spends money to help anti-choice extremists," CMD's Lisa Graves notes, "while IWF claims it is not anti-abortion and there is no GOP 'war on women.'"

* * *

Indeed, at the David Horowitz event where Higgins bragged about her group's role in the "Republican conservative arsenal," she explained that IWV has success "with audiences that normally don't tend to like to hear from Republicans and conservatives" because "branding matters . . . We have worked hard to create a branded organization that does not carry partisan baggage. It's called 'Independent Women's Voice.' Being branded as neutral, but having the people who know, know that you're actually conservative, puts us in a unique position."

Higgins took credit for turning around Scott Brown's 2010 Senate campaign in Massachusetts (by figuring out that the most important issue to voters was giving Republicans "the 41st vote" against the ACA) and for helping Kentucky GOP Governor Matt Bevin squeak by last year mainly by targeting "Democrats, liberals, and independents," she said. "Having this branding, you can go places where, if you're the [Republican National Committee] or the [Republican Governors Association] . . . they can't get access that we can."

Spending for both IWF and IWV grew by more than 400 percent from 2011 to 2012.

Spending for both IWF and IWV grew by more than 400 percent from 2011 to 2012, according to CMD, reflecting the new investment in electioneering. The two groups have raised \$16 million since 2010. Since the Citizens United decision that year, groups like IWF and IWV don't have to disclose many of their donors, so it's hard to know who's behind the funding explosion. Higgins's Randolph Foundation is a big donor, directing \$3.78 million to IWF since 1998. The Koch-allied anti-Obamacare Center to Protect Patient Rights gave IWV \$250,000 in 2009 to fund its push against the ACA, according to CMD, and the National Right to Work Committee has also funded the group in 2012 and 2013. Donors Trust and Donors Capital Fund, which secretly direct the funding of wealthy conservatives, including the Kochs, gave the groups \$5.3 million between 2002 and 2014, the most recent year for which they have filed data. Although IWV boasts of accepting "no Koch money," IWF received more than \$800,000 from Koch-controlled family foundations between 2001 and 2012, CMD says.

In 2016, IWF and IWV have turned to the threat of Democratic Presidential nominee Hillary Clinton, as well as the pro-family agenda she and her allies are pushing with her campaign. The groups are uniquely placed to try to fight the gender gap that may doom Donald Trump and cost the GOP the Senate. As IWF's Schaeffer told ALEC in July, "The war on women narrative has shifted from a focus entirely on reproductive rights to a focus on making the workplace fair for women. And I don't need to tell you issues of pay equity, childcare subsidies, paid leave mandates,

flexibility, overtime regulation, licensing, retirement—these are all now sort of the new front in the war on women, and we are doing our best to push back on that.”

IWF told women in focus groups that paid family leave actually hurts rather than helps the working poor.

Unfortunately for Republicans, Schaeffer noted, IWF polling shows that “people are overwhelmingly supportive of laws like the Healthy Families Act [which would mandate paid sick leave], and that includes conservatives, and so we have to do a much better job of talking about them.” When IWF told women in focus groups that paid family leave actually hurts rather than helps the working poor—Schaeffer offered no evidence for that claim—support dropped, she told the ALEC meeting. Even among “progressive women,” Schaeffer said, a message that paid leave both hurts the working poor, and limits their own work flexibility—again, she shared no evidence—reduced support by double digits.

The popularity of Democrats’ family support legislation led IWF to put together its own “limited government” family support package, named “Working for Women,” consisting of programs accomplished through the tax codes, like “personal care accounts” that would let a woman save for a family leave tax-free, as well as pushing for comp time rather than overtime, plus deregulating child care to make it more affordable. Schaeffer offered to help ALEC members find ways to push these “limited government” alternatives, rather than have nothing to counter the popular family support proposals put forward by Democrats.

“In my opinion that’s deceptive, although unfortunately it is not usual for Koch-connected groups to behave like front groups that use appealing names that cloak their real agendas, especially to try to win elections,” CMD’s Lisa Graves said.

Meanwhile, Heather Higgins keeps up her Twitter advocacy of Donald Trump.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Mr. Chairman, I also ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a press release regarding a UCLA School of Law study titled “Transgendered People Are Over Four Times More Likely Than Cisgender People to be Victims of Violent Crime.” While they are 1 percent, they are 4 times more.

Chairman BISHOP. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information follows:]

REPORT SUBMITTED BY HON. DELIA C. RAMIREZ

TRANSGENDER PEOPLE OVER FOUR TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN CISGENDER PEOPLE TO BE VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIME

March 23, 2021

Transgender people are over four times more likely than cisgender people to experience violent victimization, including rape, sexual assault, and aggravated or simple assault, according to a new study by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law. In addition, households with a transgender person had higher rates of property victimization than cisgender households.

Researchers analyzed pooled data from the 2017 and 2018 National Crime Victimization Survey, the first comprehensive and nationally representative criminal victimization data to include information on the gender identity and sex assigned at birth of respondents.

Results showed that both transgender women and men had higher rates of violent victimization than their cisgender counterparts, but there were no differences between transgender men and women.

“The media has rightly given attention to the 2020 increase in murders of transgender women of color,” said lead author Andrew R. Flores, Affiliated Scholar at the Williams Institute. “Our study shows that both transgender women and men are also highly vulnerable to non-fatal physical and material victimization.”

Key Findings

- Transgender people (16+) are victimized over four times more often than cisgender people. In 2017–2018, transgender people experienced 86.2 victimizations per 1,000 people compared to 21.7 victimizations per 1,000 people for cisgender people.
- Transgender women and men had higher rates of violent victimization (86.1 and 107.5 per 1,000 people, respectively) than cisgender women and men (23.7 and 19.8 per 1,000 people, respectively).
- One in four transgender women who were victimized thought the incident was a hate crime compared to less than one in ten cisgender women.

- In 2017–2018, transgender households had higher rates of property victimization (214.1 per 1,000 households) than cisgender households (108 per 1,000 households).
 - About half of all violent victimizations were not reported to police. Transgender people were as likely as cisgender people to report violence to police.
- “Research has shown that experiences of victimization are related to low well-being, including suicide thoughts and attempts,” said study author Ilan H. Meyer, Distinguished Senior Scholar of Public Policy at the Williams Institute. “The results underscore the urgent need for effective policies and interventions that consider high rates of victimization experienced by transgender people.”
- Contact Rachel Dowd at dowd@law.ucla.edu for the full report.

About the Study

The report, “Gender Identity Disparities in Criminal Victimization: National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–2018” appears in the *American Journal of Public Health* and is co-authored by Andrew R. Flores, Ph.D., Ilan Meyer, Ph.D., and Lynn L. Langton, Ph.D., and Jody L. Herman, Ph.D.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentlelady’s time has expired.

Mrs. RAMIREZ. Thank you, Chairman.

I yield back.

Chairman BISHOP. I now recognize Mr. Strong for his 5 minutes of questioning.

Before he begins, I would like to remind all Members that the witnesses are the guests of the committee and to maintain the decorum of the committee during questioning of the witnesses.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Erickson, based on your experience in both DHS leadership and local law enforcement, what type of DHS assistance would be helpful to local law enforcement dealing with extreme left-wing violence?

Mr. ERICKSON. Well, as I’m sure you’re aware, the DHS’s I&A is the only statutorily-mandated member of the intelligence community that is required to share information with State and local partners. That’s really the crux of where they can be most helpful. It’s sharing articulable specific and actionable intelligence to State and local partners so that they can actually make use of that intel.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you. Have you heard from local law enforcement who have dealt with extreme left-wing violence about assistance that would help and be helpful to them to deal with this?

Mr. ERICKSON. Well, again, it really boils down to the nature of the intelligence that’s being shared downstream. It has to be tailored to the consumer, in this case, the State or local law enforcement agency. So the more specific, the more detailed in nature that the information or intelligence can be, the more that the receiving agency can make use of it.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you. There have been many comments and questions from my colleagues across the aisle focusing on right-wing violence and domestic extremism. In your opinion, should the political beliefs of a group inform DHS’s decision to take action against violence, or should extremism be addressed consistently?

Mr. ERICKSON. It should be addressed consistently.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you.

Mr. Rosas, in your time on the ground reporting on violent incidents, have you heard from police or other first responders regarding the challenges they face dealing with extreme left-wing violence?

Mr. ROSAS. Yes, because part of the problem is that a lot of people that show up at these violent events, when it comes to the far left, they're not from the local area. So sometimes they're not even aware that they're supposed to be on the lookout for these types of people. I mean, here with the recent case in Atlanta, we had people from Canada and France. Right. So, I mean, that's like a DHS-level type thing.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you. Do you have an opinion on what types of resources may be helpful for them?

Mr. ROSAS. I mean it's kind-of similar with—a lot has been talked about with gun violence. A lot of it just needs to—I mean we don't need anything particularly new, we just need laws to be enforced. When people are attacking private property or individuals, you arrest them and you charge them and you go through the court system. In Portland, what was it, the local DA office dropped over 80 percent of the cases that were brought to them. So they were able to go out and continue that again and again. So it's not that we need anything new. It's just similar with gun control laws, we just need to enforce the ones on the books as opposed to trying to—we do that first before we look at other solutions.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you. Thank you. As someone who is deeply familiar with the groups like Antifa and the threats they present, what can we in Congress be doing to help confront those threats?

Mr. ROSAS. I mean just be consistent in the fact that, again, when you—I mean, I find a little disingenuous to hear some of the Members on the other side of the aisle expressing grief over recent crime incidents when last I checked all the Members on this committee voted against the recent House resolution that was against the D.C. crime bill.

Mr. STRONG. Thank you, Mr. Rosas.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back a minute and 45 seconds.

Chairman BISHOP. So you are yielding that to me, is that correct? Not back to the Chair?

Mr. STRONG. Yes, sir, I am yielding back to you.

Chairman BISHOP. As we get at—I know you don't have a whole lot of—you are not impressed by the topic, the notion of left-wing violence, you sort-of suggested it is a distraction. Someone was furnishing me some of your tweets. In March, Governor DeSantis had this quote that was, quote, tweeted by you, I don't know what's going to happen. The Manhattan District Attorney is a Soros-funded prosecutor. That is an example of pursuing a political agenda and weaponizing the office. Your comment on that was, of course, DeSantis is using the exact same antisemitic white supremacist rhetoric about the Soros-funded black DA. Then you had another tweet in which you said white supremacy and the anti-abortion movement have always been inextricably linked. There is just no quiet part anymore among GOP officials.

So when you are talking about white supremacist violence, are you referring just sort-of to the conservative half of the political spectrum or are you talking about something different? In other words, you say anti-abortion views or white supremacist views about Soros, DAs, or of white supremacists, can you explain what that means to you?

Ms. SPITALNICK. Absolutely.

Thank you, Chairman, and I'm very glad you asked that question.

When I refer to white supremacist violence, I'm talking specifically about the murders and other violence that we've seen at exponential levels over the last few years, including, again, in 2022. Every single extremist murder in this country was committed by a right-wing—

Chairman BISHOP. How about 2023?

Ms. SPITALNICK. In 2023—well, I don't have the statistics for 2023 yet, but if you—

Chairman BISHOP. You know about Nashville.

Ms. SPITALNICK. But I also know about Allen, Texas and a variety of other—

Chairman BISHOP. I don't disagree that you may have—it looks like I have expired the time. If we get another opportunity to speak, maybe we will do some more, but my time is up.

Ms. SPITALNICK. Look forward to it.

Chairman BISHOP. Or the gentleman's time is up, but the gentleman's time having expired, I now recognize Ms. Clarke of New York for 5 minutes of questions.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and thank you to our panelists today.

Mr. Chairman, I have heard oftentimes, particularly when dealing with this subject matter of left-wing organized violence, a lot of time spent on talking about violence that has caused damage to property. But colleagues seem to be omitting certain examples. So I want to make sure that we correct the record here.

Here we have an example—and this is the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing. That is some serious property damage. As a matter of fact, it is \$652 million worth in fact. The Oklahoma City bombing was famously a right-wing attack against the Federal Government, which may be why my colleagues don't talk about it. Though, to be honest, I care much less about property than I do about human lives. Tragically, the Oklahoma City bombing was also incredibly lethal, killing approximately 168 people and injuring an additional 680, making it the deadliest act of domestic terrorism in United States history.

I highlight this to show that right-wing movements in this country have a long history of violence, a long history of being more violent than left-wing movements. But this is nothing new. What is new, though, is the extent to which the Republican Party has enhanced and embraced and encouraged violence, especially under the extreme MAGA cult of Donald Trump.

Let's talk about what has happened to the GOP over the past several years. In 2015 and 2016, throughout his campaign for president, Donald Trump encouraged violence against protesters at his rallies, saying protesters should be roughed up and that his supporters should, "knock the hell out of them". He said attacks on protesters were "very, very appropriate" and something that "we need to do a little bit more of". Republicans had plenty of opportunity and time to recognize what kind of politician Donald Trump was, and they fell in line to support him.

After Trump was elected, right-wing violence went from bad to worse. Here, we all know this photo, this is the photo from the

Unite the Right rally held in 2017, during which a self-identified white supremacist rammed his car into a group of counter-protesters, killing one person and injuring dozens of others. Call that a domestic terrorist attack. In fact, the driver pled guilty to 29 Federal hate crimes, and Ms. Spitalnick helped hold the rally's planners liable for planning a violent attack. I want to thank you for your hard work and dedication to our Nation. At this time President Trump said in the aftermath of the rally that there were very fine people on both sides of the rally, which encouraged white nationalists.

Here is a photo of Portland, Oregon, in 2020. My Republican colleagues have highlighted property damage resulting from these protests. But to me, the most troubling aspect of these protests was that Trump's Department of Homeland Security confirmed that police without identification were using unmarked vehicles to arrest protestors. Unidentified Federal police were kidnapping protestors in unmarked vehicles and the Trump administration's actions in responding to these protests encouraged vigilante justice, chaos, and violence, not law and order.

While in office, Trump also did the following to encourage violence, labeled the news media, "the enemy of the people", encouraged police officers to be tough with people they arrest, encouraged the shooting of looters, praised law enforcement for an extrajudicial killing, and told the Proud Boys, a group so vile as have been labeled a terrorist entity in Canada, to stand back and stand by, galvanizing the group according to their own words in helping to instigate planning for January 6. That brings us to one of the darkest days in American history, the failed insurrection of January 6.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. CLARKE. Right, but we have many examples, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman BISHOP. I recognize Mr. Crane of Arizona for his 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. CRANE. Thank you guys for coming today. I appreciate you guys being here on Police Week.

Mr. Erickson, the lady sitting to your left, Ms. Spitalnick, stated on Twitter that white supremacism is the most dangerous terror threat. Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

Mr. ERICKSON. I think, again, it depends on what context you're looking. Globally I would probably disagree with that.

Mr. CRANE. Well, just look at what she tweeted. Is the most dangerous terrorist threat. What do you think about that?

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes, I would probably disagree with that.

Mr. CRANE. Why is that, Mr. Erickson?

Mr. ERICKSON. Because the global view of threats that we face in this country is much larger than the domestic extremism that we're talking about today. I think that's a completely different hearing, a completely different topic to have. But I think we tend to get myopia when we start talking about specific things that we start talking in hyperbole. That's what I would assume.

Mr. CRANE. Yes. Yes, you are right. We do that a lot around here. We do that a lot around here. That seems like that is one of the predominant themes in this chamber, which is ironic for some

of us that have actually been around the world chasing down real terrorists.

Mr. Rosas, what do you think about that? What do you think about that tweet from Ms. Spitalnick? White supremacy is the most dangerous terror threat. What do you think about that? Yes or no?

Mr. ROSAS. I would agree with Mr. Erickson. If we're talking about—I mean just—I mean globally, there's a lot of bad people out there that want to hurt us. I would also just say that herein the District, just walking down on the street, with homicides being up 7 percent and along with other crimes being up, I wouldn't be stabbed or carjacked or shot, statistically by a white guy in a red hat screaming, this is MAGA country.

Mr. CRANE. Yes, no, exactly. We all know that is the case. I mean, it is not the reason you can't walk down the street in Chicago, New York, Baltimore, et cetera, because of white supremacy. It is just sad, because here is the deal, white supremacy is disgusting. It is disgusting. I look across the aisle at some of my brothers and sisters that don't have the same skin color as me, and you know what I see? I see men and women that were created in the image of God, just like I was. You may have a little more melanin in your skin than I do, I could care less. Even though I don't agree with you politically or your political worldview, you guys are my brothers and sisters and I think it is disgusting.

That being said, you guys are playing a very dangerous game by continually overstating—continually overstating the threat of white supremacy when there are massive threats. It is not white supremacists that are killing tens of thousands of our children in pill form called fentanyl, it is not white supremacy that is storming over our Southern Border right now, it is not white supremacy that is trafficking sex slaves into this country at record numbers, and on and on and on. But if you guys want to keep beating that drum, you are more than—that is your right, that is your right. But it is a reason that a lot of Americans don't take you guys seriously. My brothers, my brothers and sisters, it is a reason why America doesn't take you guys seriously, because you keep beating that drum. It wasn't white supremacists that flew airliners into the World Trade Centers. Guess what? They are still out there. A lot of those folks—because I have actually chased a lot of them overseas, they would love to come into a room like this with an S vest on and clack it off and kill every single one of us. Black, brown, white, they could care less, because you don't share the same religious ideology as them.

So we can keep playing these games. But you guys have seen the CBP individuals in here telling you how many individuals on the terror watch list has come over that Southern Border. I am telling you, my brothers and sisters of different colors than me, of the same color as me, if we are going to get serious about homeland security, we need to stop. We need to be realistic. Yes, I don't know a Member on this side or that side that doesn't think legitimate real white supremacy is disgusting, because it is. Any type of supremacy is disgusting. Any time we devalue anybody or hurt them or harm them with violence because of their skin color is disgusting.

Ms. Gaines, thank you so much for what you are doing. As a dad to two little girls, it is pretty cool to see young women like yourself that have the courage to stand up to what you face on a daily basis. I have said it many times. You know what the No. 1 ingredient missing in this town is, ma'am? It is not intelligence. Do you know what it is?

Ms. GAINES. What is it?

Mr. CRANE. It is courage.

Ms. GAINES. I agree.

Mr. CRANE. You have it.

Thank you. Thank you guys for showing up today.

Ms. GAINES. Thank you.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentleman's very consequential time has expired.

I now recognize Mr. Goldman of New York for his 5 minutes question.

Mr. GOLDMAN. While I really appreciate the lecture from my colleague from Arizona, the problem is that he is speaking, of course, anecdotally.

So let's look at what our actual Executive branch agencies in charge of overseeing white supremacy, overseeing the homeland. Let's look at the homeland threat assessment, which says among DVEs, domestic violent extremists, racially and ethnically motivated violent extremists, specifically white supremacist extremists will remain the most persistent and lethal threat in the homeland, confirmed by the director of the FBI.

Now, I know all of a sudden you all on that side want to defund the FBI, you want to defund the ATF, but the director of the FBI, a Trump appointee, has said that the biggest threat to our homeland is not global terrorism, it is domestic terrorism. We have these witnesses up here who are trying to tell us—and Mr. Erickson, in his opening statement—let me just point this out—this is the big example that we need to be so worried about, because in Atlanta, apparently, there were 23 individuals arrested for crimes ranging from vandalism to assault. We have 650 people who are murdered in mass shootings every single year, almost 2 per day. Mass shootings. Sorry, 600 mass shootings, far more people. We are supposed to be talking here about vandalism. Give me a break. You can't even say—you can't sit here—Mr. Erikson, you were an employee of the Department of Homeland Security, and I want to get to that in a minute—you can't even acknowledge what your own agency said, that the biggest domestic terror threat is white nationalism, white supremacy. You are trying to gaslight us up here as if Antifa, which Mr. Rosas, apparently the expert now in organized terrorist activity, has overruled the FBI director, who says—there is a headline says Antifa is an ideology, not an organization. No, no, no, let's not listen to the FBI director, let's listen to—sorry, what is your title—senior writer at Townhall, who is going to tell us that the FBI director is wrong.

Mr. ROSAS. Yes.

Mr. GOLDMAN. I would like to introduce—there is no question—I would like to introduce by unanimous consent an AP article saying the FBI director says Antifa is an ideology, not an organization.

Chairman BISHOP. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information follows:]

ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY HON. DANIEL S. GOLDMAN

FBI DIRECTOR SAYS ANTIFA IS AN IDEOLOGY, NOT AN ORGANIZATION

By *ERIC TUCKER and BEN FOX*

Published 10:07 PM EDT, September 17, 2020

WASHINGTON (AP)—FBI Director Chris Wray told lawmakers Thursday that antifa is an ideology, not an organization, delivering testimony that puts him at odds with President Donald Trump, who has said he would designate it a terror group.

