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The Year in Hate & Extremism 2023

DECODING THE PLAN TO UNDO DEMOCRACY

About the Southern Poverty Law Center

The SPLC is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements and advance the human rights of all people.

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EXPERTS' NOTE

Fortifying Our Democracy Against the Far-Right Agenda

Our democracy and our civil rights coalition are fragile. We must be one step ahead, using comprehensive data and research to inform our strategies, and build something stronger.

The Southern Poverty Law Center's preeminent Year in Hate report provides a comprehensive analysis of the organizational infrastructure – the groups – upholding white supremacy in the United States. It is these organizations, these hate groups, that form the ideological home for the hard right, strategizing, training and narrating their agenda today. This report warns of intensifying antigovernment groups built on the oppression of Black people, women, immigrants, Jews, Muslims, and Latinx, low-income, Indigenous, and LGBTQ+ communities.

More than anything, this report uncovers the playbook these groups and their leaders have used to undermine civil and human rights over the past year. They have meticulously prepared the groundwork for an authoritarian takeover and a more deeply divided nation.

For decades, the SPLC has been exposing the strategies and tactics employed to harm our communities. We've been in the rooms, read the literature, and witnessed firsthand the ugly side of our country. We've done the research. In communities across the United States, especially in the Deep South, we've sat in cafes alongside bigots and lived under oppressive policies and attitudes. We think it vital to the communities you lead and represent that you review what we have learned.

We know that old-school white supremacists wore their bigotry openly, emblazoned on their steel-toed boots and jacket patches. Today's white nationalism is cloaked in conspiracies, tropes and coded language. It seizes power directly, terrorizing people of color and Jews into hiding, or sowing division among us.

But we've also organized against them, using this knowledge to counter the hard-right movements and rebuild a civil rights coalition. We know we must stand together, armed not with weapons but with knowledge and commitment.



The hard right in the United States knows how to use a variety of tactics and has many targets. But we recognize that there is no hierarchy of oppression when it comes to anti-Black racism, antisemitism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-LGBTQ+ bigotry, and male supremacy.

This report documents their deliberate plan to come after us all and the hard-fought practice of democracy so critical to an authentic multiracial democracy committed to pluralism, equity and freedom.

We will not be divided. We hope this report serves not only as a reality check but as a tool to bring us back together. We invite you to read, share, and join us in fortifying our democracy and civil rights movement.

In Solidarity,

Rachel Carroll Rivas
SPLC Interim Director,
Intelligence Project

Eric Ward
SPLC Senior Fellow

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YEAR IN HATE & EXTREMISM 2023

A Year of Preparation Under the Specter of Conspiracy

By R.G. Cravens, Alon Milwicki
and Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon

The investigations and prosecutions related to the failed Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol have revealed just how close the nation came to a right-wing coup. In 2022, the SPLC documented how the hard right shifted its focus to hyperlocal campaigns intended to amplify the “fear and pain experienced by Black, Brown and LGBTQ+ communities” and “disrupt their ability to participate in an inclusive democracy.” That year, hate crimes significantly increased across the board, but Black, Latinx and LGBTQ+ people experienced an especially dramatic escalation in violence. In 2023, it became clear that the two years since the Jan. 6 insurrection was a time of preparation for the hard right.



Illustrations by **Chantal Jahchan**

**CANCEL
DRAG QUEEN
STORY HOUR**



**MAKE AMERICA
GREAT AGAIN**



Extremists and those opposing meaningful democracy have used the past year to legitimize insurrection, paint hate as virtuous and transform conspiracy theories into truth — all in preparation for one of the most significant elections in U.S. history. The very progress we as a country have made over the last century is at stake — and the hopes of a vibrant, diverse democracy with human rights at its core.

In 2023, the SPLC documented the highest number of active anti-LGBTQ+ and white nationalist groups we have ever recorded. These record numbers accompany increases in direct actions against minoritized groups, including hate crimes and other tactics such as anti-Black and antisemitic flyering, protests, and intimidation campaigns targeting LGBTQ+ people, libraries, schools and hospitals. Together, the activities of hate and antigovernment groups, the “holy war” and “race war” rhetoric they employ, and the environment of fear and disruption they foster foreshadow an attempt to exploit American democratic and electoral processes in 2024 to finally accomplish the goals of the insurrection — the suppression of multiracial, pluralistic democracy.

In 2023, violence was again used as a tool of suppression against Black, Brown and LGBTQ+ people. The activities of hate and antigovernment groups and the experiences of those they target for abuse, exclusion and violence exemplify what happens when racist, dominionist (a theocratic ideology that holds only Christians have the right to control government and society) and nationalistic conspiracy theories are operationalized. In July, O’Shae Sibley, a young gay Black man, was murdered in front of a Brooklyn, New York, gas station after dancing to a Beyoncé song with a group of friends, reportedly because the alleged attacker “had a problem with them dancing.” In August, Angela Michelle Carr, Anolt Joseph “AJ” Laguerre Jr. and Jerrald De’Shaun Gallion were murdered in Jacksonville, Florida, by a white gunman who believed in the “inferiority of Black people” and hoped to “inspire others to carry out racially motivated attacks,” according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Jacksonville field office. In the wake of the murders, Kristen Clarke, who leads the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, said racially motivated hate crimes in the United States were at “an all-time high.”

The same month, in Cedar Glen, California, LGBTQ+ ally Laura “Lauri” Ann Carleton was murdered because she flew an LGBTQ+ Pride flag outside her clothing store and refused to be intimidated by the man who “tore down” the flag and “yelled ho-

mophobic slurs” when she confronted him. Throughout 2023, the Progress Pride flag was attacked by hate and antigovernment groups as well as conservative media and conservative politicians, many of whom falsely claimed it symbolized child sexual abuse.

“They fly that [Pride] flag, because they hate you and your values and what you believe and everything you stand for,” said far-right media personality Matt Walsh in March 2023. For a year, Carleton regularly replaced Pride flags that were taken from in front of her business and worried about the possibility of an “altercation,” according to her friend. In June before the attack, Carleton’s alleged murderer reportedly posted to X (formerly Twitter) an image of a burning Pride flag and appeared to associate LGBTQ+ people with pedophilia.

SPLC documented the highest number of both active anti-LGBTQ and white nationalist groups ever.

The activities of hate and antigovernment groups, those who espouse conspiratorial ideologies, and their symbiosis with many far-right politicians reveal the increasingly authoritarian and theocratic vision of the hard right. This means that for many of these groups, there is no room to compromise, no room to resolve political disputes in the ways afforded by democratic governance. Julie Green, one staple of the antigovernment movement, alluded to this at the beginning of 2024: “My children, the time has come. A time that you have been waiting for.” The far-right, self-described “prophet” Green has appeared with former Trump administration National Security Advisor Michael Flynn and hosted Eric Trump on her web show. Green predicted this year would witness “[a] reinstatement. A shift of power. A new government in control. An overthrow, and a takeover in this nation from the hands of the wicked to the hands of the righteous.”

Increasing numbers of elected officials and influencers on the far right are turning to conspiracy and theocracy in their politics, finding particular support for these ideas in the Republican Party. Rep. Mike Johnson, R-La., who was elected speaker of the House of Representatives in October, has mimicked white supremacist “great replacement” conspiracy rhetoric, and his election was applauded by multiple anti-immigrant and anti-LGBTQ hate groups. The new speaker shunned the separation of church and state, and claimed the United States is a “biblical republic” and not a democracy. In 2020, he supported a Texas lawsuit to throw out the votes from four battleground states and overturn the results of the presidential election.

Johnson was previously a litigator and spokesperson for the anti-LGBTQ hate group Alliance Defending Freedom, a self-described “Christian law firm” whose legal strategy often pits Christians unfairly against LGBTQ+ people in a legal gambit to undermine nondiscrimination laws through claims of “religious freedom.” The strategy implies and asserts that Christianity and LGBTQ+ identity are inherently mutually exclusive. The group also claims credit for helping overturn constitutional protections for abortion and, in 2023, led the legal push to eliminate access to reproductive and LGBTQ+ health care primarily by amplifying pseudoscientific claims about abortion and LGBTQ+ identity. Speaker Johnson’s ascension, despite his association with the hate group and parroting of conspiracy, is testament to the level of influence these theocratic ideologies wield within the Republican Party.

That relationship was perhaps most clearly revealed in 2023 with the release of the Heritage Foundation’s “Project 2025 Presidential Transition Project” and its accompanying 900-plus-page “Mandate for Leadership,” a sweeping plan to reshape presidential powers and the federal bureaucracy in the image of dominionism. Since its release, many of Project 2025’s recommendations were adopted or parroted by former President Trump’s election campaign. In 2023, Trump openly embraced the idea of being a “dictator” for at least his first day back in the Oval Office and, in a throwback to the rhetoric of Adolf Hitler, referred to immigrants as “vermin” and claimed they are “poisoning the blood of our country.” Trump has not only assented to some Project 2025 proposals, but also promised even more extreme policies – like an expanded version of his infamous “Muslim ban,” barring travel to the U.S. from predominantly Muslim countries.

Project 2025 was developed and supported by a coalition of more than 75 organizations, including at least nine hate and antigovernment groups with strong ties to the Republican Party, such as Alliance Defending Freedom, Center for Immigration Studies and Moms for Liberty. The coalition also features groups like the Honest Elections Project, which along with Heritage Foundation reportedly “created an incubator of policies that would restrict access to the ballot box and amplify false claims that fraud is rampant in American elections,” according to *The Guardian*. The coalition also includes groups that the SPLC identified in 2023 as components of an anti-LGBTQ+ pseudoscience network designed to push anti-trans health care, restrictive education, and anti-abortion policies, including Family Policy Alliance, Independent Women’s Forum, and National Association of Scholars.

Combined, the groups responsible for Project 2025 are churning out plans to use the federal and state governments to enforce their theocratic vision for society. The coalition’s “Mandate for Leadership” characterizes Christianity as under threat and frames some policy recommendations as part of a “Judeo-Christian tradition.” It also calls for staffing the federal bureaucracy with ideologues recruited with the assistance of many partner groups. The “mandate” also equates “transgender ideology” (a phrase used by many anti-LGBTQ groups to delegitimize transgender identity) with pornography and demands punishment for simply sharing information inconsistent with that belief, saying: “The people who produce and distribute it [‘pornography’/‘transgender ideology’] should be imprisoned. Educators and public librarians who purvey it should be classed as registered sex offenders. And telecommunications and technology firms that facilitate its spread should be shuttered.”

Increasing numbers of elected officials and influencers on the far right are turning to conspiracy and theocracy in their politics.