Hours after the hearing, Trump took to Twitter to chastise his FBI director for his statements on antifa and on Russian election interference, two themes that dominated a congressional hearing on threats to the American homeland.

Referring to antifa, the president wrote: “And I look at them as a bunch of well funded ANARCHISTS & THUGS who are protected because the Comey/Mueller inspired FBI is simply unable, or unwilling, to find their funding source, and allows them to get away with “murder”. LAW & ORDER!”

The Twitter barbs thrust Wray again into a spotlight that he has spent 3 years trying to avoid after his predecessor, James Comey, became entangled in politics before being ultimately fired. Though Wray said as recently as Thursday that the FBI made unacceptable mistakes during its investigation into ties between the Trump campaign and Russia, Trump nonetheless has intermittently lashed out at Wray over the pace of fixing those problems and continues to regard his intelligence community with suspicion because of the Russia probe.

Wray did not dispute in his testimony Thursday that antifa activists were a serious concern, saying that antifa was a “real thing” and that the FBI had undertaken “any number of properly predicated investigations into what we would describe as violent anarchist extremists,” including into individuals who identify with antifa.

But, he said, “It’s not a group or an organization. It’s a movement or an ideology.”

That characterization contradicts the depiction from Trump, who in June singled out antifa—short for “anti-fascists” and an umbrella term for far-left-leaning militant groups—as responsible for the violence that followed George Floyd’s death. Trump tweeted that the U.S. would be designating antifa as a terrorist organization, even though such designations are historically reserved for foreign groups and antifa lacks the hierarchical structure of formal organizations.

The hearing before the House Homeland Security Committee—established after the Sept. 11 attacks to confront the threat of international terrorism—focused almost entirely on domestic matters, including violence by white supremacists as well as anti-government extremists. The topics underscored the shift of attention by law enforcement at a time of intense divisions and polarization inside the country.

But one area where foreign threats were addressed was in the Presidential election and Russia’s attempts to interfere in the campaign.

Wray sought to make clear the scope of the threats the country faces while resisting lawmakers’ attempts to steer him into politically-charged statements. When asked whether extremists on the left or the right posed the bigger threat, he pivoted instead to an answer about how solo actors, or so-called “lone wolves,” with easy access to weapons were a primary concern.

“We don’t really think of threats in terms of left, right, at the FBI. We’re focused on the violence, not the ideology,” he said later.

The FBI director said racially motivated violent extremists, such as white supremacists, have been responsible for the most lethal attacks in the U.S. in recent years. But this year the most lethal violence has come from anti-government activists, such as anarchists and militia-types, Wray said.

Wray also affirmed the intelligence community’s assessment of Russian interference in the November election, which he said was taking the form of foreign influence campaigns aimed at sowing discord and swaying public opinion as well as efforts to denigrate Democratic Presidential nominee Joe Biden.

He said that the U.S. had not yet seen targeting of election infrastructure like in 2016, but efforts to sow doubt about the election’s integrity are a serious concern, he said.

“What concerns me the most is the steady drumbeat of misinformation and sort of amplification of smaller cyber intrusions,” Wray said. “I worry that they will contribute over time to a lack of confidence of American voters and citizens in the validity of their vote.”

"I think that would be a perception," Wray added, "not a reality. I think Americans can and should have confidence in our election system and certainly in our democracy. But I worry that people will take on a feeling of futility because of all of the noise and confusion that's generated."

Trump has resisted the idea of Russian interference aimed at benefiting his campaign and has been eager, along with other administration officials, to talk about intelligence officials' assessment that China prefers that Trump lose to Biden.

He responded on that front Thursday evening, tweeting: "But Chris, you don't see any activity from China, even though it is a FAR greater threat than Russia, Russia, Russia. They will both, plus others, be able to interfere in our 2020 Election with our totally vulnerable Unsolicited (Counterfeit?) Ballot Scam. Check it out!"

Though intelligence officials said in a statement last month that China prefers that Trump lose, they appeared to stop short of accusing Beijing of directly interfering in the election in hopes of swaying the outcome.

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes. Can I respond to that?

Mr. GOLDMAN. No, you cannot. I didn't ask a question.

Chairman BISHOP. It is the gentleman's time. He can spend it any way he chooses.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Mr. Erickson, you went to a meeting at the White House on December 18, 2020, did you not?

Mr. ERICKSON. I'm not sure which meeting you're speaking of.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Well, there is the same day that a group of Trump advisers, Sidney Powell and Patrick Byrne, met with the President in the Oval Office and they discussed the prospect of seizing voting machines. Did you participate in that meeting?

Mr. ERICKSON. No.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Did you hear anything about that plan to seize voting machines?

Mr. ERICKSON. No.

Mr. GOLDMAN. OK. So were you working at the Department of Homeland Security on January 6?

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes, I was.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Because it is interesting to me you talk a lot about left-wing extremist activity in your statement, but you actually worked for the Department of Homeland Security on January 6, and there was no mention of what happened on January 6 in your testimony. It is fair, that is not the topic of—this title of this hearing. I think that is the problem with the hearing, but that is not your fault.

So I just want to be clear. You have no idea—you were not involved in any discussions about seizing voting machines while you were working at the Department of Homeland Security?

Mr. ERICKSON. That is correct.

Mr. GOLDMAN. OK. When did you leave the Department?

Mr. ERICKSON. January the 20th, 2021, at noon.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Why did you leave then?

Mr. ERICKSON. There was an inauguration that occurred at that time.

Mr. GOLDMAN. So a lot of people are held over, right?

Mr. ERICKSON. No, that's incorrect. Not political appointees.

Mr. GOLDMAN. OK. Everyone was out?

Mr. ERICKSON. Basically everybody, yes, to the best of my knowledge.

Mr. GOLDMAN. So let me ask you something. Would you consider the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers to be an organized group?

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Their leaders have been convicted of seditious conspiracy at this point, right?

Mr. ERICKSON. To my knowledge, correct.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Yes, based on what they did on January 6?

Mr. ERICKSON. Correct.

Mr. GOLDMAN. OK. Have any left-wing, Antifa, or any other people been convicted of conspiracy?

Chairman BISHOP. The gentleman's time has expired. The committee will proceed—

Mr. GOLDMAN. Can he answer the question?

Chairman BISHOP. Well, actually, your question was outside of your time as well, so.

Mr. GOLDMAN. So the answer is no, he cannot?

Chairman BISHOP. We will proceed to another round, so you can get another opportunity to follow that up as you would wish.

Mr. GOLDMAN. I figured as much.

Chairman BISHOP. We will proceed to a second round of questioning.

I recognize myself for 5 minutes or what portion of that I might consume.

Ms. Spitalnick, let me go back and give you—because I didn't give you a full opportunity to answer. Just by way of reintroducing the topic, and it sort-of builds off of what Mr. Crane said to some degree. But here is another tweet that you did on April 24. When reporters write the story of Tucker Carlson, do not gloss over who he is. He is a raging white supremacist, misogynist, and bigot who has done more to normalize violent extremism and hate over the last few years than nearly anyone else. I think what I am trying to get at from you, ma'am, and you may not wish to draw such a distinction, but isn't there a distinction between the white supremacy that Mr. Crane was talking about that the Oklahoma City bomber may have been or actually, I guess he was an anti-Government, whether it was white supremacy, I don't recall, I don't know enough about him. But there certainly are malignant theories and groups out there, the New Zealand attacker, so forth. I am not an encyclopedia of that, obviously, but there is a lot of that. But you seem, in your political advocacy to draw an equivalence between that and sort-of right-wing views, conservative views.

So abortion, somebody who is pro-life is a white supremacist to you, at least judging from that tweet. If you object to Soros-funded prosecutors who have sort-of overturned the way prosecutorial activity goes on, you are a white supremacist. If you are Tucker Carlson, you are a white supremacist, misogynist, bigot, et cetera. Is there a distinction or are we talking—Again is that just—are you referring to the whole center right range of the ideological spectrum in the country?

Ms. SPITALNICK. Well, there's a distinction between white supremacist views and white supremacist violence. So when we talk about views, those are precisely the views that you just cited. The tweets that you referenced. People like Tucker Carlson, elected officials, pundits, candidates, others who have normalized and mainstreamed the white supremacist views, like the great replacement theory, talking about things like invasion, talking about things like a globalist effort to change our demographics, change

our electorate, talking about—using terms like Soros or the Rothschilds as subs for the Jewish community as part of this great replacement theory, which is deeply antisemitic, racist, and xenophobic. So when something like that gets a home on primetime news, gets espoused by elected officials and candidates, what that does is then give license to the violent extremists, like those who marched on Charlottesville or shot up the synagogue in Pittsburgh or Chabad of Poway, or the supermarket in Buffalo, who in their manifestos, use that very same great replacement theory to justify the murder of Jewish people, black people, immigrants, and so many others.

Chairman BISHOP. OK, so just to clarify, let's take anti-abortion pro-life, someone of pro-life views, that is equivalent to white supremacy, in your judgment?

Ms. SPITALNICK. There are some in the anti-abortion movement who have trafficked in white supremacist views, who have talked about things like white birth rates and the replacement of the white population and the importance of, "banning abortion in order to protect the white population". I am not saying that everyone who opposes abortion is a white supremacist, but there are absolutely many in the anti-abortion movement who utilize white supremacy to further their goals.

Chairman BISHOP. What percentage?

Ms. SPITALNICK. I couldn't tell you a percentage, but historically there is a deep interconnection between the white supremacist movement and the anti-abortion movement. There's been a lot written about this as well.

Chairman BISHOP. I mean, you can find exceptions. I am sure—Margaret Sanger was a eugenicist, wasn't she?

Ms. SPITALNICK. She could have been. She was, I believe.

Chairman BISHOP. OK, so she was pro-abortion?

Ms. SPITALNICK. So, of course, there are exceptions to every rule.

Chairman BISHOP. Let me ask—

Ms. SPITALNICK. But, that doesn't change the fact that there are those who use white supremacy as a means to further an anti-abortion agenda.

Chairman BISHOP. Mr. Rosas, let me ask you to comment on the, sort-of the subject matter. I don't even know if I can frame a question. It seems to me troubling. I mean, I am accustomed—I have been in politics a few years, and so there came to pass that every person who is a conservative is referred to as a racist repeatedly. Now, the term sort-of evolved to white supremacy. Seems to me that that is destructive for the dialog. Do you not think so?

Mr. ROSAS. Well, yes, because it seems someone sneezes the wrong way and they're accused of white supremacy. I mean, the most prominent example that I was personally witnessed to was the Kyle Rittenhouse shooting. He was immediately labeled as a white supremacist. I believe one of the members of the squad—name not coming to mind—but she said that he was a white supremacist terrorist, completely neglecting the fact that the people that he shot in self defense were all white.

Chairman BISHOP. My time has nearly expired, so I will yield back.

I will recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Ivey, for his second round, 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. IVEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I wanted to do a little housekeeping here. I have got a couple of pieces to offer for the record. I ask unanimous consent to offer these statements from the Brookings Institution, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism.

Chairman BISHOP. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information follows:]

STATEMENT OF DANIEL BYMAN, PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR, SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM OF THE EDMUND A. WALSH SCHOOL OF FOREIGN SERVICE AT GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY; SENIOR FELLOW AT THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

MAY 16, 2023

Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Ivey, and Members of this distinguished subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement for the record.¹

Political violence in the United States is a grave threat not only to the lives of Americans, but also to the health of American democracy. Violence poses a threat to political leaders and to Americans who participate in politics. It polarizes our already-divided country and undermines political discourse.

Although this hearing focuses on left-wing violence and movements like Antifa, it is vital to recognize that in recent years violence linked to white supremacist, anti-government, and other causes lumped under the label “right-wing” have proven far more lethal and more politically consequential. Congress must use its powers to bolster law enforcement, improve our understanding of the threat, and otherwise fight the scourge of extremism. All political leaders must reject those who espouse violence and extremism, creating a clear line between legitimate politics and illegitimate extremism.

The remainder of this statement has three sections. I first provide some caveats on the labels used, as both “right-” and “left-” wing movements are divided, and the uses of terms are politicized. In the second section, I compare left-wing and right-wing political violence, noting in particular the grave danger that anti-government and white supremacist violence has posed in recent years. In the final section, I offer recommendations for reducing the threat of political violence in the United States.

SOME CAVEATS ON LABELS

Using the labels “left-wing” or “right-wing” to describe political violence invariably leads to the conflation, sometimes accidental and sometimes deliberate, of extremist activity with the actions of legitimate political activists. To be clear, the overwhelming majority of the millions of Americans who are concerned about police violence against minority communities and similar legitimate causes associated with the political left in the United States have nothing to do with the violent extreme; similarly, the overwhelming majority of the millions of Americans who favor strong gun rights, are concerned with Federal Government overreach, worry about the level of immigration, and otherwise share concerns associated with the political right have nothing to do with the violent extreme. We can, and should, have a robust debate with people espousing their views, even if unpopular, without the threat of violence. By using the labels “left” and “right” to describe violence extremists I am trying to separate out legitimate politics from illegitimate violence.

Making this more difficult, and in contrast to jihadist groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (ISIS), both left- and especially right-wing extremists are difficult to categorize, with few robust organizations but strong informal networks. “Antifa” is a label under which left-wing extremism is often lumped. Contrary to much commentary, Antifa is not a group or an organization in any traditional sense; rather, it is a set of beliefs shared by a few activists, many of whom disagree with one another considerably. Antifa is short for anti-fascist (itself a word used broadly and inconsistently), and many of its members today focus on what they consider to be

¹ This statement reflects my own personal views only, not those of any of my current or past employers. In addition to the sources cited in this statement, my findings draw on my book, *Spreading Hate: The Global Rise of White Supremacist Terrorism* (Oxford, 2022).

anti-racist activism. They do not have a tight organization or coherent command and control, and indeed the concept of hierarchy is anathema to many local groups. In a few cities their ranks are slightly coherent, but in most places it is a small group of informal activists. Much of the information put out about Antifa, including by prominent figures such as President Trump, has exaggerated its coherence and reach.² Russian influence operations have also attempted to amplify disinformation linked to Antifa.³

Many Antifa adherents do not favor violence of any sort. Others argue it is necessary to be prepared for violence in self-defense. Some of these attend rallies, such as those protesting police brutality, prepared to defend protesters against groups like the Proud Boys. They are prepared, indeed at times eager, to brawl with them. Others “doxx” their opponents, publishing embarrassing private information (usually on their neo-Nazi or other right-wing extremist activities) to get them fired or shamed in their communities.⁴ A smaller number do use violence without even the excuse of self-defense, such as the Antifa adherents who joined broad, and mostly peaceful, anti-Trump or pro-Black Lives Matter protests and smashed the windows of local businesses or threw Molotov cocktails. In a very small—but still notable—number of cases, Antifa activists have used more lethal forms of violence. In July 2019, one activist attacked an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Tacoma, Washington with a rifle and bombs. As this spectrum of activity related to violence suggests, using the label “Antifa” thus tells us little about the specifics of an adherent’s goals or methods.

This organizational chaos is even more pronounced among right-wing extremists. Some are anti-immigrant, some focus on the Black community, and many are anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim. Some hate all these communities. Others are strongly opposed to the Federal Government to the point that they see government officials as agents of tyranny. Making this more complex, many among these extremists embrace a range of conspiracy theories, and some embrace a virulent form of male supremacy. Organized groups themselves are weak: almost every major attack involving right-wing terrorism in the United States was conducted by individuals with little or no group involvement—so-called “Lone Wolf” attacks.⁵ An important exception to this was the January 6, 2021 insurrection, in which violent groups like the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers played leading roles, although even there the majority of participants were not affiliated with these extremist groups.⁶

LEFT WING VS. RIGHT-WING POLITICAL VIOLENCE: COMPARING THE DANGERS

There are different ways to measure the danger posed by political extremists, but one of the simplest is to look at the number of people they kill. In the post-9/11 era, on the left the United States has seen one murder, which occurred when Michael Forest Reinhoeh, a left-wing extremist, shot and killed a member of the right-wing extremist organization Patriot Prayer in Portland in 2020. The killer had previously provided “security” for left-wing protests. He described himself as anti-fascist, but he was not a member of any local Antifa group.

Numbers for right-wing extremist violence are far higher, with numerous high-profile terrorist attacks as well as lower-level assaults, vandalism, and other forms of violence. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, far-right extremists have killed 130 people in the United States, more than any other political cause, including jihadists.⁷ Notable attacks in recent years include the 2018 Pittsburgh Synagogue attack, the 2019 El Paso mall killings, and the 2022 Buffalo market attack. A range of far-right extremists, including organized groups such as the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers as well as hundreds of unaffiliated conspiracy theorists, anti-government extremists,

²Michael Kenney and Colin Clarke, “What Antifa Is, What It Isn’t, and Why It Matters,” *War on the Rocks*, June 23, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/what-antifa-is-what-it-isnt-and-why-it-matters/>.

³Michael Grynbaum, “One America News: The Network that Spreads Conspiracies to the West Wing,” *The New York Times*, June 9, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/oann-trump.html>.

⁴Nellie Bowles, “How ‘Doxxing’ Became a Mainstream Tool in the Culture Wars,” *The New York Times*, August 30, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/30/technology/doxxing-protests.html>.

⁵Daniel Byman and Mark Pitcavage, “Identifying and Exploiting the Weaknesses of the White Supremacist Movement” (Brookings, April 2021), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/identifying-and-exploiting-the-weaknesses-of-the-white-supremacist-movement/>.

⁶For information on the role of these groups and the attack in general, see information at the “Capitol Hill Siege” website maintained by the Program on Extremism at George Washington University at <https://extremism.gwu.edu/Capitol-Hill-Siege>.

⁷See data from the New America Foundation, available at <https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/reports/terrorism-in-america/what-is-the-threat-to-the-united-states-today>.

and ordinary supporters of President Trump, also stormed the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021 in a direct assault on American democracy. Far-right extremist violence has not abated: earlier this month, on May 6, 2023, an apparent neo-Nazi with misogynist leanings shot up a Texas mall, killing 8 people.

Another concern is the role of right-wing extremism in the ranks of the military and among police officers. Although the overwhelming majority of law enforcement and military personnel reject extremism, even small numbers of extremists in uniform are of concern given the important role these entities play in American society, including their position at the front line of the battle against violent extremism itself. Here the difference with left-wing extremism is considerable: many left-wing adherents reject authority, see the police and military as instruments of authoritarianism, and otherwise are far less likely to join their ranks. Many right-wing extremists, in contrast, glorify military and police forces in theory, though in practice they have attacked them. Violent extremist crimes among those with U.S. military backgrounds have increased significantly in the last decade, and such members have played important roles in anti-Government extremist groups like the Oath Keepers and disorganized anti-Government movements like the Boogaloo.⁸

In contrast to far-right extremists in the past, today's violent far-right often targets law enforcement. On January 6, 2021, of course, far-right extremists were responsible for the death of a Capitol police officer and the wounding of over 100 others. A right-wing extremist also threatened an FBI facility in Cincinnati in 2021.⁹ Anti-Government extremists have regularly attacked and killed local police, questioned their authority to enforce the law, resisted arrest, and otherwise pose a grave threat to law enforcement.

Another danger of violence is that it infects and degrades politics. After the 9/11 attacks, Americans of all political beliefs came together, supporting a strong response to jihadist terrorism. Unfortunately, during its 4 years in office, the Trump administration increased public fears of white supremacist and anti-Government violence because of its perceived toleration, and at times even encouragement, of these causes. President Donald Trump's rhetoric matched some white supremacist talking points, playing down police violence against Black people, calling Mexican immigrants "rapists," declaring COVID-19 to be a "Chinese virus," telling Black and other minority Members of Congress to "go back" to their home countries, claiming a mythical "deep state," and demonizing the FBI. When violence occurred, as it did during a 2017 "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia organized by white supremacists, Trump opined that their ranks included "very fine people."

Political support, or at least toleration, of extremism also occurs at the State and local level: political figures have at times embraced racist and anti-Government ideas, and a few even have ties to violent organizations.¹⁰ The demonization of the FBI when it carries out legitimate investigations of American politicians is another instance of how politics can degrade an effective response against extremism. At times, the effects are simply to turn good Americans off politics, with many who would otherwise engage in local politics afraid of, or simply disgusted by, the constant stream of abuse from extremists.

Extremism of one political variety encourages its opposite. Antifa, in fact, rose in both its appeal and its activism with the rise of the white nationalist "alt-right" early in the administration of President Trump.¹¹ Similarly, many right-wing extremists claim they are acting in self-defense, often promoting outlandish conspiracy theories to prove that Antifa and others are controlling events and thus justifying their violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BETTER FIGHTING POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The U.S. Government, including the U.S. Congress, should take several steps to fight political extremism of all stripes.

A first step is to understand the problem beyond isolated examples. Data on extremism are bad in the United States, and Congress should require and resource better reporting at the Federal, State, and local levels. Despite attempts such as the 1990

⁸ Written testimony of Dr. Michael A. Jensen, "Radicalization in the Ranks: The Military Backgrounds of the January 6 Capitol Defendants," National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), April 7, 2022, prepared for the House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol.

⁹ Jacob Ware, "The Violent Far-Right Threat to American Law Enforcement," Council on Foreign Relations, January 4, 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/violent-far-right-terrorist-threat-american-law-enforcement>.

¹⁰ Anti-Defamation League, "Right-Wing Extremism in the 2022 Primaries," August 4, 2022, <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/right-wing-extremism-2022-primaries>.

¹¹ Kenney and Clarke, "What Antifa Is, What It Isn't, and Why It Matters."

Hate Crimes Statistics Act, many local jurisdictions, including many that have troubling histories, simply do not report on hate crimes, and those that do report often are inconsistent.¹² Legislation that required consistent reporting and resourced local jurisdictions would improve our understanding of violent extremism and allow a better distribution of resources. The FBI and the Department of Homeland Security should use this data to produce regular reports on the threat of extremism in the United States.

Ensuring the ranks of U.S. law enforcement and the U.S. military remain free from violent extremism of any sort is also vital. This requires careful screening of recruits, training that helps inoculate them against extremist recruitment, and other measures that reduce the danger to ensure that those charged with protecting America do so fairly and impartially.

Existing laws offer law enforcement many ways to disrupt violent extremist activities. On social media, many openly threaten others in specific terms and otherwise reveal their intentions. Many extremists violate State gun laws and rules against private paramilitary militias.¹³ Congress should encourage Federal, State, and local officials to use their authorities to target those entities that have a propensity toward violence.

Both right-wing and left-wing extremists use social media to publicize their messages and to harass their enemies. On-line harassment is especially common against people of color and women, making their lives far more difficult and discouraging many from engaging in political discourse. Social media companies should be strongly encouraged to crack down on such harassment.

Political leaders should also work to delegitimize violent extremists of all stripes, drawing clear lines between those engaging in politics—even on contentious issues such as abortion, immigration, gun rights, and police abuse—and those who favor or legitimate violence. Leaders should disavow any connections to those who espouse violence against minorities, law enforcement, and others. A model is President George H. W. Bush, who declared neo-Nazi and former KKK leader David Duke a “charlatan” and called for him to be rejected by voters when Duke ran as the Republican candidate for Governor of Louisiana in 1991.¹⁴ Such condemnations are the right thing to do. They also discourage extremists from trying to take over the political process and ensure that U.S. law enforcement agencies know they can use the proper power of the law against violent extremists without political criticism.

Strong leadership is necessary in the fight against extremism. It is my hope that hearings such as these can both identify weaknesses that must be collected and also educate the public on the need to stop political violence of any sort.

LETTER FROM THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER SUBMITTED BY HONORABLE
GLENN IVEY

May 15, 2023.

The Honorable DAN BISHOP,
Chair, House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability, Washington, DC 20015.

The Honorable GLENN F. IVEY,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability, Washington, DC 20015.

DEAR CHAIR BISHOP AND RANKING MEMBER IVEY:

On behalf of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), we write to provide our insights for the Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability's hearings entitled “‘Mostly Peaceful’: Countering Left-Wing Organized Violence.” We appreciate the opportunity to share our expertise documenting the true threat of ideologically-motivated extremism and violence, to offer critical perspective on the history and recent trends of hard-right extremism and violence, and to offer several practical policy recommendations, including the need to address this threat from a

¹²Cynthia Miller-Idriss, “The FBI’s 2021 Hate Crime Data Is Worse Than Meaningless,” *Lawfare*, December 16, 2022, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/fbis-2021-hate-crime-data-worse-meaningless> and Marek N. Posard, Adrienne Payne, and Laura L. Miller, *Reducing the Risk of Extremist Activity in the U.S. Military* (Santa Monica, CA: The RAND Corporation, 2021).

¹³Amna Nawaz and Mary McCord, “What legal standing do aimed civilian groups at protests have,” PBS News Hour, August 31, 2020, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/what-legal-standing-do-armed-civilian-groups-at-protests-have>.

¹⁴Robert Suro, “Bush Denounces Duke as Racist and Charlatan,” *The New York Times*, November 7, 1991, <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/07/us/the-1991-election-louisiana-bush-denounces-duke-as-racist-and-charlatan.html>.

public health and prevention approach. We respectfully request this statement be included as part of the official hearing record.

SPLC has been closely tracking the uptick in hate-fueled activity which is part of a larger hard-right movement that stokes the fires of antisemitism, promoting racism, fear, and extremist violence. In the last year, we have seen hard-right extremists unleash horrific acts of violence—particularly directed at Black, Brown, and LGBTQ persons—from Buffalo, New York to Allen, Texas. This hearing is just days after the 1-year anniversary of the murder of 10 Black people at a supermarket in Buffalo.¹ And the country is still reeling from the latest in this series of white supremacist-motivated attacks.² A man shot and killed 8 people and injured 7 others in a shooting spree at an outlet mall in Allen, Texas on May 6. The killer, who was shot and killed by police at the scene, had posted neo-Nazi and deeply misogynistic content to a Russian website and to YouTube.

Established in 1971, the SPLC has been tireless in identifying and rooting out extremist groups to create a fair, inclusive, and unified nation. We are a nonprofit advocacy organization serving as a catalyst for racial justice throughout the South. We work in partnership with communities of color to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements through transformative policies and initiatives, and advance human rights of all people. We have deep expertise in monitoring the activities of domestic hate groups and other extremists—including the Ku Klux Klan, the neo-Nazi movement, racist skinheads, anti-LGBTQ groups, anti-Muslim groups, anti-Government militias, and others. We currently track and expose hundreds of extremist groups operating across the country and publish investigative reports, share key intelligence, and offer expert analysis to the media and public to help prevent and counter the impact of hate.

BROAD CONSENSUS ON THE MOST LETHAL DOMESTIC EXTREMIST THREAT NOW

The SPLC condemns violence in all its forms. In recent years, intelligence community reports,³ assessments,⁴ Congressional testimony,⁵ and the White House National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism⁶ have all emphasized that the two most lethal elements of today's domestic terrorism threat are (1) racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists who advocate for the superiority of the white race and (2) anti-Government or anti-authority violent extremists, such as militia violent extremists.

SPLC's own deep longitudinal ethnographic research aligns with the overwhelming evidence of expert researchers, the intelligence community, DHS, and FBI assessments: the most significant source of targeted violence and the greatest threat to democracy and the security of our Nation is coming from hard-right extremism, animated by white supremacist ideology which sees America's diversity as a threat.

In this statement, our focus is on the ideologies which are infecting and galvanizing violence, the organized groups and individual actors who are using and promoting violence, and the deadly harms inflicted on our democracy.

WHITE NATIONALIST ORGANIZATIONS

Neo-Nazis and white nationalists are becoming increasingly emboldened and aggressive as the larger far-right movement embraces their ideas. Over the course of

¹ Southern Poverty Law Center, Caleb Kieffer, *Buffalo Massacre: A Year Later, White Supremacist Propaganda Continues to Spur Violence*, May 14, 2023 <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2023/05/11/buffalo-massacre-year-later>.

² Southern Poverty Law Center, Hannah Gais, Michael Edison Hayden, Rachel Janik and Megan Squire, *Allen, Texas Killer Posted Neo-Nazi, Incel Content Online*, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2023/05/08/allen-texas-killer-posted-neo-nazi-incel-content-online>.

³ *Domestic Violent Extremism Poses Heightened Threat in 2021*, Office of the Director of National Intelligence (March, 2021), <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/-UnclassSummaryofDVEAssessment-17MAR21.pdf>.

⁴ *Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Data on Domestic Terrorism*, Federal Bureau of Investigation & Department of Homeland Security (October, 2022), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/22_1025_strategic-intelligence-assessment-data-domestic-terrorism.pdf.

⁵ Christopher A. Wray, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, *Federal Bureau of Investigation Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2024*, May 10, 2023, https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/FBI_FY_2024_Budget_SFR_Senate_-_Approps_CJS_FINAL.pdf.

⁶ "Among that wide range of animating ideologies, racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists (principally those who promote the superiority of the white race) and militia violent extremists are assessed as presenting the most persistent and lethal threats." White House, *National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism*, June, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/National-Strategy-for-Countering-Domestic-Terrorism.pdf>

the last year, neo-Nazi and white nationalist groups have descended into public space, often to protest LGBTQ-inclusive events. The most active groups performing public displays of hatred in 2022–2023 include white nationalist Patriot Front,⁷ neo-Nazi National Socialist Club,⁸ anti-Semitic Goyim Defense League, and general hate group the Proud Boys.⁹ In public, these groups antagonize participants, shout slurs and obscenities, chant hate slogans, and wave hate symbols including the Nazi swastika. The events are meant to up-the-ante and inspire further violence. In particular, SPLC's time line on the activities and history of Patriot Front, is the most active white nationalist group in the United States, documents over 10,000 pieces of racist propaganda flyering incidents since 2018.¹⁰ Patriot Front members regularly engage in intimidation and vandalism in public. In private, Patriot Front members use racial slurs, idolize Adolf Hitler, and share violent imagery about Black people, migrants, LGBTQ people, and Jews.

These incidents are racist and often are indicative of the broad scope of hard-right beliefs that rejects equality and pluralism and is instead exclusion-seeking to limit the rights of many people through force. These violent trends show a movement that is authoritarian, reactionary, conspiratorial, and nationalistic. In addition to white supremacist ideas, many of the actors and groups responsible express misogyny, anti-LBTQ bigotry, and antisemitic sentiment.

For example, the Proud Boys have led a coordinated attack on gender equity and bodily autonomy, protesting or threatening reproductive justice and LGBTQ events around the country.¹¹ Altogether the Proud Boys participated in at least 58 LGBTQ and reproductive justice demonstrations of counter protests throughout 2022. So far in 2023, that number stands at 27—putting them on track to surpass last year's level of activism.

RECORD LEVELS OF HATE VIOLENCE

The FBI has been collecting hate crime data from the Nation's 18,000 Federal, State, local, and Tribal law enforcement agencies since 1991. The most recent data, from 2021, documented the highest number of reported hate crimes ever—the highest number of race-based crimes, the highest number of anti-AAPI communities hate crimes, the highest number of anti-Hispanic hate crimes, and the highest number of crimes directed at individuals on the basis of their gender identity.¹² Crimes and murders of transgender people have increased significantly in the United States in recent years. A recent study found that transgender women and men were over four times more likely than cisgender people to be victims of violent crime.¹³ Black trans women accounted for nearly three-quarters of the known victims.¹⁴ In recognition of the need to highlight prevention of hate violence, the FBI recently designated civil rights and hate crime as a Level 1 National Threat, its highest threat priority.¹⁵

THE IMPACT OF ANTI-LGBTQ EXTREMISTS

These deadly statistics are coupled with a documented prevalence of anti-LGBTQ hard-right extremist organizing in the country. A political atmosphere of anti-LGBTQ sentiment has dominated the media landscape and microphones of sympathetic politicians. In March 2023, the Conservative Political Action Conference

⁷ Southern Poverty Law Center, *Patriot Front*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist/files/group/patriot-front>.

⁸ Southern Poverty Law Center, *National Social Club* (NSC-131), <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/nationalist-social-club-nsc-131>.

⁹ Southern Poverty Law Center, Cassie Miller, *SPLC Statement for the Jan. 6 Select Committee on Proud Boys* (June 10, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2022/06/10/splc-statement-jan-6-select-committee-proud-boys>.

¹⁰ Southern Poverty Law Center, Jeff Tischauser, *Patriot Front Timeline* (April 11, 2023), <https://www.splcenter.org/patriot-front-timeline>.

¹¹ Southern Poverty Law Center, Cassie Miller, *Proud Boys Aid the Right-Wing Assault on the LGBTQ Community and Reproductive Justice* (July 13, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/07/13/proud-boys-aid-right-wing-assault-lgbtq-community-and-reproductive-justice>.

¹² Federal Bureau of Investigation, *2021 Hate Crime Statistics Act Supplemental Report* (March, 2023), <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/hate-crime>.

¹³ *American Journal of Public Health*, Andrew R. Flores, Ph.D., Ilan Meyer, Ph.D., Lynn L. Langton, Ph.D., and Jody L. Herman, Ph.D. "Gender Identity Disparities in Criminal Victimization: National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017–2018" <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/press/news-trans/press-release/>.

¹⁴ Everytown for Gun Safety, *How does gun violence impact the communities you care about?* <https://everytown.org/#transhomicide>.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Justice: *Combatting Hate Crime*, Department of Justice, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/tile/1428666/download>.

(CPAC) featured anti-trans speakers who referenced a hard-right trend of falsely portraying LGBTQ people as a threat to children.¹⁶ Michael J. Knowles, a Daily Wire host, said “transgenderism” must be removed from public life.¹⁷

Moreover, in the past 2 years, an unprecedented amount of anti-LGBTQ legislation has been introduced and adopted¹⁸ at the State level targeting LGBTQ families and children for harassment by the State,¹⁹ depriving fundamental rights to speech and assembly,²⁰ and even limiting participation in America’s democratic institutions by restricting voting access.²¹ Along with these legislative attacks on LGBTQ freedoms and the violent attacks on LGBTQ spaces like nightclubs and Pride events, extremist groups like the Proud Boys and Patriot Front—some of whom were instrumental in the deadly January 6 insurrection—are also targeting the institutions of American civil society like schools, libraries, and children’s hospitals in an effort to drive LGBTQ people out of American society.²² SPLC continues to monitor a significant number of anti-LGBTQ hate groups and their activities each year.²³

Institutionalized leadership organizations in the hard-right anti-LGBTQ movement have created an “us” vs. “them” understanding of the world that wrongly blames LGBTQ and insinuates religious divisions. These groups also minimize violence against LGBTQ and further amplify the ideas that underpin the bigotry that motivates violent actors—like pseudoscience about transgender people.

THE “GREAT REPLACEMENT” CONSPIRACY THEORY

Social and political movement research and analysis by SPLC’s Intelligence Project subject-matter experts have long documented that the motivations and ideological underpinnings of the hard right movement’s violent actors are often predictable. The great replacement narrative provides the central framework for the global white supremacist movement. This racist conspiracy says there is a systematic, global effort to replace white, European people with nonwhite, foreign populations.²⁴ The purported ultimate goal of those responsible—Democrats, leftists, “multiculturalists,” and Jews—is to reduce white political power and, ultimately, to eradicate the white race.

Once a fringe idea propagated by hate groups and other extremists—frequently in on-line message boards—the “great replacement” theory and ideas akin to it have been normalized and dragged into the mainstream, in part, with the help of conservative political figures, media personalities, lawmakers, and anti-immigrant lobbying groups.

This month, the accused murderer of 11 Jewish people at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018, is facing the legal consequences of ideologically-inspired violence.²⁵ The details of this act of mass-violence are chilling. He al-

¹⁶ Southern Poverty Law Center, Cassie Miller, *Proud Boys Aid the Right-Wing Assault on the LGBTQ Community and Reproductive Justice* (July 13, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/07/13/proud-boys-aid-right-wing-assault-lgbtq-community-and/reproductive-justice>.

¹⁷ Southern Poverty Law Center, Creede Newton, *CPAC Hosted Convicted Sex Offender Amid Calls to Protect Children* (March 7, 2023), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2023/03/07/cpac-hosted-convicted-sex-offender-amid-calls-protect-children>.

¹⁸ American Civil Liberties Union, “Legislation Affecting LGBTQ Rights Across the Country,” (December 2, 2022), <https://www.aclu.org/legislation-affecting-lgbtq-rights-across-country>.

¹⁹ Sneha Dey and Karen Brooks Harper, *Transgender Texas Kids are Terrified after Governor orders that Parents be Investigated for Child Abuse*, (February 28, 2022), *The Texas Tribune*, <https://www.texastribune.org/2022/02/28/texas-transgender-child-abuse/>.

²⁰ Jaclyn Diaz, *Florida’s Governor Signs Controversial Law Opponents Dubbed ‘Don’t Say Gay’*, (March 28, 2022), NPR, <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/28/1089221657/dont-say-gay-florida-desantis>.

²¹ Kathryn K. O’Neill, Nathan Cisneros, Will Tentindo, and Jody L. Herman, *The Potential Impact of Voter Identification Laws on Transgender Voters in the 2022 General Election*, (September 2022), <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/trans-voter-id-impact/>.

²² Southern Poverty Law Center, Cassie Miller, *Proud Boys Aid the Right-Wing Assault on the LGBTQ Community and Reproductive Justice*, (July 13, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/07/13/proud-boys-aid-right-wing-assault-lgbtq-community-and-reproductive-justice>.

²³ Southern Poverty Law Center, R.G. Cravens and Susan Corke, Statement submitted for the record, House Committee on Oversight and Reform Hearings on *The Rise of Anti-LGBTQ+ Extremism and Violence in the United States* (December 14, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/statement-house-oversight-hearings-rise-anti-lgbtqi-extremism-violence-us.pdf>.

²⁴ Southern Poverty Law Center, Jason Wilson, and Aaron Flanagan, *The Racist ‘Great Replacement’ Conspiracy Theory Explained* (May 17, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/05/17/racist-great-replacement-conspiracy-theory-explained>.

²⁵ Southern Poverty Law Center, Michael Edison Hayden, *Antisemitic Mass Shooting Suspect Faces Death Penalty in Trial* (April 21, 2023), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2023/04/21/antisemitic-mass-shooting-suspect-faces-death-penalty-trial>.

legedly yelled, “all Jews must die” allegedly due to his fixation on the Jewish community’s humanitarian refugee efforts. He believed in the so-called “great replacement” conspiracy theory, which falsely posits that elites—or sometimes, as the accused murderer believed, explicitly Jewish people—are conspiring to bring non-white people into Western countries as a way of breeding white people out of existence.

The Tree of Life murders—the most deadly anti-Semitic attack in U.S. history—were not alone as domestic extremist incidents inspired by hard-right hate and the false “great replacement theory.”

- The man accused of murdering 49 worshippers and injuring dozens of others in two Christchurch, New Zealand mosques on March 15, 2019, had posted a manifesto steeped in white supremacist propaganda and references to “white genocide,” underlining his belief that white people are being systematically replaced across the world by non-whites. The alleged killer also espoused a belief in “accelerationism,” the idea that violence should be used to push Western countries into becoming failed states. Adherents hope the collapse will give rise to radical, presently unthinkable changes in our society.²⁶
- On the last day of Passover in 2019, a gunman entered the Chabad of Poway synagogue in Poway, California, and opened fire. The April 27 attack claimed the life of a woman and left three others injured—including the rabbi. Before the attack, the 19-year-old alleged murderer posted what he described as an “open letter” on the white supremacist-friendly forum 8chan, according to NBC News.²⁷ Like the alleged New Zealand murderer, the alleged Poway synagogue murderer’s statement also included the hallmarks common among radicalized white supremacists, such as adulation of suspected or convicted mass murderers and propagation of the false claims of a global plan to replace white people. He praised the carnage in Christchurch, citing that live-streamed act of violence as an influence on his own attack. He also referenced the alleged perpetrator of the murderous Tree of Life synagogue attack.
- The accused mass shooter of over 20 people at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, on August 3, 2019 allegedly said in a manifesto left behind that the “attack is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas.”²⁸ The shooter reportedly drove more than 9 hours to target a heavily Hispanic shopping center that he believed would be full of Mexican nationals.
- And on May 14, 2022, a gunman carried out a horrific, racially-motivated attack, killing 10 Black people and wounding 3 others at a Tops Friendly Markets grocery store in east Buffalo, New York. The gunman left behind an on-line screed suggesting the attack was motivated by the same racist conspiracy theory that had previously inspired other white supremacist acts of terror in El Paso, Texas and Poway, California.²⁹ The Buffalo suspect also cited immigration as a key driver of alleged white displacement in the United States in a document circulated online.³⁰ He allegedly chose his target location because the ZIP code that includes the store, 14208, is 78 percent Black—the highest percentage of Black population of any ZIP code in up-State New York, according to the Census Bureau’s 2020 American Community Survey.³¹

On March 6, Representative Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member of the House Oversight and Accountability Committee, sent a letter signed by all committee Democrats to Representative James Comer, the committee Chairman, asking him and his

²⁶ Southern Poverty Law Center, Michael Edison Hayden, *New Zealand Terrorist Manifesto Influence by Far-Right Online Ecosystem, Hatewatch Finds* (March 15, 2019), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2019/03/15/new-zealand-terrorist-manifesto-influenced-far-right-online-ecosystem-hatewatch-finds>.