Antisemitism and the Adaptability of Conspiracy

One prominent example of the operationalization of conspiracy in 2023 is the surge in antisemitic incidents this year. Graffiti of Nazi symbols and vandalism of Jewish establishments remain the most consistent incidents from year to year; however, in 2023, and particularly after Hamas' Oct. 7 terrorist attack, there has been a significant surge in swatting or bomb threats made against synagogues, Chabad houses, and other openly Jewish businesses and institutions. Antisemitism has been twisted to fit various situations including the Israel-Hamas war, references to the “deep state,” and control over social movements, media influence and financial systems.

The escalation became especially pronounced following the terrorist attack in Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. Extremist rhetoric seeped into mainstream narratives at an alarming pace, blurring the lines between legitimate criticism of the Israeli government's actions and outright antisemitism. This year also saw a rise in the use of tropes encompassing notions of Jews controlling multiple industries, American subservience to Jewish interests, and the equation of any criticism toward Israel with antisemitism, knowingly or unknowingly employed by public figures and prevalent on social media platforms. On X (formerly Twitter), for example, the site's chairman Elon Musk in November endorsed an antisemitic post, which claimed that Jewish people “have been pushing the exact kind of dialectical hatred against whites that they claim to want people to stop using against them.” Musk responded, “You have said the actual truth.”

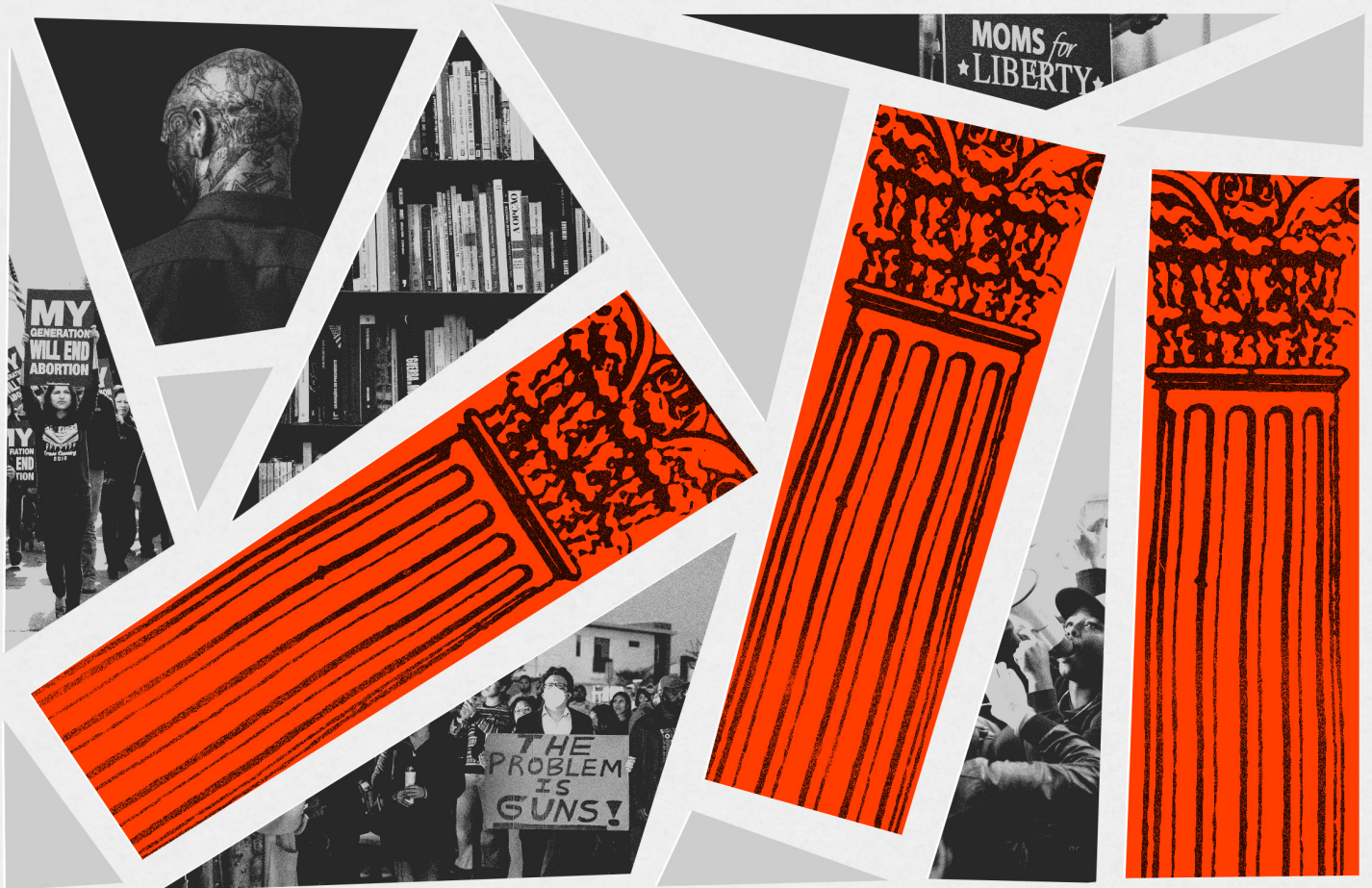
A faux hypersensitivity toward antisemitism was particularly visible among right-wing media and politicians in the United States as they utilized the legitimate issue of antisemitism on college campuses to disingenuously further an attack on higher education.

The concept of Jewish control over society stands as one of the most prevalent antisemitic tropes, tracing its modern-era roots from *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, through Henry Ford's *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*, to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* – all of which are regularly cited by extremists as evidence. In 2023, former President Trump denied reading *Mein Kampf* after criticism of his rhetorical similarities to antisemitic and anti-immigrant Nazi propaganda. The upcoming election year will likely witness a continued use of George Soros as an antisemitic trope to symbolize the existence of the “deep state.” The Soros trope gained traction during the 2022 midterm elections. Given former President Trump's prior distribution of mailers and emails employing this trope to rally support and instill fear of the “deep state,” it's probable that he will continue to exploit this trope to evoke fear or justify a potential loss. Such actions could further galvanize the country behind this antisemitic trope, solidifying anti-Jewish sentiment as a more entrenched aspect of American politics.

In addition, a faux hypersensitivity toward antisemitism was particularly visible among right-wing media and politicians in the United States as they utilized the legitimate issue of antisemitism on college campuses to disingenuously further an attack on higher education. While these institutions should review and revise their policies, accusers need to acknowledge their own ties to antisemitic narratives before accusing others. Certain politicians targeting education overlook their associations with groups like Moms for Liberty, which has a chapter that quoted Hitler, and entities like PragerU, known for promoting right-wing ideas and neglecting the realities of slavery and Indigenous peoples in American history, and fostering a pro-white Protestant narrative that emboldens extremist groups.

These right-wing attacks can propagate racist rhetoric, suggesting a minority population's disproportionate influence on national outcomes. New College's Christopher Rufo responded to the resignation of Harvard President Claudine Gay on X, by exclaiming, “SCALPED,” invoking the genocidal practice colonial settlers employed against Indigenous people as a victory lap for his imagined crusade. These responses prompt skepticism about how genuine their claimed support for Jewish and other marginalized peoples is.

Furthermore, extremist groups have attempted to inject themselves into the national discussion about the war against the terrorist group Hamas. At the end of 2023, the Goyim Defense League distributed a flyer



online and in person stating, “FREE PALESTINE.” This is not in any way to show support for Palestinian people. Rather, this is a not-so-thinly-veiled attempt at stoking more antisemitism and using Palestinian people to further their own aims. This is a common tactic used by hard-right extremists throughout U.S history — pretending to engage legitimate conversation about a national or international issue to promote their own endgame, which is, in this case, uniting the country against Jews.

Sowing Disruption Through Antigovernment Conspiracies

The U.S. is in the midst of a powerful social and political disruption. In the wake of long wars, pandemics and economic disruption, the hard right is taking advantage of the dislocation and suffering so many of us are experiencing to undermine meaningful democracy and eliminate the checks, balances and institutions that hold people and organizations that seek power to account. Communities of color, immigrant communities, minority faith communities and LGBTQ+ communities are all targeted by and

experience the negative effects of antigovernment conspiracies through targeted violence, but also book bans, acrimonious town halls, school boards as battlegrounds, and agitation among one’s neighbors. Attacks on democratic institutions are part of a concerted effort by the hard right and antigovernment extremists to gain power through a focus on local politics, emphasizing the power local institutions and government bodies — sheriffs, counties, local churches — so that the local authorities can trump, even nullify, federal and state laws. It is a twisting of our social contract, driven by conspiracy theory and fabrication, to increase power for the few at the expense of the many.

Some of the most worrying conspiracy theories gesture back to the days of the Christian patriot posse comitatus movement, resurrecting the myth that the highest law in the land rests at the county level and, now, with the sheriff. These conspiracies are known as “county supremacy” and “the constitutional sheriff movement,” which claim without merit that the county government and sheriff trump any federal or state law or policy. It aims at a new form of nullification — a rallying cry for

The resurgence of dominionism is an attempt to fulfill a decades-old dream, begun when segregated schools were ruled unconstitutional, to keep education shackled to a narrow, authoritarian version of Christianity.

the Confederacy (and neo-Confederates) — where the county or the sheriff can nullify laws in their jurisdiction based on their own reading of the U.S. Constitution.

This has led some sheriffs to believe that they can ignore federal and state laws that they disagree with, such as gun control laws, without any form of accountability except the ballot box. The Marshall Project, for example, recently found in a survey of sheriffs in the U.S. that the vast majority who serve in the office are “White and male ... far more conservative than Americans as a whole, and largely approve of Trump’s performance as president.” Of 500 sheriffs polled, almost half agreed that “their own authority, within their counties, supersedes that of the state or federal government.”

In Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis revived the Florida State Guard — a volunteer militia that exists outside of the traditional military command structure with state funding budgeted “for helicopters, boats and cellphone-hacking technology.” After it was announced, “alt-tech” websites “lit up” with anti-immigrant and antigovernment comments calling for the guard to be used to “secure” elections and “our interest” against the federal government and to stop refugee resettlement. Mimicking this move, some counties have even created their own local militias, taking that power away from the states.

This antigovernment ideology helps spread the pernicious belief that our country cannot and should not come together through government to achieve social goods and human rights. This local absolutism, which is based not on law or compact but on right-wing fringe political theories — such as posse comitatus, constitutional sheriffs and county supremacy — is dangerous because it tears away the checks and balances used to ensure accountability for those who wield the right to use deadly force.

Threats from Dominionism Theology and Christian Supremacy

Christian supremacy and dominionism were prominent features of antigovernment conspiracy and movement organizing in 2023. Dominionists preach that only Christians — and in particular, Christians who believe as they do — have the right to control government and all influential posts in society and culture. This is called dominionism, a form of Christian supremacy that Frederick Clarkson, a researcher at Political Research Associates, has defined as “the theocratic idea that Christians are called by God to exercise dominion over every aspect of society by taking control of political and cultural institutions: for example, over the role of government, the form and content of public education, and eliminating rights related to bodily autonomy.”