²⁷ NBC News, Ben Collins and Andrew Blankstein, “Anti-Semitic open letter posted online under name of Chabad synagogue shooting suspect” (April 27, 2019), <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/anti-semitic-open-letter-posted-online-under-name-chabad-synagogue-n999211>.

²⁸ Southern Poverty Law Center, *Hate is Alive in America—El Paso Shooting* (August 5, 2023), <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2019/08/05/hate-alive-america-el-paso-shooting>.

²⁹ Southern Poverty Law Center, Caleb Kieffer, *Buffalo Massacre: A Year Later, White Supremacist Propaganda Continues to Spur Violence* (May 14, 2023), <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2023/05/11/buffalo-massacre-year-later>.

³⁰ Southern Poverty Law Center, Caleb Kieffer, *Cadre of Nativist Groups, Figures Have Long Pushed Replacement-By-Immigration Ideas Into the Mainstream* (July 14, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/07/14/cadre-nativist-groups-figures-have-long-pushed-replacement-immigration-ideas-mainstream>.

³¹ CNN, Shimon Prokupez, Christina Maxouris, Dakin Andone, Samantha Beech, and Amir Vera, *What we know about Buffalo supermarket shooting suspect Payton Gendron* (June 2, 2022), <https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/15/us/payton-gendron-buffalo-shooting-suspect-what-we-know/index.html>.

Republican colleagues to denounce the white nationalist “great replacement” conspiracy theory.³² The letter said that during one hearing, on February 7, Republicans “invoked dangerous and conspiratorial rhetoric echoing the racist and nativist tropes peddled by white supremacists and right-wing extremists.”³³ This included warnings about “invasion” and accusing the Biden administration of implementing a plan “to deliberately open our border” for purposes of “changing our culture.” Rep. Comer and all the other Republicans refused to sign, calling it an attempt to “distract” from issues about the border.

Tucker Carlson, the now-former Fox News commentator, was one of the biggest media purveyors of “great replacement” ideas. He used his prime-time spot to stoke fear about immigration at the Southern Border and falling birthrates as existential threats to white people. While Carlson was careful to avoid using the more overt terms favored by avowed white nationalists, these extremists have praised him for mainstreaming their ideas.³⁴

Yet, behind right-wing media influencers like Carlson, according to an April 2022 poll conducted by SPLC and Tulchin Research, there is disturbing, unnerving support for the conspiracy theories and ideologies that motivated these murderous acts.³⁵ The poll found that the ideas underpinning the white nationalist “great replacement” narrative have become thoroughly mainstream on the political right. Nearly 7 in 10 Republicans surveyed agree to at least some extent that demographic changes in the United States are deliberately driven by liberal and progressive politicians attempting to gain political power by “replacing more conservative white voters.” Across the political spectrum, the poll documented substantial support for threatening or acting violently against perceived political opponents.

ANTI-GOVERNMENT MOVEMENT

For decades, the anti-Government movement has formed militias and engaged in paramilitary training, using their expertise to target and terrorize Federal, State, and local government officials, agencies, and facilities.³⁶ As we documented in our extensive statement for May 26, 2021 House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties hearings, “Confronting Violent White Supremacy (Part V): Examining the Rise of Militia Extremism,” these groups have regularly cited what they perceive as government tyranny as their motive—including, but not limited to, what they believe is an intent by government officials, to create a one world government.³⁷

The Oklahoma City bombing remains the deadliest act of domestic extremist violence in the U.S. history. The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on April 19, 1995, killed 168 people—including 19 children—and injured more than 650 others. The bombing is the hallmark event cauterizing the extreme risk of violence and death that is posed by the anti-Government movement.

In recent years, militias and anti-Government adherents have openly promoted and emphasized the prospect of an impending second civil war. Over the course of 2020 and during January 2021, movement members, many of them armed with guns or explosives, conspired to commit insurrection against the United States Government (Washington, DC), kidnap a sitting Governor (Michigan), bomb a Federal building (Nevada), murder law enforcement and security personnel (California), and intimidate civilians and Government employees in the streets, at their homes, and

³² <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/sites/democrats.oversight.house.gov/files/2023-03-05%20JBR%20to%20Comer%20re%20GRT%20FINAL%20Version.pdf>.

³³ House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, *On The Front Lines of the Border Crisis: A Hearing with Chief Patrol Agents* (February 7, 2023) <https://oversight.house.gov/hearing/on-the-front-lines-of-the-border-crisis-a-hearing-with-chief-patrol-agents/>.

³⁴ Southern Poverty Law Center, Caleb Kieffer, *Buffalo Massacre: A Year Later, White Supremacist Propaganda Continues to Spur Violence*, May 14, 2023, <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2023/05/11/buffalo-massacre-year-later>.

³⁵ Southern Poverty Law Center, Cassie Miller, *SPLC Poll Finds Substantial Support for ‘Great Replacement’ Theory and Other Hard-Right Ideas* (June 1, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2022/06/01/poll-finds-support-great-replacement-hard-right-ideas>.

³⁶ Southern Poverty Law Center, *Antigovernment General*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/antigovernment-general>.

³⁷ Southern Poverty Law Center, Susan Corke, and Rachel Goldwasser, House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, “Confronting Violent White Supremacy (Part V): Examining the Rise of Militia Extremism” (May 26, 2023) <https://www.splactionfund.org/sites/default/files/final%20SPLC%20Action%20Fund%20Statement%20House%20Oversight%20Civil%20Rights%20and%20Civil%20Liberties%20Rise%20of%20Militia%20Extremism.pdf>.

at their places of employment in California, Washington, DC, Idaho, Michigan, New Mexico, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington.

Here are some of the leading hard-right anti-Government extremist groups and driving ideologies:

The Oath Keepers

Now with leaders convicted of seditious conspiracy for their January 6th associated activities, the Oath Keepers has steeped itself in conspiracy theories and trained for a revolution against the state.³⁸ Like the rest of the anti-Government militia movement, Oath Keepers use fear of gun confiscation, globalization, and other anti-Government conspiracy theories (often rooted in coded antisemitism) to organize outside legitimate channels. The group uses a military-style hierarchical structure, arms training, and emergency response events to engage members.³⁹

The Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers (CSPOA)

This group of sheriffs believe in the false notion of county supremacy, which submits that county authority supersedes Federal authority.⁴⁰ This belief has animated portions of the anti-Government movement since the 1970's. Adherents believe counties are entitled to control land that is currently owned and preserved by the Federal Government. This assertion by members of the anti-Government movement, chiefly militias, has led them to conduct various skirmishes and standoffs against Federal agencies and agents, particularly in the West where Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff are habitually villainized by the anti-Government movement. According to a 2017 report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), from 2013 to 2017 at least 360 threats and assaults were directed toward Federal land management employees.⁴¹

Sovereign Citizen Movement

One of the most violent factions of the anti-Government movement is the sovereign citizen movement, whom has a documented history of inflicting violence against law enforcement. Some sovereign citizens have turned to violence. When a sovereign feels particularly desperate, angry, battle-weary, and cornered, his next Government contact, no matter how minor, can be his final straw—and the resulting rage can be lethal. Research indicates a new and growing adherence to the movement.⁴²

Anti-Immigrant Groups and Border Vigilantes

Anti-immigrant hate groups are the most extreme of the hundreds of nativist and vigilante groups that have proliferated since the late 1990's, when anti-immigrant xenophobia began to rise to levels not seen in the United States since the 1920's.⁴³ As militias on the border have become more brazen in recent months, SPLC and others have raised concerns about apparent coordination and cooperation with some Border Patrol agents.⁴⁴ SPLC has also documented that some border vigilantes have reportedly adopted the wide-spread practice of collecting the personal details of intercepted migrants—as well as the details of their U.S.-based relatives—in a move to reinforce their savior fantasies of tracking pedophiles and identifying drug traf-

³⁸ Southern Poverty Law Center, *Oath Keepers*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/oath-keepers>.

³⁹ Testimony of Susan Corke, Director, Southern Poverty Law Center Intelligence Project before the House Committee on Homeland Security “Countering Violent Extremism, Terrorism, and Antisemitic Threats in New Jersey” (October 3, 2022), https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/corke_countering-violent-extremism-terrorism-antisemitic-threats-jersey.pdf.

⁴⁰ Southern Poverty Law Center, *Constitutional Sheriffs*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/constitutional-sheriffs>.

⁴¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Countering Violent Extremism: Actions Needed to Define Strategy and Assess Progress of Federal Efforts* (April 2017). <https://www.gao.gov/assets/17/300.pdf>.

⁴² Southern Poverty Law Center, *Sovereign Citizen Movement*. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/sovereign-citizens-movement>.

⁴³ Southern Poverty Law Center, *Anti-Immigrant*, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/ideology/anti-immigrant>.

⁴⁴ Southern Poverty Law Center, *Freddy Cruz, In Plain Sight: Uncovering Border Patrol's Relationship with Far-Right Militias at the Southern Border* (July 29, 2021), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2021/07/29/plain-sight-uncovering-border-patrols-relationship-far-right-militias-southern-border>.

ficking rings,⁴⁵ drawing on conspiracies that are rooted in the early days of the QAnon movement.⁴⁶

THE JANUARY 6 DEADLY INSURRECTION AT THE U.S. CAPITOL

The anti-Government movements coalesced with the white nationalist hate movement to bring about the deadly January 6th insurrection. The events were like no other in U.S. history and represent the clear and present threat of these hard-right movements to our democracy, the U.S. Government, and the rights of people in the United States. A toxic soup of ideas from racism to anti-Government sentiment to white Christian nationalism sought on January 6th to manipulate people into acting in opposition to a free democratic election.⁴⁷

Over the 18 months of its tenure, the bipartisan House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol conducted 10 public hearings, interviewed over 1,000 witnesses, and reviewed more than one million pages of background information.⁴⁸ This was the most important Congressional investigation since the 9/11 Commission. The final report, issued late last year, established essential facts about the deadly attack—and provided us with a road map for this important national reckoning.⁴⁹

The violence on January 6th was planned and was never meant to be the end goal. The committee report documented in great detail how former President Trump called for his supporters to come to Washington on that fateful day and then knowingly inspired an armed mob of his followers to go to the Capitol to prevent the peaceful transfer of power.

SPLC has documented how far-right anti-Government extremists—and former President Trump himself—had laid the foundation for the violent insurrection in the years before.⁵⁰ The lies of a stolen election and the extremist ideologies and conspiracy theories that fueled the attack were the culmination of a months-long, coordinated strategy by Trump and his allies to overturn the 2020 election and steal the Presidency.

The committee report also documented that Trump and his allies used racism as a principal driver in immediate post-election efforts to disenfranchise voters in major urban areas in Michigan, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and other States. Over the next months, the false allegation of a stolen election led many State legislatures with Republican majorities (including in Deep South States where the SPLC operates) to enact discriminatory anti-voter laws and create new, racially gerrymandered Congressional districts. These new districts disproportionately disenfranchise voters of color and are designed to undermine elections and control election outcomes in 2024 and beyond.⁵¹

Beyond the essential historical record, the true measure of the committee's work will be whether the planners, perpetrators, funders, and those who inspired the insurrection—including former President Donald Trump, his allies and other politicians who sought to forcibly uphold white supremacy and overturn the 2020 election—are held accountable, with serious consequences. The committee's report and accompanying materials have provided a blueprint toward these objectives for Congress and the U.S. Department of Justice. The committee's investigation, final report, and accompanying criminal referrals are essential steps toward transparency and accountability.

PROMOTING MALE SUPREMACY

In the past, in both SPLC and the field of extremism research as a whole, analyses of the far right have often neglected to fully account for the innumerable ways

⁴⁵ Southern Poverty Law Center, *Freddy Cruz, How Antigovernment Extremists and QAnon Took Over the Southern Border* (August 8, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/08/08/how-antigovernment-extremists-and-qanon-took-over-southern-border>.

⁴⁶ Southern Poverty Law Center, *What You Need to Know about QAnon* (October 27, 2020), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2020/10/27/what-you-need-know-about-qanon>.

⁴⁷ Southern Poverty Law Center, Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon, *Dangerous Devotion: Congressional Hearing Examines Threat of White Christian Nationalism*, (December 28, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2022/12/28/dangerous-devotion-congressional-hearing-examines-threat-white-christian-nationalism>.

⁴⁸ <https://www.govinfo.gov/committee/house-january6th?path/browsecommittee/chamber/house/committee/january6th/collection/CRPT>

⁴⁹ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-J6-REPORT/pdf/GPO-J6-REPORT.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Southern Poverty Law Center, *The Road to Jan. 6: A Year of Extremist Mobilization*, <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2021/12/30/road-jan-6-year-extremist-mobilization>.

⁵¹ Southern Poverty Law Center, Michael Lieberman, *Jan. 6 Anniversary: Two Years Later, We Must Hold Capitol Insurrectionists Accountable* (January 6, 2023), <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2023/01/06/jan-6-anniversary-two-years-later>.

gender, misogyny, and gender-based violence manifest within and operate alongside other forms of racially- and religiously-motivated hate.⁵² It is now impossible to ignore the centrality of male supremacy in the hard-right movement.⁵³ Our research has documented that many in the hard right want to revive an older social order, before the Civil Rights Movement, women's and gay liberation movements, and other social and political transformations that have upset what was a thoroughly white-dominated, patriarchal society. In this worldview, Christianity should hold a preeminent place in our society and even form the basis for our laws. White people, they (often implicitly) suggest, deserve to hold a dominant position in society because of their supposed innate superiority. White supremacy is central to the hard right, but so is a desire to maintain a patriarchal society where people adhere to strictly-defined gender roles and men act from a position of dominance.

This has been made clear by the right's campaign to strip people of their reproductive autonomy, to demonize LGBTQ people, and to deny trans people every opportunity to express their gender identity. This is a campaign imposed through legislation, but also through violence, including increasing protests, threats, and violence aimed at LGBTQ people (including the November 2022 mass shooting that left 5 people dead at a queer club in Colorado⁵⁴), reproductive rights advocates, and abortion providers.

ANTISEMITISM

Antisemitism serves as a connective tissue between hate groups that are otherwise seemingly unconnected. Particularly among white supremacist groups, antisemitism is often the entry point into the hate movement and is the fuel the feeds white nationalism. We saw this in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017 ("Jews will not replace us") and in Washington, DC, on January 6 (many breaching the Capitol flaunted antisemitic imagery).⁵⁵ In recent Congressional testimony, Eric Ward, now executive vice president for Race Forward, poignantly said, "... antisemitism is the loom on which other hatreds are woven, so essential that it is easy to ignore. If we seek to counter domestic extremism, we must recognize that antisemitism remains the energizing principle behind white nationalism."⁵⁶

Throughout 2022, celebrities, politicians, and other public figures promoted and embraced antisemitic rhetoric. This mainstreaming and normalization of antisemitism has boosted the profile of many extremist groups and has resulted in direct threats to the Jewish community. The antisemitic tirades and on-line threats from Ye—formerly known as Kanye West—for example, appear to have had real-world consequences.⁵⁷ Another example of the normalization of antisemitism; in the 2022 election cycle, no name was invoked more in association with dirty money, control of media and politics, or the existence of a "deep state," than George Soros, the Hungarian American Jewish financier and philanthropist. Right-wing media and politicians have consistently positioned Soros as a boogeyman whose influence and ideas will destroy American democracy.

As SPLC has relayed to Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff and other members of the White House interagency working group on antisemitism, Jews are not responsible for antisemitism—and Jews cannot end it by themselves. The recognition that anti-Jewish hatred is a core facet of other bigoted ideologies reinforces the need for a more robust interracial and intersectional approach to combating antisemitism in America. To advance the goal of a multi-racial, inclusive democracy, fighting antisemitism is at the heart of the fight against structural racism.

⁵² Southern Poverty Law Center, Lydia Bates, *Patriarchal Violence: Misogyny from the Far-Right to the Mainstream* (February 1, 2021), <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2021/02/01/patriarchal-violence-misogyny-far-right-mainstream>.

⁵³ Southern Poverty Law Center, Cassie Miller, *Male Supremacy is at the Core of the Hard Right's Agenda*, (April 18, 2023), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2023/04/18/male-supremacy-core-hard-rights-agenda>.

⁵⁴ Southern Poverty Law Center, Jason Wilson, *Colorado Springs: Far-Right Influencers Made LGBTQ People Into Targets* (November 22, 2022), <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2022/11/22/colorado-springs-far-right-influencers-made-lgbtq-people-targets>.

⁵⁵ Susan Corke and Michael Lieberman, *Antisemitism: An Engine for Anti-Black Racism*, National Urban League, 2023 State of Black America, <https://soba.iamempowered.com/antisemitism-engine-anti-black-racism>.

⁵⁶ Eric K. Ward, Executive Director, Western States Center, U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, "Domestic Extremism in America: Examining White Supremacist Violence in the Wake of Recent Attacks" (June 9, 2022), <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/imo/media/doc/Testimony-Ward-2022-06-09.pdf>.

⁵⁷ Anti-Defamation League, Center on Extremism, "Ye is Right" Antisemitic Campaign Continues, (February 12, 2023), <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/ye-right-antisemitic-campaign-continues>.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

We offer these policy recommendations which we hope will promote long-term investments and initiatives that will move our Nation closer to fulfilling its highest ideals and promise of equality.

EXPAND ANTI-RACISM EDUCATION AND UPSTREAM PREVENTION INITIATIVES

To bolster community well-being and ensure that all individuals are prepared to inoculate young people against radicalization, funding for prevention and education initiatives is imperative. We applaud the White House's recent announcement of \$1 billion in new funding through the Safer Communities Act "to support safer and healthier learning environments," as well as new funding through the Department of Commerce to improve digital literacy and for the Department of Health and Human Services to "support student well-being and resilience in the face of hate and trauma."⁵⁸ The SPLC has partnered with American University's Polarization and Extremism Research and Innovation Lab (PERIL) to produce resources for adults caring for and/or working with youth to assist them in helping to steer young people away from extremist propaganda and the supremacist narratives they encounter on-line and off through the building of resilient communities of inclusion.⁵⁹

- The White House must follow through on the wide array of Government initiatives and public-private partnerships against hate and extremism announced last September at the United We Stand Summit.⁶⁰
- The Department of Education and the Department of Justice should fund programs aimed at preventing extremism and promoting deradicalization respectively—and move from punishment models to restorative justice initiatives that repair harms, restore trust, and help communities build resilience and reduce the likelihood of future harms. Especially in these divided and polarized times, every elementary and secondary school should promote an inclusive school climate and activities that celebrate our Nation's diversity.⁶¹
- Congress and the Department of Education should fund programs to develop and promote civics education and develop curricula addressing structural racism, as well as funding for States to implement their own related initiatives.
- Congress and the Biden administration should fiercely oppose efforts to ban books, to impose educational gag orders on teaching truth and hard history, and other efforts to place restrictions on inclusive education.

SPEAK OUT AGAINST HATE, POLITICAL VIOLENCE, AND EXTREMISM

Words matter, especially from our leaders. It is impossible to overstate the importance of elected officials, business leaders, and community officials using their public platforms to condemn antisemitism, hate crimes, vandalism, and violence of all kinds, and false ideas like the "great replacement" theory. A year after the Tops supermarket shooting, far too many political figures and pundits continue to perpetuate this dangerous rhetoric.

ENFORCE HATE CRIME LAWS

Enforcement of existing Federal and State hate crime laws—and training for judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officials charged with enforcement—is critical, but insufficient. The law is a blunt instrument against hate and racism. We cannot legislate, regulate, tabulate, or prosecute racism, hatred, or extremism out of existence.

IMPROVE HATE CRIME DATA COLLECTION EFFORTS

- After 30 years of incomplete data and consistent FBI HCSA underreporting, Congress and the Biden administration should support mandatory hate crime reporting. Until legislation to require reporting can be enacted, expanded incentives are needed—more carrots and more sticks—toward making hate crime

⁵⁸ White House, *FACT SHEET: New Actions from the Biden-Harris Administration and the Public and Private Sectors to Foster Unity and Prevent Hate-Motivated Violence*, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/09/15/fact-sheet-new-actions-from-the-biden-harris-administration-and-the-public-and-private-sectors-to-foster-unity-and-prevent-hate-motivated-violence/>.

⁵⁹ <https://www.splcenter.org/peril> & <https://www.splcenter.org/peril-community-guide>.

⁶⁰ <https://unitedwestand.gov/>.

⁶¹ Southern Poverty Law Center, Lydia Bates, *Prevention and Resilience: Supporting Young People through Polarizing Times* (Fall 2022), <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/fall-2022/prevention-and-resilience-supporting-young-people-through-polarizing-times>.

prevention initiatives and credible hate crime reporting by all law enforcement agencies a condition precedent to receiving Federal funds. Special attention should be devoted to large underreporting law enforcement agencies that either have not participated in the HCSA program at all or have incorrectly reported zero hate crimes.

IMPROVE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC EXTREMISM

- Though most hate crimes are not committed by individuals affiliated with an organized hate group, the Biden administration and Congress should continue to closely track the nature and magnitude of the problem of domestic extremism and should fund resilience and digital literacy initiatives⁶² as well as Government and academic research on the best evidenced-based prevention programs.⁶³
- Every State prohibits private militias, and many States have laws prohibiting political violence, restricting firearms in the State capital/government buildings and near polling places, and banning paramilitary training for civil disorder.⁶⁴ Federal and State authorities should raise awareness about these laws—and enforce them.

DEFEND AND PROMOTE INCLUSIVE, TRUTHFUL EDUCATION

As many States push new laws to restrict inclusive education and restrict teaching about difficult history in the United States, more needs to be done to ensure young people are presented the unvarnished facts about this country's history—both good and bad—to shape a better future.⁶⁵

PROMOTE ON-LINE SAFETY AND HOLD TECH AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES ACCOUNTABLE

Social media companies should not enable the funding or amplifying of white supremacist ideas or provide a safe haven for extremists. Consistent with the First Amendment and privacy considerations, Federal and State government officials should implement rules and regulations to ensure that tech companies comply with civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination. Law enforcement should scrutinize platforms and ensure they are enforcing prohibitions on activities that endanger the public or conspire against the rights of others.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this statement. For more information about SPLC's work to address right-wing hate and extremism, please contact R.G. Cravens, senior research analyst, Lead, Intelligence Project [] or Michael Lieberman, senior policy counsel, Hate & Extremism []. We stand ready to work with subcommittee Members to address these critical issues.

STATEMENT OF HEIDI L. BEIRICH, PH.D. CO-FOUNDER/EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
GLOBAL PROJECT AGAINST HATE AND EXTREMISM

MAY 16, 2023

Chairman Dan Bishop, Ranking Member Glenn Ivey, and esteemed Members of the House Homeland Security Committee's Oversight, Investigations, and Accountability Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit a written statement. My name is Heidi Beirich. I hold a Ph.D. in political science from Purdue University and am the co-founder of the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism (GPAHE). I am an expert on white supremacist and far-right extremist movements, having served as an advisory board member of the International Network for Hate Studies, a co-founder and co-chair of the Change the Terms Coalition, which advocates for solutions to on-line extremism, and the author of numerous academic studies on extremism as well as co-editor of *Neo-Confederacy: A Critical Introduction*.

⁶² Southern Poverty Law Center, *Parents & Caregivers Guide to Online Radicalization: Assessments and Impact*, <https://www.splcenter.org/peril-assessments-impact>.

⁶³ Southern Poverty Law Center, Lydia Bates, *Conversations about Gun Violence, Disinformation and Extremism* (February 27, 2023), <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/conversations-about-gun-violence-disinformation-and-extremism>.

⁶⁴ Georgetown Law, Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection, *Addressing Political Violence, Unlawful Paramilitaries, and Threats to Democracy*, <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/icap/our-work/addressing-the-rise-of-unlawful-private-militias/>.

⁶⁵ Southern Poverty Law Center, *Learning for Justice, Freedom to Learn*, <https://www.learningforjustice.org/freedom-to-learn>.

My organization is a member of the Christchurch Call Advisory Network, an international body created by the governments of France and New Zealand after the 2019 Christchurch mosque attacks, which the United States joined in 2021, that advises on the handling of on-line terrorist content and activity and is also a member of President Biden's Summit for Democracy. I have testified in front of Congressional committees on extremist threats to the military and veterans and the dangers posed by accelerationist neo-Nazi and militia movements. I also submitted solicited testimony to the January 6th Select Committee on the role of the white supremacist Proud Boys in the Capitol insurrection and, co-written with my colleague Wendy Via, testimony on how rising far-right extremism threatens democracy. My research has been cited in hundreds of academic pieces and news reports and I have served as an expert witness on far-right extremist groups in legal proceedings. I am honored to submit this statement.

This hearing is dedicated to "Countering Left-Wing Organized Violence" and though all political violence is deplorable and must be countered, I believe the focus is misguided as it does not align with what political violence data tells us is most threatening to our Nation. In announcing this hearing, the Chairman's media advisory said, "The left-wing lawlessness Americans experienced during the summer of 2020 was, unfortunately, only the beginning of a long season of political violence and intimidation . . . This increasing political violence cannot remain unchecked." The advisory specifically points to violence against law enforcement and other Americans from an organized left-wing movement. However, political violence from an "organized left" is not the real threat that Americans and law enforcement are facing. Data on acts of political violence clearly shows that it is the far right that is driving terrorism in the United States, including targeting and, in certain cases, murdering law enforcement. That is not to say there is no violence from far-left actors, it is just simply not on the scale or as deadly as what is coming from far-right actors. Indeed, organized far-right actors have recently been convicted of seditious conspiracy for involvement in an insurrection against our democracy, surely something that directly threatens all of us.

For some time now, the main threats to our country in the form of "organized violence," specifically domestic terrorism, have come from the far right. This is not only my assessment. The FBI, DHS, and the National Counterterrorism Center have all come to this same conclusion in recent years, citing white supremacist and anti-Government extremism as the main threats. And the United States is not alone in facing rising terrorism and violence from the far right. In June 2020, the State Department announced that white supremacist terrorism is "a serious challenge for the global community" and in 2020 added the neo-Nazi Russian Imperial Movement and some of its leadership to its Specially Designated Global Terrorist list.

Some very recent examples of far-right extremist violence or attempted violence are illustrative of the threat. Less than 2 weeks ago, a neo-Nazi and misogynist killed 8 people at a mall outside of Dallas in a shooting spree. In early March, members of the LGBTQ+ community holding a Drag Queen story hour were attacked by white supremacists shouting "Heil Hitler." In mid-March, a leader in the neo-Nazi Feuerkrieg Division was arrested for threatening to kill a journalist. And in late March, a self-identified White Lives Matter member was arrested for trying to burn down an Ohio church that was hosting an LGBTQ+ event. In February, a founder of the neo-Nazi Atomwaffen Division was arrested in a plot to destroy Baltimore's power grid (he had served time in prison for possession of illegal weapons and bomb-making materials and may have been targeting a Florida nuclear power station in 2017). Last October, former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's husband, Paul, was viciously attacked in his home by a man steeped in far-right conspiracy theories such as QAnon and who believed former President Donald Trump's lies that the 2020 election had been stolen. In June 2022, masked members of the white supremacist Patriot Front were arrested near an Idaho Pride event for conspiracy to riot and found to have smoke grenades, riot shields, and other concerning materials in their possession. The police who handled the arrests received multiple death threats. This is far from a comprehensive list of far-right violent incidents over the last year.

Additionally, the most serious mass terrorist attacks in recent years have been perpetrated by white supremacists. In May 2021, a shooter targeted Black shoppers in a grocery store in Buffalo, NY, killing 10 people. He was motivated by the most dangerous white supremacist conspiracy theory, the "Great Replacement," which argues falsely that white countries are being "invaded" and white people "replaced" by people of color and immigrants, a process they lay at the feet of "globalists" or Jews. That same idea motivated terrorist attacks at a synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018, a Walmart in El Paso in 2019, and others both in the United States and abroad. It is the most violence-inspiring idea circulating on the far right.

We should not forget that far-right extremists have also targeted our most fundamental political institution, our democracy. The January 6 insurrection, which attempted to stop a peaceful transfer of power, was the deadliest attack on the Capitol ever and killed 5 people and injured 140 police officers. Members of two far-right organized extremist groups—the anti-Government Oath Keepers and the white supremacist Proud Boys—have been convicted for seditious conspiracy, meaning they were found responsible for acts to “conspire to overthrow, put down, or to destroy by force the Government of the United States, or to levy war against them, or to oppose by force the authority thereof, or by force to prevent, hinder, or delay the execution of any law of the United States.” And members of another far-right extremist group, the Three Percenter militia, have been indicted for conspiracy for their acts on January 6, with at least one having pleaded guilty. Far-right extremists have also killed law enforcement officers and extremist members of the military have engaged in plots to kill their fellow soldiers. Just this year, an Air Guard member with extremist views leaked sensitive national security documents. These examples show that far-right activities are multifaceted and threaten our national security.

This is the real extremist political violence that Americans are facing. And that threat has been escalating in recent years and needs the most attention and resources to counter. This assessment does not make light of violence coming from the left, and in past eras there was significant terrorism and violence including murders by left-wing groups in the 1970’s and threats and property destruction by anarchist, environmental, and animal rights extremists in the 2000’s. But it is simply a fact that in recent years, the left is less connected to deadly acts, and when engaged in criminality, is more prone to property destruction and street-violence (which far-right groups also engage in with deadly results) than murder. To counteract these real threats to Americans, it is imperative that data drives the decision making.

Additionally, as it is a focus of this hearing, it is important to note that a significant amount of far-right violence was perpetrated or attempted against racial justice protesters in 2020. On June 3, 2020, Federal authorities arrested three individuals allegedly associated with the Boogaloo Bois, a loosely organized group of far-right extremists preparing for a civil war, for conspiring to cause violence during Las Vegas Black Lives Matter protests using incendiary devices. Less than a week later, law enforcement officials near Richmond, Virginia, arrested a Ku Klux Klan leader for driving a vehicle into peaceful protesters. And two law enforcement officers were killed in California by members of the Boogaloo Bois. In 2020, far-right extremists also used cars as weapons against racial justice protesters, with reports of at least 50 vehicle-ramming incidents starting in May 2000. At least 18 were categorized as deliberate. None of this excuses the violence that sometimes accompanied the protests, including officers injured and blinded, police cars set on fire, and property destruction, but there is no evidence these events were caused by left-wing actors or members of antifa, as Trump so often exclaimed. An AP analysis of hundreds of arrests for illegal activities during the protests including arson, assault, rioting, and other charges, found most arrested weren’t “leftist radicals.” Additionally, an analysis of racial justice protests in 2020 and 2021 found that “94 percent of protests involved no participant arrests, 97.9 percent involved no participant injuries, 98.6 percent involved no injuries to police, and 96.7 percent involved no property damage.” Describing these events as lawless is simply false.

TERRORISM DATA PROVES FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISTS TOP THREAT

Several analyses of political violence substantiate what the FBI and other Federal agencies have asserted, that the most lethal form of terrorism today is coming from the far right, particularly from white supremacists and anti-Government militias, but also inspired by other bigoted far-right ideologies such as male supremacy.

In the Center for Strategic and International Studies’ (CSIS) assessment of ideological motivation based on data on terrorist attacks and plots from 1994 to May 2020, they found, “right-wing attacks and plots were predominant from 1994 to 1999 and accounted for more than half of all incidents in 2008 as well as every year since 2011, with the exception of 2013. Most right-wing attacks in the 1990’s targeted abortion clinics, while most right-wing attacks since 2014 focused on individuals (often targeted because of religion, race, or ethnicity) and religious institutions. Facilities and individuals related to the Government and police have also been consistent right-wing targets, particularly for attacks by militia and sovereign citizen groups.”

CSIS also found that the number of incidents had increased since 2014: “This increase is reminiscent of the wave of right-wing activity in the 1990’s that peaked with 43 right-wing incidents in 1995. The Oklahoma City bombing, which occurred

on April 19, 1995, was the second-most deadly terrorist attack in U.S. history, after September 11, 2001. In three recent years—2016, 2017, and 2019—the number of right-wing terrorist events matched or exceeded the number in 1995, including a recent high of 53 right-wing terrorist incidents in 2017. Despite a moderate decrease in 2018 to 29 incidents, right-wing activity again increased in 2019 to 44 incidents.” In 8 of the years from 1994 to 2019, all fatalities were caused by right-wing attackers, and in 3 more, including 2018 and 2019, these actors caused more than 90 percent of annual fatalities. CSIS found that while religious terrorists caused the largest number of total fatalities because of 9/11, right-wing perpetrators were “most likely to cause more deaths in a given year.”

CSIS also documented 25 left-wing attacks in 2020. Those incidents included attempts to derail trains in efforts to stop pipeline construction and at least 7 incidents in which police and their facilities were attacked with incendiary devices and weapons fire. The incidents included the burning of a Minneapolis police precinct during the racial justice protests in 2020 and the killing of a Trump supporter in Oregon by a suspected gunman who was a self-described antifa supporter, the only death that year connected to far-left violence. In 2020, CSIS made the following conclusions: far-right terrorism has significantly outpaced terrorism from other types of perpetrators, such as far-left or Islamic extremists, right-wing attacks and plots are the majority of all terrorist incidents since 1994, right-wing attacks and plots have grown significantly, and finally, right-wing extremists perpetrated over 90 percent of these incidents between January 1 and May 8, 2020. In 2021, CSIS further found that violent far-right attacks and plots remained the most frequent type of domestic terrorism, and they were responsible for 28 of 30 fatalities from terrorism in 2021. As a *Washington Post* analysis of CSIS data concluded, “The surge [of terrorist violence] reflects a growing threat from home-grown terrorism not seen in a quarter-century, with right-wing extremist attacks and plots greatly eclipsing those from the far left and causing more deaths.”

It is notable that CSIS found that far-left perpetrators motivated by anarchism, anti-fascism, or anti-law enforcement beliefs committed a growing percentage of attacks in 2021. Although these actors were behind a higher than usual number of terrorist attacks and plots in 2021, only one committed by a Black nationalist and anti-police activist resulted in a fatality. In 2021, violent far-right attackers primarily used highly lethal weapons, such as firearms, while far-left attackers mainly used weapons such as knives or bludgeons, leading to a higher number of deaths by far-right actors.

Data from other sources supports CSIS’ analysis that far-right terrorism is the most frequent and deadly. In 2021, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reported that over the prior decade, there were about 450 U.S. murders committed by political extremists. Of these murders far-right extremists were responsible for about 75 percent, Islamic extremists for about 20 percent, and left-wing extremists for 4 percent. White supremacists committed nearly half of the murders. In 2022, the ADL identified 62 extremist-connected mass casualty incidents since 1970, with 46 of them being far-right ideologically-motivated, more than half having occurred in the prior 12 years. All of the extremist-related murders in 2022 were committed by far-right extremists. Left-wing extremists engaged in violence ranging from assaults to fire-bombings and arsons, but since the late 1980’s, have rarely targeted people with deadly violence.

GOVERNMENT ANALYSES CONCUR

Government analyses agree with CSIS and the AOL. In an October 2022 threat assessment from the FBI and DHS, it was reported that, “In 2021, the FBI and DHS assessed RMVEs [Racially-Motivated Violent Extremists] advocating the superiority of the white race and anti-authority or anti-Government violent extremists, specifically militia violent extremists, presented the most lethal threat categories.” The assessment also pointed out that these far-right extremists, “were most likely to conduct mass-casualty attacks against civilians, and militia violent extremists would typically target law enforcement and government personnel and facilities.” A March 2023 GAO report assessing data on the threat notes, “According to DHS, there were 231 domestic terrorism incidents between 2010 and 2021. Of these, about 35 percent (the largest category) were classified as racially or ethnically motivated. These attacks were also the most lethal.” The report further notes that, “Anti-Government or anti-authority motivated violent extremism was the second largest category of incidents, and resulted in 15 deaths over the same time period.” On left-wing animal rights extremism the report says, “There were also domestic terrorism incidents linked to animal rights extremists and abortion-related violent extremists, among other motivations. Animal rights-related incidents did not result in any

deaths during this time period; incidents related to abortion-related violent extremists led to 3 deaths.”

Academic research studying world-wide data on terrorism substantiates that left-wing extremism is less deadly. An analysis published in 2022 in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* that looked at far-right, far-left, and Islamist extremism found that “radical acts perpetrated by individuals associated with left-wing causes are less likely to be violent.”

Given this data it is unsurprising that in May 2021, Attorney General Merrick Garland and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas both told a Senate committee that the greatest domestic threat facing the United States came from what they called “racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists,” meaning far-right actors. Garland emphasized that the greatest threat is from “those who advocate for the superiority of the white race.” In February 2022, DHS issued a bulletin saying of the domestic terrorism threat, “The convergence of violent extremist ideologies, false or misleading narratives, and conspiracy theories have and will continue to contribute to a heightened threat of violence in the United States.”

The rising tide of far-right domestic terrorism is also reflected in the FBI’s caseload as the lead agency investigating terrorism and political violence. In January 2022, FBI officials reported that their domestic terrorism investigation caseload had more than doubled from 1,000 to 2,700 over the prior 18 months, leading to a 260 percent increase in personnel. The agency also reported that of its 2,700 open cases, where an individual or group of individuals has been designated domestic terrorists, almost a third were involved in the January 6th insurrection and subsequent political activity connected to it. To help manage the surge in far-right extremism cases, the DOJ created a new domestic terrorism unit in 2022. “January 6th was not an isolated event,” FBI Director Christopher Wray told the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 2, 2021. “The problem of domestic terrorism has been metastasizing across the country for a long time now and it’s not going away anytime soon.”

It is relevant that hate crimes, which are predominantly motivated by the same hatreds white supremacists hold and can be considered mini-domestic terrorist attacks for their targeting of specific protected classes, have also been on the rise. The FBI reported in March that hate crimes rose from more than 8,000 in 2020 to nearly 11,000 in 2021, the eighth year in a row that the numbers have gone up. This is particularly troubling given that we know from multiple Bureau of Justice Statistics analyses that hate crimes are underreported by around 90 percent.

The data is clear. Terrorism from the far-right is more frequent, deadlier, and has been increasing in recent years. There is left-wing violence, but it does not in any way compare with the volume and deadliness of far-right violence. These numbers justify the conclusions reached by Federal agencies that countering far-right domestic terrorism must be the priority in law enforcement and other efforts, such as those outlined in President Joe Biden’s 2021 National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism. There is no evidence to conclude that left-wing organizations and individuals or their associated violence should be a priority in the battle against political violence.

IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSING THE THREAT OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE ACCURATELY

For policy reasons, it is critical that responses to political violence line up with the available evidence of where the threat is most dire. Through administrations of both parties after the 9/11 attacks, far-right violence was ignored as the focus moved entirely to Islamist extremism, obviously also a very serious threat, but not the only one. Just 6 years prior to 9/11, Timothy McVeigh, inspired by a neo-Nazi race war novel and anti-Government militias, committed the largest domestic terrorist attack in American history up to that time. But the reality of such violence was forgotten in the wake of 9/11. Taking our eye off far-right violence meant that agencies that protect us from political violence were understaffed and lacking in expertise as far-right attacks began to metastasize during the Obama administration.

But there was a deeper problem in this reluctance to accept rising far-right violence as a growing threat. Emblematic of this was the Obama administration’s decision to withdraw a DHS report in 2009 that correctly anticipated that this type of violence would be on the rise. In the wake of multiple attacks on the DHS report by conservatives, 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.” Obama officials also did not seem to understand the new landscape they were facing. During its February 2015 White House summit on countering violent extremism, Obama only mentioned one far-right attack, Timothy McVeigh’s Oklahoma City bombing. Just a few months later, white supremacist

Dylann Roof killed 9 in a Black church in Charleston, SC. And shockingly, just 2 weeks after the Charleston massacre, the House Committee on Homeland Security released a Terror Threat Snapshot that contained no mention of Charleston or the threat of far-right terrorism.

Because of a politicized refusal to confront the available data on the source of the threat, Federal agencies were completely unprepared for the mass attacks and far-right violence that has exploded in recent years. And today, the head-in-the-sand attitude toward far-right extremism continues to be a problem. A 2022 report from the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee determined that although DHS and FBI have identified white supremacist and other far-right violence as “the most persistent and lethal terrorist threat,” the Federal Government has continued to prioritize Islamist terrorist threats when allocating resources. Facts must be the basis of analysis and lead policies that can protect the American people from the actual threats they face.