The growth of this movement is fueling anxiety around what many in the media are calling Christian nationalism. The goal of much of this theology is to strip government of functions such as education and welfare and, as dominionist minister and “historian” David Barton has argued, reserve those for churches. Importantly, this is not a pluralistic religious vision for the public good — Barton does not seem to mean main-line churches but, specifically, like-minded dominionist churches that would siphon off public funds and put them in the hands of a reactionary minority. U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson is a student of Barton’s work, further raising alarm bells about Johnson’s speakership.

This is an old idea, dangerous to democracy and human rights, that has motivated the antigovernment right for decades. Yet the resurgence of dominionism is an attempt to fulfill a decades-old dream, begun when segregated schools were ruled unconstitutional, to keep education shackled to a narrow, authoritarian version of Christianity. Jerry Falwell wrote back in 1979: “I hope I live to see the day when, as in the early days of our country, we won’t have any public schools. The churches will have taken them over again and Christians will be running them. What a happy day that will be!”

But happy for whom?

There are several drivers of this new dominionism, but one of the most potent comes from a growing movement within charismatic churches called the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). Using the image of “Seven Mountains,” the leaders of this movement argue that Christians who believe as they do are divinely commanded to lead and control all aspects of the country. Organizations such as the Truth and Liberty Coalition and City Elders are NAR organs that aim to seize control of political power at all levels of society. The founder of City Elders, Jesse Leon Rodgers, has even explained that his movement seeks to achieve not just theocracy, but theonomy, where “our lives, our businesses, our culture, our cities, our schools” are under control of religious authority. NAR apostle Andrew Wommack has also expressed the kind of power they envision for the City Elders: “They are gatekeepers. If they want to pass something in schools, they go through City Elders. We need to do that.”

Such authoritarian religious movements are influential in society broadly. In addition to Barton, Charlie Kirk of Turning Point USA, a reactionary student organization, employs the image of the Seven Mountains mandate. The NAR has also consistently argued that their opponents or detractors are literally “demonic.” GOP operative Roger Stone, for example,

who is a late-in-life Christian, has even argued that he saw a demonic portal open over the White House, claiming it opened because of the Bidens.

In addition, Florida state Rep. Webster Barnaby has referred to LGBTQ+ people as “demons and imps.” Bishop E.W. Jackson, a former candidate for Virginia lieutenant governor, claimed the pronouns “they/them” are plural because people who use them are “possessed by multiple demons.” Former President Donald Trump demonstrated how all these dehumanizing epithets blend together at the highest echelons of American political rhetoric at the anti-LGBTQ+ hate group Family Research Council’s 2023 “Pray Vote Stand” summit, saying, “But I wanted to, and had to stand up to the communists, the Marxists, the atheists and the evil and demonic forces that want to destroy our country.”

Of 500 sheriffs polled, almost half agreed that “their own authority, within their counties, supersedes that of the state or federal government.”

When everyone but your own is demonic, there is no room for discussion or any daylight left between you for compromise, which undermines the very heart of a modern, democratic system. The effect is a wearing down, and sometimes, a tearing down of institutions and trust meant to hold people accountable to each other and to help moderate conflict before it breaks into violence. The destruction of our civic institutions, even when they need reform, will only give the hard right a free hand unencumbered by checks and balances to rewrite our social contract into a dystopian, Christian supremacist, and even neo-fascist future.

Hate Groups Multiply and Mobilize

Throughout 2023, the SPLC documented the activities of hard-right factions as they attempt to desensitize us to the erosion of pluralism and multiracial democracy while amplifying conspiratorial and false narratives that paint the far right as victims of political and religious persecution. We detail many of these activities in this report. In addition to the troubling trends we highlight above, we also documented a growth in hate groups and the continued use of political violence.

In 2023, the white nationalist movement surged, reaching a historic high of 166 chapters of various groups. This growth was led by the National Justice Party (NJP) and Active Clubs. While the NJP, with centralized leadership, used independent chapters for flyering, Active Clubs relied on Telegram for recruitment. This growth came with a pivot toward increasingly violent tactics, threats, and intimidation, emboldened by successes of other far-right groups.

While the number of neo-Nazi groups remained stable in 2023, new groups like the Blood Tribe, led by Chris Pohlhaus, gained attention with the large, uniformed demonstrations in which members carried swastika flags and performed Roman salutes. Despite arrests, legal challenges and online crackdowns, such groups as the neo-Nazi Aryan Freedom Network also expanded, emphasizing in-person demonstrations over low-risk activities, particularly against immigrants. Combined, these activities suggest a determined return to tactics that rely on aggression, intimidation and violence.



166

white nationalist movement
chapters were active in 2023

In 2023, the SPLC also documented hundreds of protests – many led or attended by white supremacist and neo-Nazi groups – targeting a children’s literacy program known as Drag Story Hour. The growth comes specifically at the expense of trans people – who were frequently targeted in 2023 by online

For some hate groups, restricting anti-racist and LGBTQ+ inclusive school curricula is considered part of their right to “religious freedom.”

rhetorical and in-person violence and victimized by an emergent network peddling anti-trans pseudoscience that the SPLC documented in our 2023 CAPTAIN report. The increasing vitriol directed at trans people, and especially trans kids, is reflected in the record number of active anti-LGBTQ+ hate groups the SPLC documented in 2023.

In addition to the spike in antisemitic attacks that followed the Oct. 7 terrorist attacks in Israel by Hamas, the SPLC documented a rapid return to virulent rhetorical Islamophobia by anti-Muslim groups who, throughout much of 2023, had opportunistically focused their ire on other marginalized people like LGBTQ+ and immigrant communities. Anti-Muslim rhetoric helped fuel attacks on Palestinian Americans, including the Oct. 14 murder of 6-year-old Wadea Al-Fayoume by his family’s landlord in Plainfield Township, Illinois, outside Chicago, who was reportedly angry with the family for “what was going on” in Israel.

The violent rhetoric and activities of many hate and antigovernment groups in 2023, coupled with their embrace of electoral conspiracies and rejection of inclusive civil institutions (like schools, libraries and religious congregations), presage a troubling willingness to co-opt those same American civil and social institutions in 2024 to both position far-right actors in offices of authority and lend an air of legitimacy to the conspiracies that animated the Jan. 6 insurrection.

One component of this strategy, on display in 2023, is restricting the flow of historically accurate information about systemic racism and American pluralism. As we explain in this report, in Florida, present-day attacks against diverse students perpetuate the legacy of forced assimilation in the United States. Through book bans and limits on inclusive curriculum, education policies are compelling marginalized students to only learn and acknowledge whitewashed views of history that erase the experiences and contributions of the minorities who helped make this country. For some



115K

members were claimed by Moms for Liberty across 47 states in 2023

hate groups, restricting anti-racist and LGBTQ+-inclusive school curricula is considered part of their right to “religious freedom.”

Many hate and antigovernment groups are unwilling to compromise with those who oppose their exclusionary, racist and hateful visions for society. This is increasingly reflected in the use of Christian and white supremacist, dominionist and militaristic rhetoric that characterizes the hard right as crusaders against corrupt and demonic forces, represented by most people in society who do not share their restrictive views or conspiratorial mindset.

Signs of Hope

Recognizing the trends in hard-right activity we chronicle in this report as preparatory offers an opportunity to act. For example, once-influential groups began to wither in 2023 as communities contested exclusionary and hateful actions in their backyards. Within only two years of its founding, Moms for Liberty — leaders in the anti-student inclusion movement — grew to have enormous power on the right, commanding appearances by presidential hopefuls at their first national event and boasting a membership of approximately 115,000 in 47 states.

While 2022 seemed full of nothing but victories for Moms for Liberty, 2023 found the group frequently tarnished by the activities of both its local and national leaders, while also struggling to get its candidates for school board elected. Local communities, such as those in southeastern Pennsylvania, and the work of local journalists, such as those at the Bucks County Beacon in Pennsylvania, raised the alarm and pushed back, which led this year to the ouster of the anti-inclusion majority of at least two local school boards in Bucks County.

Preserving an inclusive multiracial democracy takes work; along with describing the strategies and tactics of hard-right hate and antigovernment groups, we also

share the experiences of those who work to make our communities more inclusive and less hospitable to far-right extremism. For example, in this report we show how a civilian oversight board instituted a new policy prohibiting officers in the Chicago Police Department from belonging to hate or extremist groups. We also demonstrate how literacy advocates Drag Story Hour are pushing back against anti-LGBTQ+ violence with local programs across the country.

As these examples show, the preparations of hate and antigovernment groups can still be forestalled. In addition to policy and political responses to help reduce and eliminate inequalities and to prevent and counter the spread of disinformation and conspiracy, the efforts of empowered local communities to build coalitions of civically engaged defenders of democracy and pluralism will help ensure there is no place for hate in 2024. ●

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THE MOVEMENTS ANIMATING THE RIGHT

The White Power Movement Hits the Streets

By Cassie Miller and Hannah Gais

On a warm September day in 2023, neo-Nazi leader Christopher Pohlhaus led a crew of over 50 extremists carrying swastika flags through the streets of Orlando, Florida. It was, as someone from his organization, Blood Tribe, wrote in an enthusiastic Telegram post after the event, “AN INCREDIBLE DAY TOGETHER EXPRESSING OUR WILL FOR WHITE POWER.”

Throughout 2022 and 2023, there has been a resurgence of in-person demonstrations among white nationalist, neo-Nazi and far-right reactionary groups throughout the country. For the first time since 2018, these racist activists, who together make up what is known as the white power movement, turned out in droves, holding 191 demonstrations in 2022 and 143 in 2023. These street actions have helped the movement regain some of its momentum following a series of setbacks from legal challenges, infighting and increased scrutiny from activists, journalists and lawmakers in the aftermath of the deadly 2017 “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Another sign of the white power movement’s confidence is the growth in the number of hate groups aligned with the movement. Between 2022 and 2023, the number of active white nationalist groups in the United States grew just over 50 percent, from 109 to a historic high of 165. While the number of neo-Nazi groups remained stable, eight new organizations that embrace that ideology formed within the last year.



Illustration by Klawe Rzeczy



FASCISM IS
EDUCATION
FREEDOM FROM DE...
FREEDOM FROM ANARCHIS...
FREEDOM FROM PERVERT INDOCTRINA...
FREEDOM FROM ANTI-WHITE HATRED.

NEVER
ACCEPT
INTEGRATION

WHITE
LIVES
MATTER



Today's white power movement lacks a central figurehead or figureheads, around whom to organize, nor does it have enough institutional structure to build a countervailing political apparatus. Instead, these organizers operate within a loose, decentralized network of nationwide and regional groups vying for each other's attention and acknowledgment.