Officials, predominantly Republican, who refuse to accept that data shows far-right extremism is most connected to terrorism are misleading the public. Research has shown that most Americans understand extremist violence inaccurately, largely along partisan lines. For example, a May 2022 YouGov poll measured whom Americans blame for extremist murders. The poll asked people to assess whether extremist murders were committed by left-wing or right-wing extremists and found that only a fraction of Americans viewed one side as more likely to engage in such violence. Most 2020 Trump voters said that more than half of murders linked to extremism were committed by left-wing actors, a view likely shaped by such things as Trump falsely claiming antifascist groups stormed the Capitol on January 6, have been responsible for considerable violence, and “antifa” should be labeled a terrorist organization. Most Democrats and Biden voters were better informed, saying right-wing extremists were more likely to commit extremist murders. In total, only 18 percent of respondents agreed with what facts tell us, that almost all extremist murders were a function of far-right actors. Another 21 percent said that more than half were. Given the relevant data, many Americans, particularly those on the right, have been seriously misinformed about the nature of political violence and the fact that it is mostly perpetrated by those on the far right.

This obfuscation and disinformation about the real threats our country faces from the far right comes with a price. It has hampered efforts to address extremism in the military, misinformed the public on what happened on January 6, the most serious attack on our democracy, and impeded bipartisan efforts to investigate the attack, and thus how to prevent further such situations, and left communities targeted by the far right vulnerable to violence. The latter is particularly inflamed by politicians and far-right activists who endorse the white supremacist “Great Replacement” conspiracy theory, a shameful fact considering how this idea has spawned terrorist attacks against Jews, Latinos, Black people, and others in the United States and abroad.

Accurately and honestly assessing terrorist threats is of vital importance to protecting the safety of our communities, our national security, and our democracy. If the subcommittee’s Republicans cared about keeping Americans and our law enforcement professionals safe from extremist violence, this hearing would address the significant threat from the far right. Hearings designed to fuel disinformation are unworthy of our elected leaders, a waste of taxpayer resources, and dangerous.

Mr. IVEY. I would ask to offer this joint intelligence bulletin. This is “Some Domestic Violence Extremists Adopt Boogaloo and Accelerationism Concepts To Justify or Promote Violence.”

Chairman BISHOP. Without objection, so ordered.*

Mr. IVEY. Ms. Spitalnick, I don’t know if you are familiar with the Boogaloo and Accelerationism concepts. They were new to me, but I was wondering if you could expound on and talk about how they are connected to these issues.

Ms. SPITALNICK. Absolutely. Look, the Boogaloo Boy movement, which became more prominent in the public discourse in 2020, is a deeply anti-law enforcement, anti-Government, right-wing extremist movement. It specifically came to prominence in summer of 2020 when there were some extremists affiliated with the Boogaloo

*The document has been retained in committee files.

movement who murdered two California law enforcement officers. This movement specifically believes in the idea of inciting a civil war. Some of them identify as white supremacists, some of them don't, but they are all part of this broader right-wing, anti-Government, extremist movement. I think it's indicative of the broader anti-law enforcement sentiment that exists among many right-wing extremists.

All you need to do is look at what happened here on January 6 to understand that the law enforcement injured, and some who ultimately died from those injuries that day, weren't accidental, they weren't collateral damage, they were considered a target by many of the insurrectionists on January 6. So it's important to be very clear-eyed about the anti-law enforcement sentiment that exists among many of these right-wing extremists.

Mr. IVEY. All right. Then I wanted to—I have got another article here that—it is called “Alleged Leaker Fixated on Guns and Envisioned Race Wars.” This is an article from the *Washington Post* dated May 14. I would like to offer this for the record as well.

Chairman BISHOP. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY HONORABLE GLENN IVEY

ALLEGED LEAKER FIXATED ON GUNS AND ENVISIONED ‘RACE WAR’

By Shane Harris, Samuel Oakford, and Chris Dehghanpoor

Updated May 14, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. EDT/Published May 13, 2023 at 6 o'clock a.m. EDT

Jack Teixeira, dressed in camouflage fatigues, his finger wrapped around the trigger of a semiautomatic rifle, faced the camera and spoke as though reciting an oath. “Jews scam, n—rs rape, and I mag dump.”

Teixeira raised his weapon, aimed at an unseen target and fired 10 times in rapid succession, emptying the magazine of bullets.

The 6-second video, taken at a gun range near Teixeira's home in Massachusetts, affords a brief but illuminating glimpse into the offline world of the 21-year-old National Guard member, who stands accused of leaking a trove of classified military intelligence on the group-chat platform Discord.

Previously unpublished videos and chat logs reviewed by *The Washington Post*, as well as interviews with several of Teixeira's close friends, suggest that he was readying for what he imagined would be a violent struggle against a legion of perceived adversaries—including Blacks, political liberals, Jews, gay and transgender people—who would make life intolerable for the kind of person Teixeira professed to be: an Orthodox Christian, politically conservative and ready to defend, if not the government of the United States, a set of ideals on which he imagined it was founded.

Teixeira's love of guns, which first drew him to an online community of friends, was intertwined with a deep suspicion of the government that he served as an enlisted member of the Air National Guard. But Teixeira did not consider himself a whistleblower, according to friends.

By the time of his arrest, filings by Federal prosecutors show that Teixeira had amassed a small arsenal of rifles, shotguns and pistols, as well as a helmet, gas mask and night-vision goggles, all under the roof of the house where he lived with his mother and stepfather. *The Post* obtained and verified two videos taken at their home in Dighton, Mass., where the FBI arrested Teixeira last month.

Filmed from the shooter's perspective, the first video shows a person identified by a Discord user as Teixeira firing an AR-style weapon into the forest. Another video shows the gunman firing a pistol into the woods behind Teixeira's home, including two rapid volleys that suggest the weapon may have been modified. It isn't clear what legal or illegal modifications Teixeira may have made, though devices like binary triggers and typically illegal auto sear accessories can make semiautomatic guns fire quicker than they are designed to shoot. A separate photograph shows an AK-style weapon resting on a table outside the family home next to a helmet with attached night-vision goggles.

For Teixeira, firearms practice seemed to be more than a hobby. “He used the term ‘race war’ quite a few times,” said a close friend who spent time with Teixeira in an online community on Discord, a platform popular with video game players, and had lengthy private phone and video calls with him over the course of several years.

“He did call himself racist, multiple times,” the friend said in an interview. “I would say he was proud of it.”

The friend, like others on the server, spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid being associated publicly with Teixeira, who faces a potential sentence of 25 years in prison. The friend gave a video interview to *The Post* and requested that their face be obscured and their voice modified.

In the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, Teixeira told friends that he saw a storm gathering. “He was afraid they would target White people,” his friend said. “He had told me quite a few times he thought they need to be prepared for a revolution.” The friend said Teixeira spoke approvingly of Kyle Rittenhouse, a teenager who shot three people, two fatally, during protests that summer in Kenosha, Wis., claiming that he had acted in self-defense. A jury acquitted Rittenhouse of five counts, including intentional first-degree homicide, in 2021.

Teixeira’s preparations for civil chaos weren’t limited to arms; knowledge was also power. His job as a computer technician at Otis Air Force Base, on Cape Cod, gave him access to the Pentagon’s network for top-secret information, where, according to his friends, Teixeira viewed thousands of classified documents on a vast range of topics, from the war in Ukraine to North Korean ballistic missile launches to attempts by foreign governments to interfere in U.S. elections. Teixeira shared some of this intelligence bounty with a band of about two dozen people in a Discord server he came to control called Thug Shaker Central. (The server’s name, the most often used of several, is a racist allusion.) Teixeira’s goal, they said, was to reveal truths that powerful people had hidden from ordinary ones.

Teixeira wanted his online companions, many of them teenage boys, to “be prepared for things the government might do, reinforcing to them that the government was lying to them,” said the close friend, who was also a member of the server. Beginning in 2022, the year after Teixeira was granted a top-secret government security clearance following a standard background investigation, he began posting classified documents in the server, first typing them out by hand and later uploading photographs of printed documents bearing classification markings and restrictions on their distribution. He also shared video from the base, showing friends on the server where he worked and allegedly secreted away classified intelligence.

The Post obtained hundreds of documents, as well as text messages, that Teixeira shared on the server over the course of several months. Teixeira’s lawyers declined to comment. Teixeira, who remains in Federal custody, has not entered a plea.

Teixeira occasionally augmented his leaks with sober analysis. He once confidently predicted that China “will be trying to avoid sanctions and appease us in the near term” in light of new laws and regulations aimed at blunting the country’s semiconductor manufacturing industry.

But Teixeira’s missives also revealed a conspiratorial streak.

“Recently a Al-Qaeda sympathizer moved nearby my area, immigrant and we’re finding more about their organization,” he wrote in October 2022, apparently referring to the U.S. Government. “Any sand n—r like that we will watch them[.]”

On Discord, an account with the handle “Jack the Dripper,” one of Teixeira’s known monikers, shared an image titled “payback,” showing a large passenger jet careening toward the Kaaba in Mecca, Islam’s holiest site.

Teixeira asserted that “lots of FBI agents were found to have sympathized with the Jan 6 rioters,” and he said naive members of the intelligence community, of which he was technically a part, had been “cucked.” He referred to mainstream press as “zogshit,” appropriating a popular white-supremacist slur for the “Zionist Occupied Government.” Friends said that during live video chats, Teixeira expounded on baseless accusations of shadowy, sinister control by Jewish and liberal elites, as well as corrupt law enforcement authorities.

“He had quite a few conspiratorial beliefs,” the close friend said, adding: “I remember him multiple times talking about things like Waco and Ruby Ridge, and talking about how the government kills their own people,” referring to a pair of notorious armed standoffs that the far right has held up as emblematic of government oppression.

Polarized by the pandemic

Already united by their love of guns and their Orthodox Christian faith, two members of Thug Shaker Central said their nascent political beliefs became hardened and more polarized during the isolation of the pandemic. Unable to see their local

friends in person, the young members spent their entire days in front of screens and came under the influence of outsize online figures like Teixeira. Some on the server saw him as an older brother—others, friends said, like a father figure.

The Post obtained previously unpublished screenshots from the server and recordings of members playing games together. Racist and antisemitic language flowed through the community, as did hostility for gay and transgender people, whom Teixeira deemed “degenerate.” The line between sarcasm and genuine belief became increasingly blurred. On video calls, users held up a finger, jokingly imitating members of ISIS. In their rooms were flags associated with Christian nationalism and white power.

In interviews, some of the members struggled to explain worldviews that had developed largely online, and expressed remorse. Several admitted they had become radicalized during the pandemic and were influenced by Teixeira, whose own politics seemed animated by social grievances and an obsession with guns.

The members may have sensed they were treading into dangerous political waters, even before leaked classified documents started circulating. During video chats, some hid their faces behind masks, fearful of being publicly identified with a group of self-professed bigots, Teixeira’s close friend said.

After he enlisted in the U.S. Air National Guard in September 2019, Teixeira also feared that his own racist and violent statements would jeopardize his chances of getting a security clearance. “He was worried something from Discord would come up during his interview,” said the friend, who met him when the application was still pending. Teixeira changed his online handle to an innocuous version of his surname and became “less active” in the community for a time, the friend added, in an effort not to create more incriminating evidence.

But Teixeira already had an offline record that arguably should have raised concerns for the officials who approved his security clearance. In March 2018, Teixeira was suspended from his high school “when a classmate overheard him make remarks about weapons, including Molotov cocktails, guns at the school, and racial threats,” according to a Justice Department filing last month that argued Teixeira should remain in jail while he faces charges under the Espionage Act stemming from his alleged leaks.

Federal prosecutors noted that, according to local police records, Teixeira claimed that he had been talking about a video game when he made the alarming comments. But other students disputed that characterization, prosecutors said. And Teixeira’s close friend, who knew him after he had graduated high school, said he had confessed to wanting to take a gun to school and carry out a shooting.

“He had told me multiple times about when he was younger, his desire to shoot up his school,” the friend said. “He hated his school.”

“To my knowledge, he never hurt anyone physically, but he absolutely talked about it pretty often,” the friend added. Other friends confirmed Teixeira talked about attacking his school, but they said they didn’t take his threats seriously.

It remains unclear how Teixeira obtained a clearance and what consideration, if any, adjudicators gave to his history of violent remarks.

Ann Stefanek, an Air Force spokeswoman, said Teixeira is subject to “potential discipline,” considering he was working under active duty. After the Air Force concludes an investigation, she said, a commander will determine if Teixeira should face charges in the military. The service is coordinating closely with the FBI in the leak investigation, she said.

Teixeira remains an airman first class, a low-ranking enlisted service member, as he awaits trial on the leaking charges.

The military has, in the past, struggled to track down individuals who have espoused racist or white-nationalist ideologies. Service members have faced charges that include dereliction of duty and misconduct for racist rants.

After Teixeira got his privileged access, he sought out another official license that had eluded him: a firearms identification card, which, in the State of Massachusetts, permits the possession of “non-large-capacity rifles, shotguns, and ammunition.”

Teixeira’s application had been turned down in 2018 due to the concerns of local police about his violent remarks at his high school, court records show. But in a letter to a local police officer in 2020, Teixeira argued that his new career in the Air Force, and the security clearance that came with it, demonstrated his trustworthiness.

“I now represent much more than myself and need to watch what I say and do both in public and in private, as it affects more than just myself,” Teixeira wrote in November 2020. He allegedly began divulging classified information online a little more than a year later.

A second server

The pandemic refuge of Thug Shaker Central wasn't the only place Teixeira appears to have spilled protected information.

According to court documents and online records reviewed by *The Post*, Teixeira posted intelligence on another Discord server as early as February 2022. This community of gamers contained hundreds of people, exposing official secrets to a much larger audience than his tight circle of friends, who said they understood they should keep the classified documents to themselves.

The server, called Abinavski's Exclusion Zone, is associated with a YouTube streamer who plays the video game War Thunder, known for its realistic models of tanks, fighter jets and other military vehicles. A member of the server, who asked not to be identified, said a user believed to be Teixeira posted intelligence in a channel called "civil-discussions," usually in a running thread.

Abinavski's Exclusion Zone remained active this month. When *The Post* reviewed the server on Tuesday, it listed 627 members, of whom 150 were online at the time.

On April 6, a Discord user informed Teixeira that he had seen material he believed the service member had shared show up on another social media platform, Telegram, in a channel devoted to pro-Russian topics.

"Is it actually one of them btw," the unidentified user asked, according to court documents.

"Not commenting," Teixeira wrote in reply. The user then asked, "[D]id you share them outside of abis," an apparent reference to Abinavski.

In chat logs made public by prosecutors, Teixeira repeatedly makes reference to "the thread" where he had posted material starting in 2022. In a March 19, 2023, exchange, Teixeira wrote that he'd "decided to stop with the updates," thanking "everyone who came to the thread about the current event," an apparent reference to the Russian invasion of Ukraine that had begun a year earlier.

"I was very happy and willing and enthusiastic to have covered this event for the past year and share with all of you," Teixeira wrote, in comments that match messages the *New York Times* first reported he had made on that date in what it identified as a second server but didn't name as Abinavski's Exclusion Zone. In an email to *The Post*, Abinavski said a user believed to be Teixeira left the server in early April.

Abinavski said the civil-discussions channel had a thread for conversations around the Ukraine war, created roughly the time Russia invaded. "Members confirmed with me . . . that photos of documents were posted" to the channel, Abinavski said.

The YouTuber added that Discord deleted the civil-discussions channel on April 24 after "multiple members" received notices from the company.

In a statement, a spokesperson for Discord said: "We have removed content, terminated user accounts, and are cooperating with the efforts of the United States Departments of Defense and Justice in connection with this incident."

"In this instance, we have banned users involved with the original distribution of the materials, deleted content deemed to be against our Terms of Service and issued warnings to users who continue to share the materials in question," the spokesperson added.

As classified documents began popping up across the internet, Teixeira asked an unnamed user to help him delete en masse the posts that Teixeira had made in civil-discussions, according to court documents. "If anyone comes looking, don't tell them shit."

But the leak that led the authorities to the young National Guard member appears to have come not from Abinavski's larger group but within Teixeira's trusted circle. The classified information that showed up on Telegram, and later circulated more broadly online, came from a young Thug Shaker Central member, several other members of the server said, who broke the club's unwritten rule not to share the documents and set off a chain of events that led to Teixeira's arrest the following month.

Moving from online to IRL

The civil-discussions channel gave Teixeira a large audience. But in Thug Shaker Central, he seemed to feel he was in a more intimate environment, able to share his love of guns and express his political views to a sympathetic audience. Teixeira posted videos and photographs taken at his mother and stepfather's home in Dighton and clips he recorded at the nearby gun range, where Teixeira made his "mag dump" video.

Teixeira developed an offline relationship with at least one friend on the server: Henry Adams, 18, who lives with his family about an hour's drive from Dighton in Hanover, Mass.

Three former members of Thug Shaker confirmed Adams's identity, as well as his close ties with Teixeira and activity on the server. An attorney for Adams, Max Perlman, confirmed that his client knew Teixeira for "around 3 years," bonding over shared interests. Through his attorney, Adams denied being a member of Thug Shaker Central, claimed to be unaware of its existence and said he had never seen any "illicit material" posted by Teixeira on any server.

According to a former member of the server, Adams tried to obtain support for Teixeira following his arrest. Asked if Adams had contacted anyone on the server, Perlman said his client had spoken "to one minor individual and asked for letters of support because Mr. Teixeira's mom ask[ed] him to see if people would do that and get them to his lawyer."

Perlman said Adams and Teixeira visited a shooting range in Raynham, Mass., "many, many times," accompanied by Adams's mother, Lisa, his father, Richard, or Teixeira's biological father, Jack Michael Teixeira.

Reached by phone, Adams's mother didn't dispute that her son knew Teixeira. But she denied that he was active on Thug Shaker Central and said he "saw nothing." Referring to Teixeira, she asked, "When did serving your country and being a Christian become a bad thing?"

Attempts to reach Jack Michael Teixeira were unsuccessful.

Additional videos obtained and verified by *The Post* showed Teixeira and Adams at the gun range, owned by Taunton Rifle and Pistol Club. In one, Adams fires a Soviet-era SKS rifle. In another, Teixeira fires a pump action shotgun.

The club president, Eric Dewhirst, confirmed that the footage was taken at the members-only facility. In an interview at the organization's clubhouse, Dewhirst said there was no record of Teixeira being a member, suggesting that he and his friend were probably taken there by someone else. Dewhirst, who said he had read about Teixeira's alleged crimes and his life online, described the 21-year-old as "young and head full of mush."

'He absolutely enjoyed gore'

When Teixeira wasn't firing guns in the real world, he was playing with them online.

"He played a lot of video games, mostly shooters," his close friend said, noting that Teixeira preferred games from the shooter's point of view.

Teixeira's gaming and political cultures overlapped, the friend observed. "Once you start getting into the more niche video games, a lot of those communities are much more conservative. I think he found a small place where his views got echoed back to him and made them worse."

The interest in video games and conservative politics was accompanied by an acute obsession with violence, the friend said. "He would send me a video of someone getting killed, ISIS executions, mass shootings, war videos. People would screen-share it, and he would laugh very loudly and be very happy to watch these things with everyone else. He absolutely enjoyed gore."

Friends may not have taken seriously Teixeira's threats against his high school. But he voiced approval of some shooters, particularly when they targeted people of different races and faiths. Teixeira was especially impressed by a gunman's rampage at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2019, which left 51 people dead and 40 injured. "He was very happy that those people died," the friend said, because they were Muslim. The shooter live-streamed his massacre as though he were in a video game.

The line between condoning violence and making light of it was slippery. When Teixeira was waiting on approval of his security clearance, he told his friend that he was particularly concerned that "jokes" he had made in the server might surface about "shooting up buildings" and "wanting to kill government agents." These were frequent subjects of amusement.

"Most of the jokes he would make were about the ATF," the friend said, referencing the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Federal Government's premier gun control agency and a *bête noire* of the far right.

"He was very against gun control. And so he would talk about wanting to kill ATF agents or when ATF agents would show up to his house, like theoretically preparing your house so that they would die in some strange trap."

In arguing that Teixeira should remain in jail while he faces charges, Federal prosecutors pointed to his threats of violence in high school. But among online communities whose members hold "more extremist conservative views," the friend said, "it's really common to joke about killing government agents like that, so it never seemed worrying to me."

Teixeira's alleged hostility toward the government doesn't explain his motivation for disclosing classified information. Other convicted leakers, including those like

Teixeira who served in lower-level positions but had some of the highest levels of security clearance, were self-described whistleblowers trying to check perceived abuses or wrongdoings. Teixeira was trying to impress, and apparently mold, a group of teenagers.

"I think he did think it made him special," the close friend said. "I think there was a part of him that felt like he was cool or important because he got that access."

For the teenagers Teixeira had taken under his wing, the classified documents offered an education about how the world secretly worked. "He wanted to be seen as someone who's powerful or looked up to," the friend said. "He wanted them to be what he thought was the ideal, the ideal man."

Dalton Bennett, Evan Hill, Alex Horton, Andrew Ba Tran, Alice Crites, Nilo Tabrizy, Jon Gerberg and Dan Lamothe contributed to this report.

Mr. IVEY. The point I wanted to make on this one, because I didn't know this was there, this is about Jack—I think it is pronounced Teixiera, who is the individual who worked in national security, stole documents, and then leaked them to the public. Apparently what motivated him was—I will just read a little bit here—Jack Teixiera, dressed in camouflage fatigues, his finger wrapped around the trigger of a semiautomatic rifle, faced the camera and spoke as though reciting an oath, "Jews, scam, n-word, rape, and mag dump". Then he used his weapon aimed at an unseen target and fired it ten times, emptying the magazine. The article goes on to talk about his interactions with the group of young men that he shared these documents with. Preliminarily he wasn't apparently planning to release them to the public, but he did release them to these friends, and they got out eventually. Then a little later in the article, it talks about his comments about the Black Lives Matter protest. He told his friends he saw a storm gathering. One friend said he was afraid they would target white people. He had told me quite a few times he thought they need to be prepared for a revolution.

So I guess there is a commonality here, actually traits all the way back to McVeigh and beyond, about sort-of an apocalyptic vision about what is going to happen with the United States, the second Civil War and the like, that sort-of leads to these kinds of dangerous responses. Teixiera didn't actually kill anybody, but many of the people that we are talking about today did. It seems to me that that is an important line of distinction to draw when we are trying to separate out these issues.

But at the end of the day, and as I said at our last hearing, Mr. Chairman, I think there is a good hearing in here somewhere with respect to how the Homeland Security Committee can address these types of problems and move forward.

Mr. Erickson, you raised concerns about the Government issuing information and responding to false information, misinformation. That is fine. I have a different view on some of these, but I think there is a point where, especially if it is drawing a distinction about who is politically right or making those kinds of evaluations, I do think there are definitely scenarios where the Government can and should be issuing information, especially where it creates, I will say, a clear and present danger with respect to the community.

I do share your view that it should be addressed consistently, and by that I mean violence, especially murder, I think should be prosecuted as such. I think vandalism and other types of crimes should be prosecuted as such. I think the point of the testimony I have heard so far today and the data we presented was there is

a clear distinction between the right-wing extremism violence, which has been in many instances, results in homicide, sometimes targeting police. I think what you all have said with respect to Antifa and the like, that tends to be vandalism, theft. I think there is some arson and property crimes, but different. But at the end of the day, I think we need to address both.

So with that, I yield back.

Chairman BISHOP. I thank the Ranking Member for the ecumenical sort-of concession there. I appreciate that. I think the gentleman's style is one that I appreciate.

With that I recognize Ms. Greene for 5 minutes of questioning, second round.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just while we have been sitting in this committee room having this hearing today about left-wing extremism and violence, literally as we were being gaveled in, we experienced some left-wing extremism of our own on the second floor of this building while we have been in here. The Center for Popular Democracy invaded our office building this afternoon to push their extreme agenda on everything from climate to the debt ceiling. Approximately a dozen were arrested while we were sitting in this hearing room. Thankfully, my staff brought over pictures to share with you all. This happened right here in the rotunda of the Cannon building while we were sitting here in this hearing, having this hearing on left-wing extremism. I mean, you kind-of can't even make this up, but George Soros funded it. It is the open society that funds this group. Here they are being arrested by Capitol Police. We really appreciate their work. Here they are being loaded into the vans, thankfully, and here are some of their signs that they left here in the Cannon building. I don't know if we call that an insurrection, left-wing extremism, violence, I am not sure what we call it.

But I would like to remind—or I would like to remind everyone that while we are talking about white supremacy, Ms. Spitalnick, you were talking about white supremacy—

Ms. SPITALNICK. It's Spitalnick.

Ms. GREENE. Oh, I apologize, Spitalnick. Ms. Spitalnick, while you were talking about white supremacist in abortion, I totally agree with you. There are a lot of white supremacists in the abortion movement and abortionists, because they have murdered over 20 million black babies in America since *Roe* versus *Wade* in 1973. That is on average 900 black babies are aborted, they are ripped apart inside their mother's wombs. So I would agree with you, that could be labeled white supremacy, or we could just label it murder. It should never be happening. So if you want to talk about white supremacy and the abortion movement, you should really analyze that in your human rights groups that you run as you collect donations from people with your nonprofit. Because I think that is something extremely important to talk about, is the right for those black babies to have lives as American citizens, the right for them to be born, the right for them to be given a chance to live as free Americans instead of murdered.

You think this is funny, Ms. Spitalnick? Is this funny to you? Is babies being murdered in the womb funny to you? Because you are smirking and laughing at me right now.

Ms. SPITALNICK. What's not funny are the black people and Hispanic people and Jewish people and Muslim people who have been murdered in synagogue, in church, in supermarkets, in mosque, by white supremacists.

Ms. GREENE. Are you aware that all color people are murdered? That is a fact. That every single color person has been murdered. That is not unusual. It is not just that people of color are murdered. White people are murdered, too. Murder is not just for minorities. That may be a shock to you because you seem to dive deeply into all kinds of misinformation and seem to be uninformed yourself.

But if you are going to talk about white supremacy and abortion, you need to study very hard about who the targets are, and it is not just black women and it is not just black babies, it is Hispanics as well. I think that is important for you to understand.

If you apparently care about human rights and you care about studying extremism, let's have a little talk about extremism, shall we? I think that is important because that is what this hearing is all about? I would like to inform you—or maybe you don't know, maybe you do know—I doubt it, you mostly care about white supremacists and white wing extremism, but there is quite a pattern of left-wing, violent protest on college campuses today. Ms. Gaines here was the victim of it. Do you support what they did to Ms. Gaines, these trans terrorists chasing her into a room? Do you support their movement?

Ms. SPITALNICK. I am absolutely sorry that Ms. Gaines felt threatened and unsafe while she was on a college campus, and that is not acceptable. But again, the statistics tell us that when it comes to politically-motivated violence in 2022 was committed by a right-wing extremist.

Ms. GREENE. Every single murder in America was committed by a right-wing extremist?

Ms. SPITALNICK. Every single politically-motivated murder was committed by a right-wing extremist.

Ms. GREENE. Are you sure about that?

Ms. SPITALNICK. I am——

Ms. GREENE. Are you aware that the Tennessee shooter just recently identified as a man, and she was a biological woman? Was she a right-wing extremist as well?

Chairman BISHOP. The gentlelady's time has expired. I will allow the witness to answer the question.

Ms. SPITALNICK. So that was a shooting that happened in 2023.

Ms. GREENE. OK.

Ms. SPITALNICK. There is no evidence as to what ideology motivated that shooting. What we do know is that cisgender males are responsible for the vast majority of mass shootings in this country.

Ms. GREENE. I am sorry, I don't know what a cisgender male is. There are only two genders, it is male and female. That would be—so one knows what a cisgender male is. It is a made-up idea.

Ms. SPITALNICK. Unfortunately, the anti-trans invasion language that you've been using——

Chairman BISHOP. The gentlelady from Georgia yields back.

Ms. SPITALNICK [continuing]. Does nothing but normalize the issues we're talking about here today.

Chairman BISHOP. I recognize Mr. Strong for his 5 minutes of questioning. I beg your pardon, Mr. Ezell. I missed you over there. Thank you.

Mr. EZELL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Erickson, as a sheriff and a police chief and a law enforcement professional, I believe this day in history that the police are better trained and better equipped and better prepared than any time in our history. The attack on law enforcement is nothing new. We have been attacked many times over the years that we have policed this great country. What is new is a lack of support that has come to us from the Federal Government, namely this Biden administration.

Law enforcement officers work many long hours and to protect their communities. It has been very disheartening to see what has come out of Washington over the last several years and the major cities in this country. This should be concerning to all Americans. Could you speak to some of these effects, how they have affected the ability to recruit and retain police officers?

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes, absolutely. Everything you've said is correct. I've said it before. I think we're facing a generational crisis in recruiting and retention. Not just major cities in this country, but communities of all sizes are having a more and more difficult time getting qualified young folks to enter into the profession. There's a lot of reasons why, in no small measure, it has to do with the negative atmosphere that's been born out of this more modern incarnation of the anti-police movement. There have been anti-police movements over decades and decades, but the modern movement began probably 7, 8 years ago and it's had a debilitating effect on recruiting and retention. You can understand why.

But compounding that, you have the problem with a lack of support throughout the arc of the criminal justice system. Law enforcement is only the first part of that justice system. So you can arrest all the people you want, if prosecutors aren't going to charge them and they are going to be let out, that has a demoralizing effect on the profession. Again, it's sort-of a self-fulfilling cycle where it keeps feeding into itself.

So it's a huge problem. I think we need to change the tone and the rhetoric about how we describe law enforcement across the board. I think we need to universally support and uphold the work that they're doing and make sure that they're funded and resourced appropriately.

Mr. EZELL. Thank you very much.

We can all agree on that, you know, our law enforcement needs continually-updated training. This is a very complex time that we are living in. Law enforcement is being required to do more than we have ever been asked in my 42-year history as a law enforcement officer. I think that is something that we have got to come together on, is that the police officers get up every day and go to work to serve their community. They work long hours, they get tired just like everybody else. But during some of these protests and some of the things that we have seen around the country, the police are baited, they are pushed. Sometimes it is not very easy to respond in what people would think is a normal manner if you feel your life is threatened.

So what I just want everybody to understand is that law enforcement in this country is here for everybody in this room. What I will say about some of these extremists on both sides, they need to be put in prison. They need to be left in prison so they won't be out here terrorizing the good citizens, the taxpayers, and the hard-working people of this community. I think we could come to some sort of understanding on both sides about enforcing the law, charging people, giving them a trial, getting it done so that we can better protect society.

Again, Ms. Gaines, I would like to commend you for your bravery, thank all the witnesses for being here today and let's figure this thing out. Let's get something done.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman BISHOP. I wonder if the gentlemen would yield to me individually before yielding back the—the remaining minute of your time?

Mr. EZELL. Yes, I do, I yield back to that Chairman.

Chairman BISHOP. I thank you, sir.

First thing, without objection, Ms. Greene will submit for the record the four photograph of the events she indicated were recorded earlier today in this building with the arrests of people who were intruders or protesters or whatever.

[The information follows:]







Chairman BISHOP. Ms. Gaines, the 30 seconds we have got left, and I think I focus on you. We see sort-of the nature of the dialog and politics that we are having right here and I guess I would say—again, I would join the others in commending you for your courage and ask you if you have any closing thoughts, in case I don't get another chance, to speak to what you think about the ability to have a dialog when we are calling each other the most horrific names and how we get to the right result.

Ms. GAINES. Because I do think that the majority of people in this room agree on the same things, we all want everyone to be safe, we all want this sense of fairness. So it's kind-of discouraging

for me being 23. I always kind-of joke and say I was naive before the Lia Thomas stuff, specifically. I wish I could go back to being naive of just how this system really works. It is pretty heart-breaking—and that's not to one side or the other—just seeing the kind-of going for the throats. I understand to a degree, but I think we all want the same thing. So I feel like we should be able to create solutions that—I know we can't appease everyone, that's very evident, but appease majority of people and keep majority of people safe.

Chairman BISHOP. Thank you, ma'am, for that.

With that, I recognize for his second round 5 minutes of questioning, Mr. Strong.

Mr. STRONG. Ms. Gaines, as a father I can't imagine what happened that day in that dressing room. Your day started with a man that was average at best in the sport of swimming, then claiming to be a woman or a transgender, changing in front of you and your teammates. Then your day ended with a man that tied you for the fastest time being awarded first place by the NCAA. As a young lady, you were failed at a bunch of different levels. It is unbelievable what you have been through. I commend you and your family for being here today.

I yield the rest of my time to Ms. Greene from Georgia.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you, Mr. Strong.

I would like to continue back with talking about left-wing extremism. I think it is very important, this issue.

I would would like to remind everyone here in the summer of 2020, the protests and violence in major cities all over the country were so intense, it caused over \$2 billion in damage in America. This was Nation-wide in cities all over our country. The far left groups that occupied Portland were there for over 100 days, causing over \$2 million in damage to the Federal buildings and local businesses. Seattle protesters claimed several blocks, literally took it over in a neighborhood that they called Capitol Hill Autonomous Zones, or CHAZ, which is something that no one can comprehend how an Antifa group and left-wing extremist group can come in and literally take over city blocks.

I just wonder Ms. Spitalnick—I am sorry—a senior advisor on extremism at Human Rights First, which is a nonpartisan organization—nonpartisan—have you studied Antifa?

Ms. SPITALNICK. No, I have not studied Antifa, but I am aware of the research that those who do study extremism across the spectrum has done that tells us that while, yes, on the left, there is oftentimes to the extent left-wing violence exists, it tends to be focused on property damage and other acts along those lines, whereas on the right, for the most part, the violence tends to be manifesting in the sort-of deadly mass acts of violence that we've been talking about here today.

So first and foremost—

Ms. GREENE. I reclaim my time, I reclaim my time. Thank you.

You are with a nonpartisan organization, nonprofit, which means you raise money in a nonpartisan fashion for extremism and human rights. So you don't consider property damage—for the American people, by the way—I am a business owner, it is really hard to run a business, especially if the entire neighborhoods and

area get set on fire night after night, the police officers are attacked, they are attacking Federal courthouses, and making the entire community literally unlivable. It is hard to have customers come in your store, especially when you own a store or maybe you have a Wendy's franchise that gets burned to the ground. So you don't consider that worth studying, the property damage and all of the violence that happens to the American people? I would think that you consider that something worth studying and caring about, especially in a nonpartisan organization.

Ms. SPITALNICK. Absolutely there is left-wing violence that does exist in certain ways. But the point that I am making is that we cannot draw false equivalencies between property damage and the death of people by mass shooters who are targeting them based on their race, their religion, or other characteristics.

Ms. GREENE. Well, what about their job or their profession, like being a police officer? We could talk about the city of Atlanta. That is the State I am from. I am from Georgia, as a matter of fact. There is an Atlanta Public Safety Training Center in Atlanta. The Atlanta City Council has proposed a \$90 million—that is taxpayer-funded, by the way—\$90 million from the taxpayers for the protection and the safety of the city of Atlanta. Well, this Antifa group has come in there and decided to take it over because they call it Cop City. You want to talk about human lives? Well, it seems to be that being a police officer is a target for Antifa because they actually murdered someone there. They actually murdered a police—oh, you don't know—that is right, because you don't study left-wing extremism from your nonpartisan, so-called nonprofit. But let me tell you about it. There was a 26-year-old activist, Manuel Teran, shot and killed Georgia State Patrol Trooper there. That was this year—you are right, not last year, it was this year. So left-wing extremism is definitely on the rise, and murder is a big part of it.

I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentlelady yields back.

I recognize Mr. Crane for his 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. CRANE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rosas, you spent a lot of time embedded on the ground in protests and riots throughout the unrest in 2020, including in Portland, Seattle, Kenosha. While most people in the protest march come with the intent of exercising their First Amendment rights, it seems that there is often a faction intent on taking advantage of the protest to engage in violence.

Could you please describe some of the tactics you have seen left-wing groups employ in preparing to confront police?

Mr. ROSAS. So the common thing is to first initially arrive and organize in a peaceful way. We saw that in Portland. I saw that. They would organize themselves in the park right across from the Federal Courthouse, but then as time would go on, more and more people would start to try to tear down—they had the fence up by them, so they would try to tear down the fence, they would try to start fires, they would try to breach the perimeter. So I know Congresswoman Clarke was bemoaning the response to it, but from what I saw, the Federal officers that were protecting the Federal Courthouse, they only came out after the rioters attacked the courthouse first on those nights.

Mr. CRANE. Did you see anything to indicate that the violence in some of these situation was planned in advance?

Mr. ROSAS. Absolutely. I mean they are—again, when we're talking about Portland, they would have people organized to do specific jobs. Sometimes, again, there would be the arsonists, they would have people with umbrellas to try to counteract the 40 millimeter less-than-lethal projectiles, they would have—because they were using tear gas, the officers, they would have people with leaf blowers to try to blow away and direct the gas back. So they basically had, as you know, basically an MOS, military occupational specialty, during those times.

Mr. CRANE. How did the members of Antifa communicate with each other to coordinate and plan their attacks?

Mr. ROSAS. Again, a lot of it's through social media, a lot of it's through just regular phones and encrypted chats. One of the reasons why I personally do not livestream any of the riots that I covered is because they actually even have kind-of like a cyber intel unit, because they would watch the livestreams and if somebody wasn't—if there was a livestreamer who wasn't aligned with them or who was willing to actually show their their violent acts, they would tell the people on the ground that, hey, this person is here. They would be able to pinpoint where they are based on the livestreams. It is pretty much that sophisticated.

Mr. CRANE. Can you talk to us real quick about some of the weapons and tools that you have seen used? Also tactics employed by these Antifa groups?

Mr. ROSAS. So outside of Molotov cocktails, I mean, again in Portland, there was an actual IED thrown, not just a large grade firework, but an actual improvised explosive device thrown at the Federal courthouse. They would use crowbars, hammers, metal pipes, basically anything. Sometimes they would be armed with handguns. I saw that in Kenosha. So it's a wide range of weaponry. The reason why they like blunt instruments is because you often see them with backpacks, so they're able to quickly take the hammer or crowbar out of the backpack, do damage, or attack somebody with it, and then put it back. Since they're all wearing black, then kind-of blend in back in the crowd, so it's harder to—if they were caught on video, it's harder to pinpoint who it was.

Mr. CRANE. Thank you.

Mr. Erickson, is it true that you were a law enforcement officer for a while?

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes.

Mr. CRANE. Does it bother you, as somebody who wants to protect all people, to see law enforcement and protection become bipartisan and polarized—or partisan, I should say?

Mr. ERICKSON. Yes, law enforcement officers—I never went to a call and asked somebody what their political registration was before I helped them. They're there to do their job. They're trying to keep communities safe. They don't want to get sucked into the partisan debate. They just want to do their jobs.

Mr. CRANE. Yes. When you were serving as a law enforcement officer, was that before or after the defund the police movement?

Mr. ERICKSON. That was before.

Mr. CRANE. That was before.

Mr. ERICKSON. Correct.

Mr. CRANE. What do you think about that whole defund the police movement?

Mr. ERICKSON. I mean, I thought it was asinine. It made no sense. Politically, it made no sense. logically, it made no sense. But I didn't really make much of it other than disappointment that it actually manifested in the cutting of some budgets. I thought people had more common sense than to go down that path.

Mr. CRANE. Yes, common sense isn't so common, is it?

Mr. ERICKSON. It depends.

Mr. CRANE. Thank you.

I yield back my time.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentleman yields back.

We will proceed to—for those interested, we will proceed to a third round of questioning. I will pass, though, to the Ranking Member, Mr. Ivey, for 5 minutes.

Mr. IVEY. There were some comments about law enforcement, and I guess the theory is that police departments across the country are having trouble hiring because of defund arguments and difficult environment and the like. We had another hearing from this morning, and the chief from I think—I believe it was Odessa, Texas, came in, and consistent with what other members of law enforcement have said, the primary focus of what he talked about was pay. His point was the area where he lives, they have oil and gas fields, you can start working for oil and gas, and a young individual can work his way up to making \$100,000 in relatively short period of time whereas at the police department, A, he said that you have to be 21 to be hired. So a lot of these young men take jobs right after high school, and so by the time they are old enough to be hired by the police, it is too late, they have already gone into other fields, and they pay a lot less than these young men can earn in the law enforcement profession.

So he also noted that when somebody asked, he pointed out that that was never an issue where he is. It is just unrealistic. He said they had strong support from the community and the prosecutors.

So I do want to be careful about sort-of trying to make this a unanimous point across the country. There are lots of places in the country where people are having trouble hiring police for the same reason people are having trouble hiring in other professions. Sometimes it is the money, sometimes it is the nature of the work. But it is not because—not universally at least for sure—of some kind of defund the police movement.