Many white power activists are not explicitly pro-Trump, nor do they indicate much interest in engaging with the mainstream political process, even to interrupt it. Nevertheless, they see promise in the litany of reactionary causes that the pro-Trump Republican Party has embraced and have aligned their activism with the mainstream right's parade of grievances against immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, Black people, and other racial or religious minorities. Highly mobilized, they are ready to ride the authoritarian wave of Trump's campaign, challenging the enemies they share with the presidential candidate through protests, intimidation and acts of violence.

Surging Street Activism

During the heyday of the "alt-right" — a term that members of the movement, researchers and journalists used to describe a big tent approach to white supremacist organizing during the early years of the Trump presidency — the SPLC documented a historic increase in the number of white power street demonstrations. Between 2016 and 2018, SPLC analysts found that far-right activists from a variety of ideologies, including from the white power movement, organized and attended 125 rallies, marches and protests nationwide. That level of activity was a dramatic departure from previous decades, when the movement eschewed this kind of activism in favor of holding buttoned-up conferences, publishing racist "scholarship" and, in general, attempting to make themselves appear respectable to mainstream audiences.

While the number of white power street demonstrations in the first half of Trump's presidency was historically significant, today's street activism far surpasses it. This past year saw almost twice as many demonstrations as 2017 — the high point of activism for the alt-right. Whereas alt-right activists held several much larger and nationally focused events, such as the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, today's cadre of white power activists has focused their energies on smaller, more localized events.

The focus of white power demonstrations has also shifted in recent years. Alt-right groups planned their rallies and marches often as a show of force, meant to pro-

mote their ideology while intimidating Black people, leftists and others. The impulse was perhaps best epitomized by the deadly 2017 rally in Charlottesville, which aimed to "unite the right." Recent white power events, though, are more specifically targeted and overtly reactionary — focusing, most often in the past two years, on targeting LGBTQ+ people. That focus has also tightened: In 2022, about 32% of white power demonstrations and protests targeted LGBTQ+ people, but by 2023 that proportion grew to 47.5%. Most of those demonstrations targeted specific community events, including drag and Pride events and a children's literacy program called Drag Story Hour.

In comparison, in 2023 antisemitism was a prominent part of about 20% of white power demonstrations, while 35% focused broadly on promoting white supremacist ideology.

The white power movement designates as an enemy any group that they deem a threat to a white, patriarchal, Christian social order: Black people, nonwhite immigrants, religious minorities, nonbinary and gender-nonconforming people, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. The fact that the movement is now focused so heavily on LGBTQ+ people is a clear response to popular trends in right-wing politics. As the GOP stepped up and normalized the assault on LGBTQ+ people, and trans people in particular, the white power movement is emboldened to lend them a hand — operating in the streets as right-wing operatives pushing their anti-LGBTQ+ agenda in legislative bodies, through lobbying efforts, and in the media.

'Be the Vanguard We Say We Are'

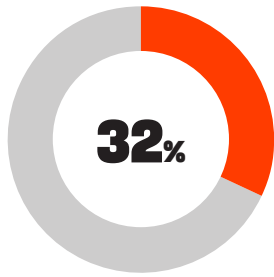
Blood Tribe's 50-person-plus demonstration in Orlando represented a turning point for the neo-Nazi movement. "It has been many years since a rally this large, using explicit Nazi imagery, has happened in the United States," Spencer Sunshine, a longtime researcher of the far right, later wrote for Truthout.

Other neo-Nazi groups, such as the New England-based Nationalist Social Club (NSC-131), have portrayed these demonstrations as a necessary risk.

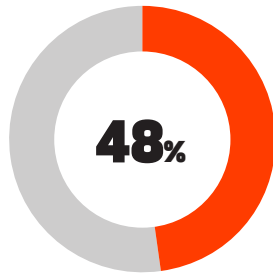
"It is times like these when our movement must step up to the plate and be the vanguard we say we are," NSC-131 wrote on the social media app Telegram on Sept. 5, 2023, in response to the governor of Massachusetts calling upon the Commonwealth's National Guard to aid communities housing migrant families.

"F*** your optics/F*** your message/F*** your stickers/Do something," NSC-131 added.

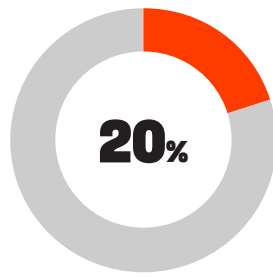
A notable feature of today's white power demonstrations is the increased participation of overtly



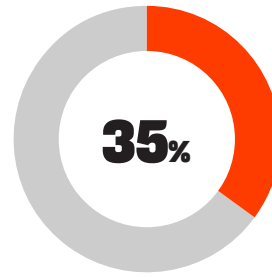
Percentage of white power demonstrations and protests that targeted LGBTQ+ people in 2022.



Percentage of white power demonstrations and protests that targeted LGBTQ+ people in 2023.



Percentage of white power demonstrations where antisemitism was prominent in 2023.



Percentage of white power demonstrations focused on promoting white supremacist ideology in 2023.

white nationalist and neo-Nazi groups like Blood Tribe, NSC-131 and others who employ such racist imagery as swastikas, Hitler salutes and common neo-Nazi symbols like the sonnenrad. As they stepped up their activity, the Proud Boys, a far-right reactionary group whose leaders played a prominent role in the 2021 insurrection, have decreased their public activism. Indeed, the primary reason the number of white power demonstrations decreased between 2022 and 2023 is the declining activity of the group. While the Proud Boys were present at 121 white power demonstrations in 2022, by the following year members participated in just 44.

Other white power groups that have recently ramped up their activism include Active Clubs, a loose-knit, nationwide network of street-fighting clubs founded by imprisoned white nationalist leader Robert Rundo. The white nationalist group, which grew to 39 chapters in 2023, is attempting to build a racist subculture among young white men that focuses on physical fitness, brotherhood and participation in on-the-ground demonstrations. In 2023, they erected banners and racist and antisemitic messages and protested outside LGBTQ+ community events.

Marching Toward November 2024

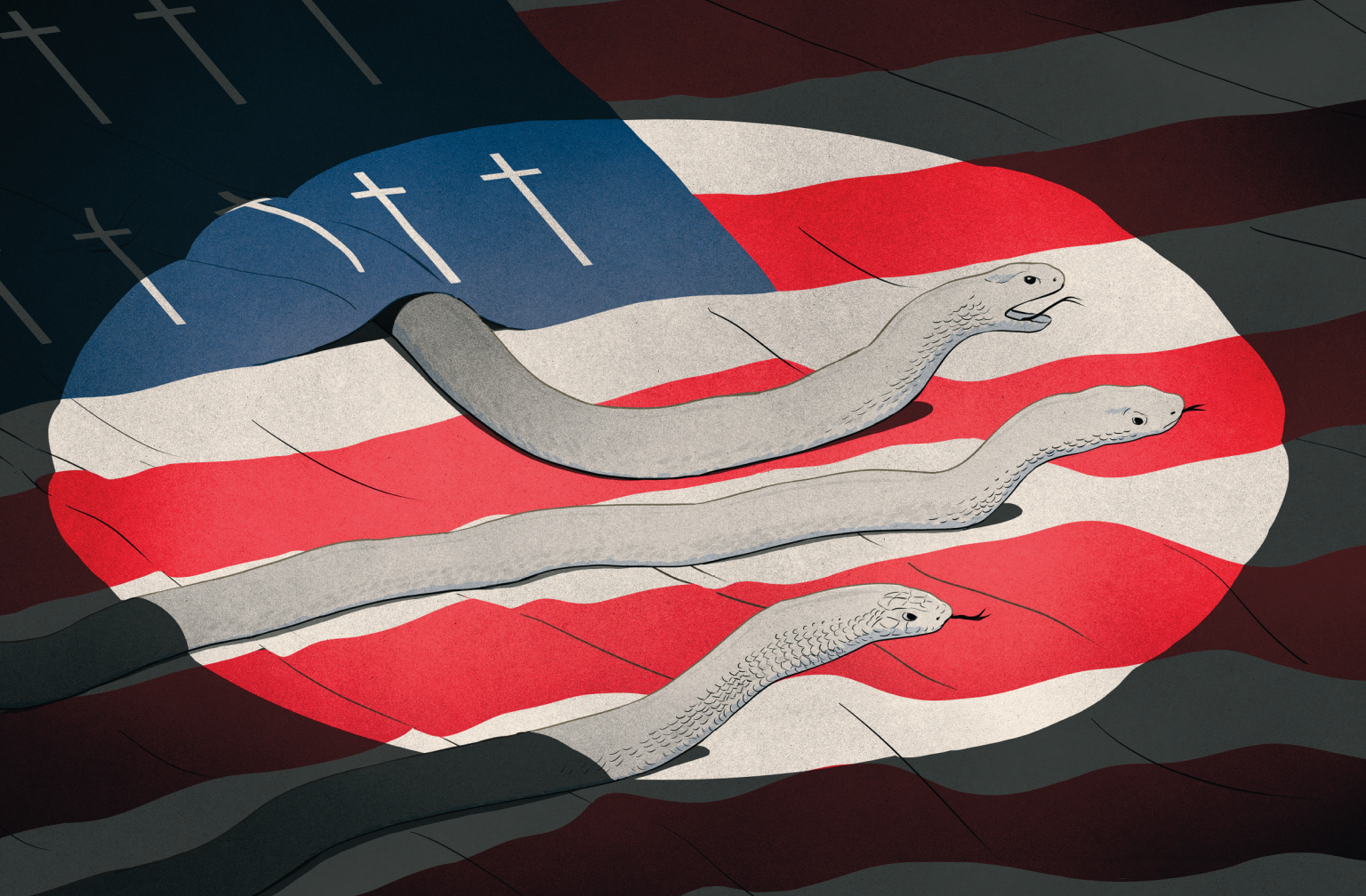
Despite the Proud Boys' declining on-the-ground activism, their activity will likely surge during this presidential election year. Though the group's most prominent leaders are currently imprisoned on se-

ditionary conspiracy convictions stemming from their participation in the 2021 insurrection, the group's numbers remain stable. If anything, the convictions have fueled the group's authoritarian impulses, leaving them primed to, once again, act on the perceived orders of Donald Trump.

Other groups within the white power movement are facing infighting and fatigue among their membership. Patriot Front, an overtly fascist organization headquartered in Texas, has seen their growth stall as members seem to have become disillusioned with the group's authoritarian structure and tightly controlled activism. The National Justice Party, which grew to 32 chapters in 2023, collapsed at the end of the year thanks to infighting among the group's leaders, who referred to themselves as "chairmen."

Within the white power movement, groups fade, collapse and rebrand frequently. In times of greater political stability, these developments often mean the movement's activism is impeded for years.

But that is unlikely to be the case in 2024. Much of the movement's motivation comes from an external source: the increasingly mainstream, hard-right wing of the Republican Party. As the pro-Trump GOP continues to endorse authoritarianism, as well as tolerate and even promote political violence, the white power movement will enthusiastically take to the streets. With the heightened political tensions that come with one of the country's most important presidential elections, the chances of political violence this year will likely outstrip even 2020. ●



The New Dominionism Tries to Rule

By Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon

Dutch Sheets, Lance Wallnau, Mario Murillo and Hank Kunneman are four of the most influential Christian leaders in the U.S. Yet most people have probably never heard of them. As leaders of a Christian supremacist movement, they decreed publicly in 2022 that they have the God-given right to rule the United States and that they “have been given legal power and authority from Heaven.” These far-right figures claim to be “God’s ambassadors and spokespeople over the earth” who “are equipped and delegated by Him to destroy every attempted advance of the enemy.”

These men who made what is known as the “Watchmen Decree” are among the leaders of the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), a new and powerful Christian supremacy movement that is attempting to transform culture and politics in the U.S. and countries across the world into a grim authoritarianism. NAR adheres to dominionism, which Frederick Clarkson of Political Research Associates defines as “the theocratic idea that Christians are called by God to exercise dominion over every aspect of society by taking control of political and cultural institutions.”

Dominionism has long been a driver of antigovernment extremism in the United States. NAR is the latest chapter, and possibly the most successful, in dominionists' modern effort to make their reading of Christianity authoritative and supreme in everyone's lives.

Over the past two decades, NAR's influence has broadened beyond church walls, pouring out this form of Christian supremacy into the mainstream, already wreaking havoc on local communities and our democracy. Their influence is real; not only did they have a voice in the Trump administration, but the new speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, is closely aligned with NAR leaders. The goal of this new dominionism is to disrupt both more mainline versions of Christianity and U.S. democracy, and in its wake, take control of state and society and yoke everyone to their authoritarian vision of the world.

The New Apostolic Reformation

Dominionism originated on the fringes of Reformed Christianity largely through the writing of R.J. Rushdoony and his Christian Reconstruction movement. The new brand of dominionism took the idea of Christian supremacy from such theologians as Rushdoony and rooted it in the soil of independent charismatic and Pentecostal churches, one of the newest and fastest growing branches of Christianity. And while Rushdoony believed the United States would incrementally be reconstructed into a Christian nation, leaders of the new dominionism are not so patient. NAR adherents believe their time is now.

As the Watchman Decree suggests, it is more helpful to understand NAR as a political movement driven by what NAR expert André Gagné refers to as a “political theology of power.” The goal of NAR is not saving souls one at a time. Instead, these extremist leaders state a desire to seize influence over the entire culture and implement their narrow, authoritarian views of the Bible in the form of law, policy and culture. Prophet Lance Wallnau has promoted a meme – the Seven Mountains Mandate – to summarize this goal. Each mountain is a sphere of our society – government, religion, media, business, education, family, and arts and entertainment – and each should be dominated by NAR leaders and followers, according to the meme.

NAR's goal is to disrupt religion and politics, and in the wake of that disruption, fill the void with Christian supremacy. Just as there has been economic disruption over the past two decades, there has also been political disruption in the form of Trumpian politics and the MAGA movement. NAR, in addition to polit-

These men who made what is known as the “Watchmen Decree” are leaders in the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), a new and powerful Christian supremacy movement that is attempting to transform U.S. culture and politics, and those of countries across the world, into a grim authoritarianism.

ical disruption, aims to disrupt Christianity itself by getting rid of denominations and checks and balances created to curb abuse. Some NAR pastors have taken over churches with internal democratic practices and turned them into undemocratic “apostolic” centers where only the pastor – or, where there is one, an apostle – has ultimate authority.

Dominionist leaders such as this are often vague about the details of how the future looks in practice, but the antidemocracy and exclusionary implications are clear. Lance Wallnau has argued that dominionists have to “destroy the public education system before it destroys us.” Others have set their sights on local government. City Elders, a new organization that details plans to create guardians over politics, elections and culture in every county, would essentially act as a local shadow government. LGBTQ+ equality is also a frequent target of dominionists. Sean Feucht, a highly influential musician and praise leader, has called trans persons demonic, highlighting the negative impact on the future of LGBTQ+ peoples liberation.

Demons and demonic influence, as well as “spiritual warfare,” are central to NAR belief and practice, and those who do not prescribe to their views are seen as possessed or under demonic influence.

NAR is deeply anti-democratic, both as a movement and in its vision of society. C. Peter Wagner, who came up with the term New Apostolic Reformation, preached: “What dominion means is that we are the head and not the tail of our society. It’s a rulership and we rule as kings.” This is a menacing statement for a country that fought a revolution to overthrow kingship. Their vision, if realized, would mark the end of the American democratic experiment.

‘The Big Lie’ and Insurrection

Today’s political dominionism goes hand in hand with nationalism and NAR leadership often seeks to do away with both Christian and political institutions that could hold them accountable. NAR leaders have been among the most faithful backers of Donald Trump, so much so that some have grown worried about the many failed pro-Trump prophecies other NAR leaders have made. Trump is viewed by some in the NAR as “God’s chaos candidate” who will disrupt politics enough to transform the United States into a dominionist country. This is a reference in the Bible to the God of the Jews. NAR’s comparison to Trump means he is viewed as a God.

For many NAR leaders, Christians must implement God’s will within politics; the divine will not do it alone. For example, Dutch Sheets and Lance Wallnau started a campaign to undo Trump’s defeat. Sheets used a daily devotional app he ran to rile up his members and promote the lie of Trump’s reelection and launched a “prayer and prophecy” tour after President Biden’s election. NAR prayer groups were mobilized at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, as well as supporting

prayer teams all over the country, to exorcise the demonic influence over the Capitol that adherents said was keeping Trump from his rightful, prophesized second term.

Opponents are ‘Demonic’

Demons and demonic influence, as well as “spiritual warfare,” are central to NAR belief and practice, and those who do not prescribe to their views are seen as possessed or under demonic influence. There are claims that whole neighborhoods, cities, even nations are under the sway of the demonic. Other religions, such as Islam, are also said to be demonically influenced. One cannot compromise with evil, and so if Democrats, liberals, LGBTQ+ people, and others are seen as demonic, political compromise — the heart of democratic life — becomes difficult if not impossible.

This use of the demonic in politics has spread beyond NAR and has been taken up by none other than Donald Trump, who, at a Family Research Council conference in 2023 referred not only to “Marxists” and “atheists,” but included them as part of the “evil demonic forces that want to destroy our country.” Such dehumanization has been a key element in political violence, and even genocide, throughout the twentieth century.

Conclusion

NAR is the greatest threat to U.S. democracy that you have never heard of. It is already a powerful, wealthy and influential movement and composes a highly influential block of one of the two main political parties in the country. So few people have heard of NAR that it is possible that, without resistance in our local communities, dominionism might win without ever having been truly opposed. ●



Conspiratorial Rhetoric of Migrant ‘Invasion’ Reaches High Levels in 2023

By Caleb Kieffer

Aug. 3, 2023, marked the four-year anniversary of the racially motivated shooting in El Paso, Texas, where 23 people were killed and 22 wounded at a Walmart. The shooter left behind a manifesto blaming a “Hispanic invasion of Texas” as the basis for the attack. The shooter was sentenced to 90 consecutive life sentences on July 7, 2023. But the dangerous “invasion” rhetoric the shooter pushed is still widely used — not only by fringe white nationalist or anti-immigrant hate figures, but also by prominent and powerful elected officials.

A concerning high rate of Republican members of Congress and other elected officials using the term “invasion” to describe migrants from mostly Central and South America fleeing violence and seeking asylum — a human right recognized under international law — at the U.S. southern border. The idea of an invasion by migrants and asylum seekers feeds into the “great replacement” theory, a racist conspiracy theory that claims white people in Western nations are being displaced and replaced by immigrants and people of color. It conjures dehumanizing images of migrants,

many of whom are people of color, as being a marauding, militaristic force charging the southern border. Extreme Republican elected officials also claim this is a concerted effort by the Biden administration and Democrats to import a loyal voting bloc to replace American voters, another widely used anti-immigrant trope and central theme to replacement thinking. Indeed, the introduction to the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 *Mandate for Leadership* handbook — which is a set of policy recommendations for a future conservative presidential administration — claims progressives “seek to purge the very concept of the nation-state from the American ethos” through “open border” policies. The claims and proposed federal policy changes echo the rhetoric of anti-immigrant groups who often seek to severely curtail or end all immigration to the United States.

In a chapter of the handbook dedicated to the Department of Homeland Security, for example, Ken Cuccinelli, former acting director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) during the Trump administration, claims that when undocumented immigrants are not detained, they “disappear into the interior of the United States where many commit crimes.” In line with this rhetoric, he argues for mass roundups of immigrants who could be deemed “a national security or public safety threat,” saying the role of ICE deportation officers should be “the civil arrest, detention, and removal of immigration violators *anywhere* in the United States, without warrant where appropriate.”

Cuccinelli — who infamously rewrote the Emma Lazarus poem on the Statue of Liberty in 2019 to argue for limiting immigration — also asserts in the *Mandate for Leadership* that “victimization should not be a basis for an immigration benefit,” and he argues against a visa program for victims of human trafficking.

Notably, the anti-immigrant hate groups Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) and Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), which have promoted replacement-style conspiracies, contributed to Project 2025. Those similarities are evident in Cuccinelli's chapter when he argues for the use of “Blackie's Warrants” by ICE. The term is derived from the case *Blackie's House of Beef v. Castillo* (1981) and refers to dragnet-style searches for undocumented immigrants at American businesses. The ACLU describes raids conducted under the auspices of a Blackie's Warrant: “The raid is conducted by barring the exits, and questioning everybody, or discriminatorily questioning those who ‘look foreign’ or speak with a foreign accent.” In

addition to targeting immigrant communities, the warrants are also criticized as a means to suppress union organizing. In 2016, CIS published a blog post arguing for “reinstating the use of Blackie's Warrants.”

On Oct. 2, 2023, U.S. Sen. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tennessee, tweeted: “The border must be shut immediately. Our country cannot sustain this invasion.” U.S. Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Arizona, one of the biggest proponents of this rhetoric, tweeted on May 17, 2023, “Our country is at stake and we need to save it from Biden's border invasion.” In September 2023, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott claimed there to be an “invasion at our border because of Biden's policies.” In July 2023, Abbott installed a barrier of buoys fitted with sawlike blades in the Rio Grande River to deter migrants, which received pushback from the Department of Justice and was said to have resulted in two deaths.

Some hard-line Republican governors including Abbott bused and flew migrants to liberal-leaning cities across the U.S. in hopes of driving a wedge between communities. This helped fuel xenophobic protests in cities including Chicago, where arriving migrants have been met with mixed attitudes. In September 2023, the neo-Nazi group Nationalist Socialist NSC-131 held an anti-immigrant protest outside a hotel in Marlborough, Massachusetts, where migrants were being housed. Members of the group carried flares and a banner that read: “INVADERS: GO HOME.”