I did want to point out too, and we have talked a lot about defund the police, but my Republican colleagues are talking a lot about defunding the police, but they are the ones sponsoring legislation to not just defund the ATF, but eliminate it entirely, not just to defund the FBI, but to eliminate it entirely. The Republican front-runner for President right now has called for the entire elimination of the Department of Justice and the FBI. So your former boss, I guess, Mr. Erickson.

So to the extent we really want to engage in those conversations, I think we should be careful about it.

The people again on the panel from this morning—and the panel this morning was about reducing crime at the State and local level.

They—all across the board, all three of the law enforcement officials said, yes, we have good partnerships with the Feds, we work with them closely. The gentleman from Odessa, Texas pointed out that he had a great working relationship with the Assistant U.S. Attorney in I think he said the Western District of Texas. Now this is the Biden Department of Justice, but it doesn't matter because at that level of what they are doing, they are able to work their cases together and fight crime in a coordinated way.

They also noted that it was helpful to them for the Federal funding that they are getting. I think they were talking about Byrne grants primarily, but there is \$350 million that has been made available in many instances to smaller police departments like the ones in my jurisdiction. I have a county police department that has like 1,000 officers, but we have multiple municipal police departments that have like 10 officers on the department. It is very valuable to have that kind of Federal funding to help them with getting equipment and also hiring. Some of them need bonuses to attract law enforcement and the like.

So I think it is important for us to make sure that we are not missing the big point on these issues.

With respect to, again this topic—and Ms. Gaines, I think your testimony—I think there is definitely a hearing waiting for you. I sit on the Judiciary Committee. That is probably where it should be because—addressed by those types of laws that are fall in the jurisdiction of that committee. So maybe you will pass that along to Mr. Jordan and he will have a hearing to that effect. But to the other issues, I think it is pretty clear that yes, it is clear that we have violent extremism in the United States. There are ideological roots for that that we need to address. I think that to some extent it is on the left, it is sort-of a different set of roots to those problems. But clearly the ones on the right, we can tell what those issues are, and Ms. Spitalnick has talked about those and I think we need to try and address those quickly so we don't have other big major shootings. Or we try and address them as quickly as we can.

I yield back.

Chairman BISHOP. I thank the Ranking Member for yielding back.

I will recognize myself for 5 minutes and use it as the opportunity to say I think the original event that inspired this hearing on left-wing violence was the Antifa attack on the police facility in development in Atlanta. Because for me, it was so out of nowhere, kind-of. I mean, we we have gotten accustomed to seeing this in certain parts of the country, but it is showing up other places. Maybe it has been my own narrow horizon. I have seen that it has been everywhere.

But I noticed Mr. Goldman said earlier when he was here that—I think he sort-of denigrated what happened down there, saying charges range from something to assault. I don't remember what he said. But actually I turned around to staff because what I remembered, and what staff then confirmed, is that all 23 people arrested there were charged with domestic terrorism. They got domestic terror charges. That is a pretty big deal. That either means

somebody's overcharging or I think more likely, given the stuff that we saw, Molotov cocktails and stuff like that, this is crazy stuff.

Again, I appreciate, Mr. Ivey, some of the comments you have had, but the tenor, of course, a number of comments on the other side, people outraged that we are looking at this. They can always question about whether it is worth a hearing or not. But it doesn't denigrate the idea, Mr. Crane, to your point, that there is this crazy white supremacy sort-of motivated violence out there that has cost lives. I don't denigrate that in any respect. I do think it is problematic, with all due respect, Ms. Spitalnick, to set to suggest that all conservatives are white supremacists, hence they are inspiring that. I mean, by the same token, everybody who embraces trans ideology, sponsored the woman who—or the person—I don't I remember which one, frankly—who in Nashville killed a bunch of people. I don't think—in fact, this whole concept we have heard talked about in various hearings of stochastic terrorism. You heard that phrase? Stochastic terrorism. The idea that if you engage in very normal spectrum debate, advocacy for views, you are somehow inspiring some person down the road to engage in extremist violence. I think that is dangerous to the conception of our free speech and the way we—but let me go to you, Mr. Erickson, for just a second here.

It seems to me this fundamental pillar of our democracy is the rule of law. Yet I see—you know, I think about—it is funny, the Trump administration is always taken to task. In fact, Trump himself is called a white supremacist by my colleagues on the other side, and yet they also say it was Trump's Department of Homeland Security that identified right-wing or white supremacist extremists—and I always got to formulate this right—as you say, it is the most lethal domestic terror threat to the homeland, I think is how they put it. But for some reason—but what do you see the long-term consequences if we can't even have a hearing to examine this type of violence in that so that the country will be aware of the challenges we face?

Mr. ERICKSON. Well, I mean I think the long-term implications of a lack of candor in this topic could be very disastrous. I mean, our democracy is predicated upon us being able to discuss difficult issues and do so in a respectful way, acknowledging that there are two sides to a coin or acknowledging that the spectrum of an issue can be broad and wide. A lot of what I saw today was folks mentioning one side of the violence. I think the point of this hearing, and I applaud the majority for doing this, is that we have to acknowledge all sides. For the past couple of years, there's been scant conversation about left-wing violence coming, at least from the Federal Government. Left-wing violence is not just vandalism. I was in Portland every single night. As Mr. Rosas alluded to, these domestic terrorists were not just destroying the Hatfield Federal Courthouse, but our Federal law enforcement who were in the courthouse were literally—they literally attempted to light them on fire and to burn the building down with them in it. It was only at that time that they would leave the building to try and apprehend the people that were doing that. This was not vandalism. This goes far beyond that. So to simply say, well, 22 people died in 2022, and it was all because of right-wing extremism, and to say that means

that left-wing extremism is not a problem, that's the problem. That's the problem here that we're facing right now in Congress. We have to talk about this holistically Mr. Ivey. Would the gentleman yield for a question?

Chairman BISHOP. I have only got 10 seconds, but yes, I will. You mean to him?

Mr. IVEY. To you. Your point about the domestic terrorism charges in Georgia. They were made under State law. There is no Federal statute that is domestic terrorism. Would you consider working with me to put together a domestic terrorism bill that we could pass that would apply at the Federal level on both sides and would focus primarily on the more serious crimes? Minor stuff could be left at the State level. Would you be open to that?

Chairman BISHOP. Mr. Ivey, I would be willing to work with you on anything. I think you are a great gentleman and I think that topic is worth consideration.

One concern I have, and I think one reason we haven't gotten there, is because for the phenomenon that I see here, which is to the extent the phrase terrorism or the word terrorism is used as a tool to smear or paint half of the polity, half of the American people as though they are somehow complicit in, it is problematic. But to the extent we need tools to get at what actually constitutes terrorism, to stop it, that is something that we ought to be able to co-operate on.

Mr. IVEY. Well, just along those lines, I mean, my understanding of this is that part of a definition would be statutory, and that usually what happens is there is deference given to whether it is the State Department or another department to make a determination as to which groups would fall into that category. But I would be willing to work with you on that.

Chairman BISHOP. As you say, it might be in another committee's jurisdiction. We can talk about it.

We can find a way to get it here.

Chairman BISHOP. My time has expired.

Then so I think the right thing for me to do now is recognize Mrs. Greene of Georgia for her 5 minutes.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

I agree with the committee and I agree with our witnesses that extremism and violence and political murder and all of this is absolutely wrong, no matter what side of the aisle it is on. But I think it is important to inform one of our witnesses today, Ms. Spitalnick, that you need to study your facts more, especially since your group is nonpartisan and your paycheck, I am sure, is funded by people that donated to your group. That is, again, as you are the senior advisor on extremism at Human Rights First.

Actually, there were 25 Americans killed at the hands of Black Lives Matter and Antifa, and we can call them domestic terrorists. I think that is an appropriate word. Antifa was certainly charged with domestic terrorism charges in Georgia, my home State, and rightfully so. Then one of the victims can we go back to that? Thank you. Is Captain David Dorn. Captain David Dorn. I don't think—unless Antifa is a white supremacist group—Mr. Rosas, you have done a lot of studying on Antifa. Are they a white supremacist group? Antifa BLM?

Mr. ROSAS. Not in the traditional sense. I say that because a lot of the people that I'm able to see, they are white and when they do commit acts of vandalism or they've attacked minorities. So, I mean, that could be, but I guess with what you're trying to ask, not in—

Ms. GREENE. Not in a traditional sense, but most of them are white, and they are attacking minorities.

Mr. ROSAS. In the neighborhoods and businesses they're terrorizing, yes.

Ms. GREENE. Right. Minority neighborhoods and businesses, which should be talked about more. I mean, Black Lives Matter raised millions and millions of dollars, and then there are protests that turned into violent riots, causing property damage, but to your knowledge, has BLM ever paid any money to rebuild those minority communities that they destroyed?

Mr. ROSAS. Not to my knowledge.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you.

Mr. Erickson, do you know of any effort of BLM or Antifa to spend the money that they have to rebuild these communities?

Mr. ERICKSON. I'm not familiar with any of those.

Ms. GREENE. Thank you.

I think, as we are talking about left-wing extremism that continues today, it happened today in this building while we are having this hearing, which remember the headlines that seem to be forgotten because the major focus of Democrats here in this city, the major focus from many people on the left is 1 day in history, which is January 6. But I think it is really important to remember all of the violence and unrest and unbelievable threat to human lives.

Ms. Spitalnick, remember, you care about human lives. These headlines right here talk about human lives. Human lives are important to you, is that correct, Ms. Spitalnick?

Ms. SPITALNICK. That is correct. Which is again why we need to be clear-eyed about the threat while not ignoring the fact that left-wing violence exists, as you point out, but recognizing that when it comes to politically-motivated violence, all of the statistics, including from Trump's own Department of Homeland Security, says white supremacist and other far-right extremism is the most persistent and lethal threat.

Ms. GREENE. Right. So today is white supremacist and abortion is the most lethal threat to black babies, with over 20 million being murdered in the womb, 900 a day.

Ms. SPITALNICK. What we established is that white supremacists are—

Ms. GREENE. I reclaim my time, Ms. Spitalnick, I reclaim my time. Thank you.

But what you can see here is 47 arrested, 59 officers injured, 5 officers hurt, violent BLM protests in New York, leaving 2 New York police cops injured, 11 arrested, Portland officers injured, New York police department chief injured while making arrest, more than 700 officers injured.

Let's go to one more identity that seems be targeted more than any other identity in past times, which is now a woman like Riley Gaines, the female athlete. Any woman fighting for her right to

have privacy, to change her clothes without a man in there, to have the privacy to compete. Thank God Riley Gaines was not murdered when she went to that college campus that day.

So, Ms. Spitalnick, I would ask, with your nonpartisan nonprofit that you run and you care about human rights, I would hope that you care about Riley Gaines and other women because they are the new target of political violence.

Thank you. I yield my time.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentlelady yields back.

I recognize Mr. Strong for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRONG. Mr. Chairman, I have no further questions. I have stayed at this committee hearing out of respect of what Ms. Gaines has gone through in an effort to fairly compete in sports as a female athlete.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentleman yields back.

This time I recognize Mr. Crane for 5 minutes.

Mr. CRANE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rosas, I noticed that you wanted to respond to something that one of my colleagues said about you a little while ago. I would like to give you time to go ahead and do that.

Mr. ROSAS. Yes. Thank you, Congressman.

Well, I think it's funny to be lectured by an heir to the Levi Strauss Corporation and that—honestly that's probably why he doesn't consider property damage to be that big of a deal because not only does he have that, but he also has what some would describe an impossibly good stock portfolio.

But what I can tell you is that in these riots that happened 3 years ago, yes, big corporations did suffer damage and looting, such as Target, what happened in Minneapolis. But a lot of the businesses, they were small businesses. They didn't come from multi-million-dollar families or corporations. So the fact that they had to not only deal with the completely unnecessary COVID restrictions that were happening during that time—so their bottom line was already being hit by that, but then when you add on now having to replace lost inventory or to repair damage or in some cases completely lose your entire business—that happened to a family that I know in Kenosha—I mean you're taking away people's ability to live, to have a livelihood. A friend of mine said that taking away someone's job like that is just a baby step away from murdering them because how else are they supposed to support themselves?

So I think it was absolutely disgraceful for Congressman Goldman to try to just denigrate my title because it's not just a title, I've earned it because I was there chewing the dirt in these dangerous situations. I didn't see him in any of those places. I was there in New York covering New York City, covering some pretty violent protests there. I'm also not just a writer, but I served honorably in the Marine Corps Reserves and I was very proud of that.

So that's just typical elitist thinking and that's why a lot of people hate Washington, DC and honestly, I don't blame them.

Mr. CRANE. Thank you for your service, Mr. Rosas. We appreciate it.

I yield back.

Chairman BISHOP. The gentleman yields back.

I now recognize Mr. Pfluger for 5 minutes.

Mr. PFLUGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the ability to waive onto this committee and participate in this.

This morning in this same committee room we held a hearing on our appreciation for law enforcement during National Police Week. It was very disturbing to hear colleagues on the other side of the aisle saying that this was not going to be something that was politicized and immediately hearing them launch into attacks on one type of violence, but not on all types of violence.

I would like to submit for the record, Mr. Chairman, a document here which goes into the discussions of colleagues on the other side of the aisle, including Representative Maxine Waters, who said, let's make sure we show up wherever we have to show up and if you see anybody from that Cabinet in a restaurant, in a department store, at a gasoline station, you get out and you create a crowd and you push back on them and you tell them they are not welcome here anymore. Another State senator from Missouri saying, I hope Trump is assassinated, and on and on and on. But these are elected officials. I would like to submit this for the record.

Chairman BISHOP. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information follows:]

DOCUMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY HON. AUGUST PFLUGER

PROMINENT DEMOCRATS ENCOURAGE POLITICAL VIOLENCE

- Rep. Maxine Waters called on Democrats to physically intimidate President Trump's Cabinet officials in public: "Let's make sure we show up wherever we have to show up. And if you see anybody from that Cabinet in a restaurant, in a department store, at a gasoline station, you get out and you create a crowd. And you push back on them. And you tell them they're not welcome anymore, anywhere."¹
- "I hope Trump is assassinated," Missouri State senator Maria Chappelle-Nadal posted on her Facebook. The post was serious enough that the Secret Service was called onto investigate.²
- Former Attorney General Eric Holder said at a 2018 campaign event in Georgia to "kick" Republicans: "No, no, when they go low, we kick 'em. That's what this new Democratic Party is about."³
- Speaker Nancy Pelosi as Minority Leader was surprised there aren't uprisings regarding policies toward asylum seekers at the Mexican border: "I just don't even know why there aren't uprisings all over the country, and maybe there will be when people realize that this is a policy that they defend," she said. "It's a horrible thing, and I don't see any prospect for legislation here."⁴
- Speaker Pelosi called President Trump "an imposter" and said it is "dangerous" to allow American voters to evaluate his performance in 2020.⁵
- Rep. Ayanna Pressley said there needs to be 'unrest on the streets' due to unfounded theories the U.S. Postal Service was disenfranchising voters: "You know, there needs to be unrest in the streets for as long as there's unrest in our lives."⁶
- Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez characterized migrant detention facilities as "concentration camps" ICE facilities were attacked afterwards: "The United States is running concentration camps on our Southern Border, and that is ex-

¹ McKenna Moore, *Rep. Maxine Waters Tells Supporters to Harass Trump Cabinet Members*, Fortune (June 25, 2018).

² U.S. *Lawmaker Chappelle-Nadal's Trump assassination post investigated*, BBC (Aug. 18, 2017).

³ Aaron Blake, Eric Holder: "When they go low, we kick 'em. That's what this new Democratic Party is about." Wash. Post (Oct. 10, 2018).

⁴ Douglas Ernst, *Nancy Pelosi wonders why there 'aren't uprisings' across the Nation: 'Maybe there will be'*, Wash. Times (June 14, 2018).

⁵ Emily Tillet, *Nancy Pelosi says Trump's attacks on witnesses "very significant" to impeachment probe*, CBS News, Nov. 15, 2019; Dear Colleague Letter from Speaker Nancy Pelosi (Nov. 18, 2019).

⁶ Harriet Alexander, *"Squad" member Ayanna Pressley sparks anger by calling for "unrest in the streets" in response to threats to the postal system*, Daily Mail (Aug. 17, 2020).

actly what they are—they are concentration camps.” “And if that doesn’t bother you . . . I want to talk to the people that are concerned enough with humanity to say that we should not, that ‘never again’ means something,”⁷ Since Ocasio-Cortez’s comments, four ICE facilities have been targeted by left-wing extremist groups: Tacoma, WA, San Antonio, TX, Washington DC, and Aurora, CO.⁸

Mr. PFLUGER. Let me start by saying that any type of violence is absolutely horrible, should not go 1 second without people on both sides of this dais condemning it. It does not matter what the reason is, it doesn’t matter who the person is. It should be condemned. Unfortunately, we are here in this hearing because that has not happened. We have seen first-hand the devastation that violence has caused in this country on any side of the political spectrum, and it is not OK. But specifically, I have been disappointed to not see left-wing extremist groups who have not been condemned by my colleagues on the other side of the aisle in some cases. Instead of prosecuting or holding violent criminals and individuals accountable, some within our society have made excuses for this, and it is unacceptable.

I want to say to our witnesses, thank you for being here, for standing up and showing us your courage.

I would like to focus a couple of questions and ask Ms. Gaines to respond.

The evening that the attack on you happened, I think the whole country thought, how is this possible? You have had the courage to speak out on an issue that is very personal to you. I have three daughters and to think about the issue that you are talking about and standing up for what you believe in, the freedom of speech, the First Amendment protects your ability to do that, and yet San Francisco State University President Lynn Mahoney wrote a letter sympathizing those who attacked you. I can’t imagine how that has made you feel. I know how it has made me feel.

Ms. GAINES. No, we have used the term domestic terrorists a lot in this hearing and that is constantly something I get called by these same left-leaning protesters who—again, for simply saying, women deserve fairness, we deserve safety, and we deserve respect. I get called a domestic terrorist all the time. So this term for me, maybe I have a skewed perception of what it means, but yes, it has been—I don’t know, again, it’s just disheartening to be in the position I’m in, feeling like I’m asking for the bare minimum, feeling like I’m asking for something that is so simple that we all are entitled to, yet I’m being held hostage.

There’s one more piece I wanted to mention about this night that I haven’t really touched on. I briefly touched on it in my testimony, but the verbiage outside the room when I was still giving my speech, these protesters—the video doesn’t do a good job showing of just how many were in these stairways. I mean, it was hundreds of people. But these people, they were outside the rooms. One side of the hallway would yell, trans rights are under attack. The other side would yell back, what do we do? We fight back. They kept using the term we fight back. So after I’d finally been barricaded and I was in this room for—why do they keep saying we fight

⁷ Caroline Kelly, *Ocasio-Cortez compares migrant detention facilities to concentration camps*, CNN (June 18, 2019).

⁸ Chrissy Clark, *Gun Fired into office marks fourth attack on ICE in past month*, *FEDERALIST* (Aug. 14, 2019).

back? We've talked a lot about this stemming from the top in regards to Trump and January 6 and Tucker Carlson giving the license to people to basically do whatever they want. But we're not talking about this on this side of it because the day before this incident at San Francisco State, the Biden administration press secretary had a press release, a press conference, where she says, word for word, our trans community is resilient, and they fight back. I find it so ironic they were using the exact same verbiage, we fight back. They kept saying it continuously.

So I wanted to put that on the record because we've talked about it a lot stemming from the top on the other side. But I think it's crucial to understand that that goes both ways.

Mr. PFLUGER. Well, Ms. Gaines, thank you for your courage. Thank you for standing up for what you believe in. Any sort of threats or violence or intimidation is despicable. It has no place in our society.

To my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, real courage lies in being able to stand up even when it is not popular and even when you may not agree with it, but being able to stand up to a bully, and that is what this is, this is about a bully in our society for a narrative that some don't agree with. It doesn't matter which side you stand on, but you have stood up to that bully. I applaud you for doing that. The country is watching you and your leadership, and we appreciate what you are doing.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing and standing up to a bully. We should all condemn any violence that happens. I think that that is exactly what this hearing is about.

I yield back.

Chairman BISHOP. Well done, Mr. Pfluger.

The gentleman yields back.

I thank the witnesses for their valuable testimony and the Members for their questions.

The Members of the subcommittee may have some additional questions for the witnesses and we would ask the witnesses respond to these in writing if asked.

Pursuant to committee rule VII(D), the hearing record will be open for 10 business days.

Again, with my thanks, the committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 5:04 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