The idea of an invasion by migrants and asylum seekers feeds into the “great replacement” theory, a racist conspiracy theory that claims white people in Western nations are being displaced and replaced by immigrants and people of color.

According to data collected by the immigrant rights group *America's Voice*, by late July 2023, 34 members of Congress deployed such rhetoric at least 90 times during Republican-led hearings on immigration-related matters.

On Aug. 1, 2023, 162 social justice, faith-based, gun safety and immigrant rights groups, including the SPLC, sent a letter to congressional leadership calling on them to urge their colleagues to refrain from using dehumanizing invasion rhetoric. This came at the heels of another petition sent by Oversight Democrats to Republican members in March 2023 to denounce the “great replacement” theory, which received no signatures and was written off as an effort to “distract.”

Speaking about the August letter, Vanessa Cárdenas, executive director of America's Voice Education Fund, told reporters, “When elected officials amplify dangerous rhetoric like the white nationalist invasion and replacement conspiracy theories, they create a climate that fosters political violence.”

Anti-immigrant and white nationalist thought leaders have for decades pushed invasion and replacement rhetoric. One was John Tanton, the late architect of the modern-day anti-immigrant movement.

In 1994, Tanton and Wayne Lutton co-published *The Immigration Invasion*, a book containing alarmist thinking around immigration and its alleged threat to the dominant culture of the U.S. Tanton networked with multiple white nationalists, including Peter Brimelow, founder of the white nationalist hate site VDARE.

VDARE articles heavily feature “Invasion” rhetoric. In May 2022, VDARE author “Washington Watcher II” wrote: “The Great Replacement is far from a conspiracy theory. [...] Leftists would have you believe the change is akin to changing seasons; no one is really responsible for the Camp-of-the-Saints invasion this country is suffering. ‘Migrants’ looking for a better life just showed up. To suggest otherwise is a dangerous conspiracy theory.”

The *Camp of the Saints* is a racist dystopian novel revived by Tanton that depicts Europe being overrun by immigrants from India. The book is often cited by white nationalist and anti-immigrant figures as a harbinger of what is to come if migrants continue to arrive at the border.

U.S. elected officials are not alone in fearmongering about migrants and immigration. Europe is facing a rise in far-right, xenophobic ideologies and political parties, especially in parts of France, Italy and Germany. In Ireland, anti-immigrant protests driven by

“When elected officials amplify dangerous rhetoric like the white nationalist invasion and replacement conspiracy theories, they create a climate that fosters political violence.”

Vanessa Cárdenas

Executive Director, America's Voice Education Fund

the far right erupted in wake of an alleged knife attack outside a school. The Atlanta-based Atlas Active Club, which is part of a larger network of white nationalist fight clubs, wrote on social media, “Let Ireland inspire you! Out of chaos we rise! Train, prepare, form gangs.”

Far-right Dutch politician Geert Wilders, who has spent his political career bashing Islam, tempered some of his rhetoric and saw his party make gains in 2023. Hard-right, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim figures laud Wilders and frame him as a hero to their movement. *FrontPage Magazine*, a publication run by the anti-Muslim hate group David Horowitz Freedom Center, published various articles surprisingly about the “impressive victory” of Wilders’ Freedom Party and how it is a step forward for those concerned about “the disastrous current consequences and long-term existential menace of mass Islamic immigration.”

Clarissa Martinez de Castro, vice president of UnidosUS, the largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization, reflected on the anniversary of the events four years ago and the rhetoric coming from members of Congress. “I am dumbfounded that we have to issue a call to our elected officials to unequivocally denounce white supremacist rhetoric, and ask members to refrain from using it,” Martinez de Castro told reporters on Aug. 2, 2023. “Our elected officials are entrusted with safeguarding the nation and its people. While we may have policy disagreements on how exactly to do that, there should be no uncertainty about condemning rhetoric that unleashes violence against members of our American community.” ●

MALE SUPREMACIST HARMS & RESILIENCE BUILDING

Hidden in Plain Sight

How Male Supremacy Provided the Foundation for Hate in 2023

By Rachael Fugardi

Male supremacist beliefs continued to encroach on the popular consciousness in 2023. This year, the SPLC documented nine male supremacist hate groups, including several abortion abolitionist groups, a popular misogynist incel community, and the National Coalition for Men. These male supremacist groups radically differ from each other, but they share a belief in men's perceived right to dominate and enforce strict gender norms onto women, trans men and nonbinary people. Like white supremacy, male supremacy is both an extremist ideology as well as a part of the social fabric that informs every aspect of American life. While small in number, male supremacist hate groups and the ideology they promote have an outsized influence on society. Male supremacy is a central feature of the hard right, and male supremacist influencers and abortion abolitionists are working to normalize these extremist ideas in schools and state legislatures throughout the United States. However, the omnipresent nature of misogyny and its far-reaching influence on American society means the extent of the problem is often hidden in plain sight.





300

abolitionists descended on Wichita, Kansas, for the fourth annual “Abolition Now” conference in 2023

Male supremacy plays a foundational role in hard-right radicalization. However, the gendered rhetoric of hate groups and extremist figures often goes unnoticed or unremarked on. A 1987 image from a White Aryan Resistance magazine featured a man in a hardhat paired with the words “White Men Built This Nation!! White Men Are This Nation!!!” While most people immediately pick up on the image’s racist intent, sociologists have argued that far fewer register its sexist message. While discussions of the hard right tend to focus on the role of white supremacy, male supremacy is just as central. Many hard-right groups present white men as the victims of a changing social order and present themselves as the champions of a lost traditional past. Those who reject traditionalism and strict gender norms are presented as existential threats who are ruining men’s lives and destroying society. Hard-right groups resent societal shifts toward greater equity and present white men as champions of a mythical “traditional” past. They depict those who reject strict gender norms as an existential threat to men and society.

Male supremacist narratives align the personal experiences and perceptions of young men with the broader political problems identified by an extremist movement. Andrew Anglin, founder of the neo-Nazi website Daily Stormer, explained this strategy in a 2015 post: “... Whereas race can be an obscure concept for young Whites who haven’t been forced to deal with other races directly, and the Jewish problem can be downright esoteric, the problem of being forced into subservience to women ... is something we have all experienced as young men raised in a feminist society.” In studies on political polarization, researchers have found the people most likely to support political violence were those who endorsed hostility toward women — regardless of political ideology. Similarly, misogyny and support for violence

against women have been found to be the strongest predictors of support for violent extremism.

Throughout 2023, emerging male supremacist influencers like Andrew Tate were successfully reaching and radicalizing a large audience of boys and young men. Despite being arrested and charged with rape and human trafficking offenses, Tate’s influence grew. His X (formerly Twitter) following more than doubled to 8.5 million in 2023. One sex educator told VICE World News about an encounter during a lesson on consent where a teenage boy quoted Tate, saying that “if you put yourself in a position to be raped, you must bear some responsibility.” Several other teachers have reported witnessing students as young as 11 mimicking a hand sign associated with Tate to signal their support for the alleged human trafficker, as well as an increase in rape jokes and comments about “alphas.”

Male supremacist narratives align the personal experiences and perceptions of young men with the broader political problems identified by an extremist movement.

While Tate may be the most infamous, he is not the only male supremacist idolized by their young audience. Nico de Balinthazy, known online as Sneako, is a male supremacist influencer whose trajectory mirrors the radicalization process many young boys fall into online. His early content primarily focused on video games, but in 2022 shifted to increasingly hostile and misogynist content and, later, to antisemitism as he began affiliating himself with white nationalists like Nick Fuentes. One viral video of Sneako being swarmed by his young fans illuminates how eager they are to embrace his hateful views. One young boy who appeared to be around 10 years old excitedly jumped up and down chanting, “Andrew Tate! F*** the women! F*** the women!” while another told the camera, “All the gays should die.”

There is nothing new about Tate or De Balintzazy’s misogynistic or homophobic views, but their manipulation of social media algorithms and poorly enforced social media policies against misogynistic hate speech have allowed them to amplify their message and build online empires to target and profit off an extremely young and vulnerable audience.

The normalization of male supremacy is not confined to young people on the internet or in classrooms; throughout 2023, an extreme segment of the anti-abortion movement has mobilized a large network of supporters and consolidated their influence over state legislatures across the country. This movement calls themselves “abolitionists” – co-opting the language of 19th century anti-slavery activists – but is influenced by Christian Reconstructionism and the ideas of anti-abortion militants like Matthew Trehella rather than racial justice movements.

Abortion abolitionists believe any attempt to end a pregnancy is murder and should be prosecuted as such. Deviating significantly from the more mainstream “pro-life” movement, abortion abolitionists believe those seeking, providing and assisting in the procurement of an abortion should be subject to the death penalty.

In February 2023, approximately 300 abolitionists descended on Wichita, Kansas, for the fourth annual “Abolition Now” conference hosted by T. Russell Hunter’s Abolitionists Rising (formerly Free the States) with the support of Abortion is Murder Kansas. Wichita is the same city where Dr. George Tiller was assassinated in his church by an anti-abortion extremist in 2009. Just a month before the conference, Dr. Scott Stringfield, the medical director of an anti-abortion crisis pregnancy center located next to the reopened clinic once operated by Tiller, praised the 9/11 hijackers at an anti-abortion March for Life rally: “They were principled. They were willing to die for what they believed in.” He then seemingly called for violence by encouraging those who oppose abortion “to always choose principle over pragmatism.” Others have seemed to suggest that violence is inevitable. “You’re going to shed blood in the womb, you’re going to reap it in the streets,” Philip Benham, a longtime anti-abortion activist, said at a 2023 event hosted by male supremacist hate group Operation Save America.

While some leaders of the abortion abolitionist movement have explicitly called for nonviolence, they maintain close ties to anti-abortion extremists with a history of violence. T. Russell Hunter has

The year Roe was overturned, the National Abortion Federation documented...

913%

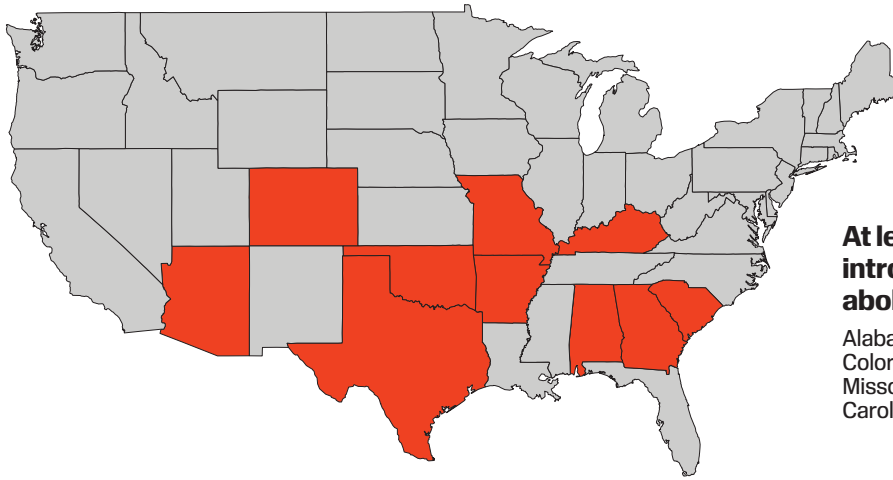
increase in incidents of stalking

538%

increase in clinic obstructions

133%

increase in bomb threats targeting abortion providers and clinics



At least 10 states introduced abortion abolition bills in 2023

Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas.

explicitly denounced violence against abortion providers, calling it “immoral” and an admission of the perpetrators’ failure to change the culture. However, the movement’s theocratic vision, extreme rhetoric and violent history leaves room for some supporters to justify violent tactics while still providing plausible deniability to the movement’s leaders.

The year Roe was overturned, the National Abortion Federation documented a 913% increase in incidents of stalking, a 538% increase in clinic obstructions and a 133% increase in bomb threats targeting abortion providers and clinics in states that continued to protect abortion rights. The same year, a federal judge issued a restraining order against members of Operation Save America after protesters physically obstructed access to a Nashville clinic while threatening patients and providers who were then forced into a lockdown. Several members of Operation Save America were also present at the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection, and another member was charged with a felony after calling in a hoax bomb threat that targeted a Wisconsin Pride event.

In 2023, abortion abolition bills were introduced in at least ten states. Additionally, key leaders within the movement have moved beyond lobbying to seek office for themselves. Noted abortion abolitionist leader Dusty Deever was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate in December 2023. During the campaign he promised to support legislation to end no-fault divorce, ban the use of LGBTQ+ education-

al materials in schools and support the Prenatal Equal Protection Act. If passed, this bill would allow prosecutors to target pregnant people for causing their pregnancies to end. In addition to criminalizing abortion, this bill would leave pregnant people – especially Black women – vulnerable to the policing of their bodies.

Black women are more than twice as likely to suffer a stillbirth, and they have already been prosecuted for behavior the state has assumed resulted in a stillbirth. So-called equal protection bills and existing fetal protection laws mistakenly assume a woman’s behavior during her pregnancy is the only factor determining fetal health. According to Lynn Paltrow, the founder and former executive director of Pregnancy Justice, “laws that seek to treat fertilized eggs, embryos, and fetuses as entirely separate legal persons provides the basis for creating a system of separate and unequal law for women.”

Reflecting on 2023, it is clear male supremacy poses a significant yet underexamined threat to our society. Male supremacy may target women, trans men and nonbinary people most directly, but its consequences harm all of us. Misogyny weakens democracy, motivates political and interpersonal violence and damages mental health. From extremist message boards to TikTok “for you” feeds, from classrooms to state legislatures, it is in all our best interests to combat misogyny wherever it exists. ●



Preventable Harms

Considering Gender While Building Resilience Against Extremism

by Lydia Bates

“Women use feminism to gain an unfair advantage over men.”

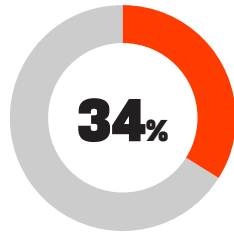
“Women like alpha males.”

“Modern society prioritizes women over men.”

In a joint report, the SPLC, Everytown for Gun Safety and the Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab (PERIL) found that 16% of respondents age 14 to 30 support these statements and others that reflect a widespread belief in women holding more social power than men and a simultaneous fear of feminization.

Published across two installments in July 2023 and February 2024, the [U.S. Youth Attitudes on Guns Report](#) used a mixed-methods approach to survey 4,156 young people and conduct 44 focus-group interviews. Together, the broad range of findings demonstrates dozens of important insights. Among them is the extent to which rigid gender roles and expectations affect young Americans’ perceptions of self, others and their relationship to guns and gun violence.

Analysis from the report’s qualitative focus group interviews elucidates a broader landscape of fear, uncertainty and gendered perceptions of control



Percentage of transgender youth that report being bullied online or electronically

and protection. Across conversations with 44 young people, several themes emerged around whom gun ownership is appropriate for and to what ends. Men were often framed as protectors for whom guns, violence and aggression are acceptable and expected. In addition to guns being tools for protection, they were also often positioned as a preventative measure in the face of potential emasculation.

The need for hegemonic power and control, coupled with a fear of being feminized, as reflected in this report has always been endemic in American society. These mainstays of masculinity exist within the milieu of sexism, misogyny, transphobia, misogyny, patriarchal violence and attacks on reproductive health care and justice that too often get dismissed as societal norms. In this slipstream of rigid, repressive gender roles, male supremacist ideologies continue to gain traction. With nine male supremacist hate groups active in 2023 and several internet personalities widely promulgating these narratives, building resilience against male supremacist ideologies and actions has never been more necessary.

While male supremacy, transmisogyny and anti-LGBTQ+ beliefs constitute standalone extremist ideologies, these narratives also undergird, reinforce and amplify many other forms of bigotry and hate-fueled violence. The quantitative survey findings detailed in the U.S. Youth Attitudes on Guns Report further contextualize the mutually reinforcing nature of male supremacist beliefs with racial resentment of Black people, extremist views of the Second Amendment and a proclivity for guns and gun culture. Specifically, survey results showed that the stronger a respondent's belief "that adults in schools should be armed," the higher [they] scored on measures of both male supremacy and racial resentment." Similarly, young people with a stronger belief in being "safer with guns than without" scored higher on measurements of male supremacy and racial resentment.

Extremist ideologies proven to prime young people for potentially dangerous views on gun use and ownership abound online. In 2023, the U.S. surgeon general found that "95% of youth ages 13-17 report using a social media platform, with more than a third saying they use social media 'almost constantly.'" While the ubiquity of the internet has contributed to many young people's growth through community development and identity affirmation, unbridled time online also creates opportunities for misuse. "Adolescent females and sexual minority youth are more likely to report experiencing instances of cyberbullying," with one-third of girls of color reporting contact with racist content or language online and "25% of LGBTQ youth, 33% of LGBTQ youth of color and 34% of transgender youth [being] bullied online or electronically."

Targeted harassment for one's immutable characteristics cannot be disconnected from the onslaught of social, legislative and physical attacks that marred 2023. In this past year alone, 179 anti-trans bills targeting gender-affirming health care were introduced across the country. Of the other 410 bills proposed in 2023, many targeted legal recognition, education, bathrooms, athletics, or the right to openly exist in public schools.

In similarly motivated attacks on individuals' rights to adequate health care and bodily autonomy and safety, 21 states now ban abortion or restrict it earlier in pregnancy than the precedent set in *Roe v. Wade*. According to the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, "It's getting harder for hospitals in abortion-hostile states to attract and retain obstetricians and gynecologists." In the South, where "more than half of all U.S. Black women and a high proportion of Latina women" live and where legislation banning abortion is omnipresent, the National Institutes of Health says people who can get pregnant will suffer "disproportionate and unequal impact."

Legally undermining people's access to health care, inclusive education and their right to make decisions for their own bodies and futures is both inherently harmful and a catalyst for interpersonal violence. From Transgender Day of Remembrance on Nov. 20, 2022, to the same day in 2023, the Human Rights Campaign recorded at least 33 murders of transgender individuals, the majority of whom were people of color. Also, "according to the CDC, in 2021, 42% of high school students reported experiencing persistent feelings of sadness, including 57% of girls and 69% of LGBTQ+ students, and nearly 1 in 3 high school girls reported having seriously considered suicide." Further, The Trevor Project found that 45% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in 2022.

But these are preventable harms. When helping young people build resilience against manipulation by hate and disinformation, it is important to consider the way gender can impact young people’s experiences online. Recently, the SPLC partnered with the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) to develop, implement, test and refine a digital and media literacy curriculum for middle school students. Between pre-curriculum implementation testing and post-testing, IREX found that female students improved an average of 22% in being able to discern fact from opinion, while male students improved only about 4%. In post-testing, male students reported a 14% greater awareness of hate speech than female students. On aggregate, however, female students still self-reported higher levels of awareness of hate speech because they had reported much higher rates of awareness in testing before the curriculum was administered.

Within the context of the U.S. surgeon general’s findings about adolescent girls’ and LGBTQ+ youths’ negative experiences online, a heightened awareness of hate speech is not surprising. However, such disparate experiences with hate speech and misinformation across genders demand explicit attention from parents, educators and all community-based caregivers. Responses for students of different genders must be tailored to help young people build the skills they need to identify and resist manipulation. Prevention measures addressing young people’s early exposure to targeted harassment online should also be implemented to ensure that all young people can navigate online spaces free from harm. This includes strengthening inclusive and comprehensive sex education courses to stymie the flow of disinformation aimed at undermining LGBTQ+ individuals.

To galvanize those prevention measures, the SPLC, in partnership with the Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab, has developed numerous resources to support all trusted adults as they help young people build resilience against manipulative extremist ideologies. Published in June 2020, *Building Resilience & Confronting Risk: The Parents & Caregivers Guide to Online Radicalization* focuses on equipping those who care for young people within the home with the information they need to prepare young people to resist extremist manipulation, as well as the tools to identify and effectively respond if a young person has become susceptible to radicalization.

An impact study of the Parents & Caregivers Guide found, “the longer people spent reading the guide, the more likely they were to report having the confidence

and skills to intervene, and the more understanding they had about topics related to extremism.” Mothers came into the study knowing more about extremism than fathers. Women also spent significantly more time reading the guide and therefore left the study more prepared and willing to intervene on behalf of young people susceptible to manipulation.

Expanding upon this resource, in November 2022 PERIL and the SPLC published *Building Networks & Addressing Harm: A Community Guide to Online Youth Radicalization* to equip all community members with preventative information and tools. Similarly, impact study testing showed that women gleaned more from the “Building Networks” guide than men: “Women (92%) had significantly better post-test knowledge accuracy than men (89%) and were more satisfied (87% at least ‘mostly satisfied’) with the guide than men (80% at least ‘mostly satisfied’).”



179

anti-trans bills targeting gender-affirming health care were introduced in 2023.

Both impact study findings speak to the key role that mothers, aunts, grandmothers and female figures play in young people’s lives. However, these studies also expose a need. Fathers, grandfathers, uncles and other male figures must learn how to support young people in building resilience against radicalization for these efforts to be successful. This requires male caregivers, educators and mentors modeling kindness and empathy and engaging in difficult conversations. Male figures should also be advocates for local policies that build safe, gender-inclusive learning and extracurricular environments and that counter the tide of anti-student inclusion groups and their regressive aims.

By emphasizing prevention measures, young people can gain the knowledge and tools to identify and resist manipulation by hateful ideologies and disinformation. Such awareness is a critical step in decoupling masculinity from violence, domination, power and control, and eroding the male supremacist, racist, anti-LGBTQ+ and other hateful ideologies that harm us all. ●

COUNTERING HATE & EXTREMISM THROUGH POLICY & DATA

Prohibiting Police Association with Hate and Antigovernment Extremist Groups

By Michael Lieberman

The law is a blunt instrument against hate and extremism. With a record number of white nationalist groups and incidents, record numbers of anti-LGBTQ+ groups, surging antisemitism and all-time-high levels of reported hate crimes, it is clear that hate and extremism cannot be prosecuted, legislated, regulated or tabulated out of existence.

More comprehensive hate crime data collection — and more inclusive hate crime laws — are necessary, but insufficient. These goals must be complemented with a commitment to address long-term contributors to hate and extremism, including government support for digital and media literacy initiatives, civics education and other programs to build a strong, inclusive, multiracial democracy, and serious efforts to reduce structural racism.

Among the most important trends the SPLC documented in this year's report is that extremists are seeking to build political power at the local level and within institutions of power, with a resurgence of in-person demonstrations among racist and hard-right reactionary groups across the country.

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15

7

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CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
 PROHIBITIONS ON CARRYING FIREARMS
 CATEGORY: _____
 OFFENSE: _____
 DATE: _____
 OFFICER: _____

Chicago Police Department
PROHIBITIONS ON CARRYING FIREARMS

ADJ
1903



V. DETERMINING AND SUBSTANTIATING VIC

A. Active participation or membership in a group, organization, or association, substantiated by specific, documented evidence.

REPORTS



In the face of these decentralized threats of intimidation and violence, local law enforcement officials must be trusted to protect all community members. Police officers are not immune from extremist ideologies that have been mainstreamed in recent years. But individuals tasked with protecting the public equitably cannot be trusted to do so if they associate with an openly racist, bigoted or misogynistic organization. Hard-right extremists strategically recruit police officers because of their weapons training and positions of power. Too frequently, police departments have been unwilling or unable to effectively discipline or remove officers involved in biased policing or active participation with white supremacist group activity. Several recent developments provide an improved accountability foundation on which to build.

Chicago Police Department: Progress in addressing extremism

Following a series of incidents in which the Chicago Police Department failed to investigate allegations of overt racist and white supremacist behavior in the ranks — or assessed weak discipline against officers directly associated with violent white supremacist groups — the SPLC wrote to the mayor and police superintendent urging the city “to adopt clear and unambiguous policies and procedures prohibiting city employees from actively associating with hate and extremist groups.”

The SPLC cited several recent examples of actions taken by federal and state officials to explicitly prohibit such activity.

- Following disturbing evidence of disproportionate veteran involvement in the deadly Jan. 6 failed insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, the Department of Defense strengthened its prohibition against active participation by military personnel in extremist activities.
- After the 2020 murder of George Floyd dramatically exposed systemic racism in our criminal legal system, President Biden issued a broad federal police reform executive order mandating the development of guidance that would, “consistent with the First Amendment ... help avoid the hiring and retention of law enforcement officers who promote unlawful violence, white supremacy, or other bias against persons based on race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity), or disability.”

... SPLC staff promoted improvements to existing rules. In a significant step forward, Chicago’s civilian police oversight board unanimously approved a new policy ... that Chicago police officers are prohibited from active participation in an organization that “advocates for systematic illegal prejudice, oppression, or discrimination.”

- The Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) updated its rules and regulations to prohibit hiring and make it easier to dismiss officers who “join, support, advocate for, maintain membership in, or participate in the activities of a hate or extremist group” as defined by the rules.

After many months of review, SPLC staff promoted improvements to existing rules. In a significant step forward, Chicago’s civilian police oversight board unanimously approved a new policy designed to make clear that Chicago police officers are prohibited from active participation in an organization that “advocates for systematic illegal prejudice, oppression, or discrimination.”

We must now build on this progress to promote effective implementation of these new rules — and to promote adoption of similar policies across the country to ensure that individuals with bigoted and white supremacist views are not hired or retained by any federal, state, or local law enforcement agencies. ●

Fourteen Actions to Stop Hate

1. Ensure that the planners and perpetrators of the deadly Jan. 6 failed insurrection at the Capitol — and those who financed and inspired them to act — are held accountable, with serious consequences.
2. Make federal and state hate crime data collection mandatory, requiring credible reporting for funding.
3. Increase funding for programs authorized by the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, including state hate crime hotlines to increase victim reporting and assistance.
4. Increase funding for community-informed hate crime prevention initiatives, including support services for those targeted and impacted by bias-motivated harms. Fund early intervention and diversion programs for youth that center on social-emotional learning and not punishment.
5. Fund safe, evidence-based academic research on prevention programs that promote social cohesion and community wellness.
6. Enforce existing federal and state hate crime laws — and expand training for judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officials on alternative sentencing and restorative justice initiatives.
7. Provide equitable access to government funds for security infrastructure to houses of worship and community institutions targeted with violence, including historically Black colleges and universities and LGBTQ+ centers.
8. Provide increased funding for civics education, digital and media literacy initiatives, conflict resolution programs and initiatives to reduce structural racism.
9. Address white supremacy in the military at every stage: screening recruits; clarifying prohibitions against advocating for, or involvement in, supremacist or extremist activity for active-duty personnel; and tailored efforts for veterans to transition to civilian life, including counseling, mental health and social welfare services.
10. Protect voters and prevent political violence by issuing guidance promoting best practices, publicly tracking threats to elections officials and infrastructure, and limiting guns at polling places.
11. Prevent the hiring, promotion or retention of law enforcement officials who actively promote unlawful violence, white supremacy or other biased policing — and mandate an annual report on these actions.
12. Promote inclusive education and democracy-building school initiatives that celebrate our nation's diversity.
13. Promote online safety and hold tech and social media companies accountable.
14. Demand that social media companies not enable the funding or amplifying of white supremacist ideas or provide a haven for extremists.



Focusing on Prevention

SPLC-PERIL Strategic Partnership Interview

By Aaron Flanagan

As in years before, far-right extremists persisted in targeting and harming communities. Notably, extremists used 2023 as a year of preparation and growth. As the number of racist white nationalist groups grew to the largest recorded by the SPLC, they doubled down their attacks on LGBTQ+ people and immigrants and mobilized resentment through antisemitic conspiracies.

Across last year, the SPLC and the Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Laboratory (PERIL) housed at American University in Washington, D.C., engaged in several projects to maximize and sustain its commitment to delivering safe, effective and actionable resources at the community level. The following interview focuses on two specifically. First, the 12-month longitudinal study of the [Parents & Caregivers Guide to Online Youth Radicalization](#) is a rare endeavor in SPLC and PERIL's respective fields. This study will help illuminate how the knowledge shared in the guide endures over time for readers, and how it may spur them to take action when recognizing warning signs of radicalization and intervene

positively in the lives of young people they care for. Among many other valuable data points, the findings show study participants' willingness to build local networks so they can develop shared power to reduce harm in their own communities.

The interview also addresses the groundbreaking investment in and launch of Michigan- and Georgia-based Community Advisory on Resilience and Education (CARE) Centers. These pilot CARE Centers will directly support communities affected by hate, discrimination and supremacist ideologies with research, resources and referrals across networks of organizations and practitioners for further support. To tailor each CARE Center to the needs of communities, researchers working on the partnership team conducted dozens of listening sessions and meetings with community members and stakeholders across a multiple months long process of documenting needs locally. Communities' needs differ and change over time, so listening sessions and meetings will continue through 2024, even as on-the-ground work and collaborations are launched.

PERIL's Pasha Dashtgard, Pete Kurtz-Glovas, Wyatt Russell and Rashmi Chimmalgi answered the following questions as a group. This interview highlights not only the partnership's commitment to an effective "do-no-harm" approach, but also its commitment to transparency and testing. Both are foundational to earning the trust of communities in seeking to reduce or prevent harms provoked by polarization and radicalization toward hard- and far-right extremism.

What makes the longitudinal study unique and valuable for overlapping fields of research, intervention and resource development?

The goal of the *Parents & Caregivers Guide* is to equip communities with the knowledge and tools to better prevent the uptake of supremacist ideologies, misogyny, conspiracy theories and misinformation in their communities. Research evaluating the impact of resources on readers/viewers over time is quite limited, particularly in looking at how readers apply and use information learned over time. Our longitudinal study is the first of its kind both in its evaluative framework (assessing changes in knowledge and in intention to act) and also in its measuring of the guide's impact on readers over time.

Using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, this study seeks to understand how readers' levels of awareness and knowledge of terms, concepts and

The most exciting results so far from the longitudinal analysis of the *Parents & Caregivers Guide* have been the findings related to action and behavior that have been motivated by reading the guide. ... what we want is to motivate action. Running studies like the longitudinal assessment of the *Parents & Caregivers Guide* is one way of doing just that.

strategies discussed in the guide relate to readers' behavioral intention — their intention to take action, to practically apply knowledge gained from reading the guide. Additionally, this study evaluates how awareness, knowledge, capability, capacity, confidence and willingness of readers change over time. This is crucial to understanding how long our guide affects behavior, when we start to see dips in knowledge retention and how long before we need to re-share the resource to jog people's memories of specific skills, strategies and information found in the guide.

How do such studies better support communities and stakeholders by providing them with more actionable, evidence-informed resources and interventions? What about the preliminary results most excites you and demonstrates how the partnership can better deliver value as it progresses?

By developing an evidence-base to assess the impact of our guides, toolkits and resources, we learn not just if a resource of ours is effective, but for whom is it effective, what in particular is it about the resource that is effective, are there specific groups or types of people that the resource impacts to a greater degree (e.g. moms, Republicans, Muslims, etc.), how long does one need to engage with the resource before they start to see benefits and how long before readers need to be re-exposed to the guide? Determining the mechanisms by which the resource impacts the people who consume it helps us tailor resources and interventions to the audiences we are trying to reach. A one-size-fits-all approach to resource development leaves behind too many constituencies and often leaves people feeling like the resource wants to be for everyone in general, but in fact is for no one in particular. Conversely, a resource that is targeted and specific conveys careful consideration of the needs and particularities of the audience it is intended for.

The most exciting results so far from the longitudinal analysis of the *Parents & Caregivers Guide* have been the findings related to action and behavior that have been motivated by reading the guide. Around 10% of the study's sample said that they joined or created a group that discusses youth radicalization after having read the guide, and 7% of respondents said that they used the information found in the guide to interrupt the recruitment of a young person in their life into an extremist group. That being said, it is not enough to raise awareness or even convey knowledge — what we want is to motivate action. Running

studies like the longitudinal assessment of the *Parents & Caregivers Guide* is one way of doing just that.

This year, the partnership is launching a pilot program of CARE Centers. Can you explain what these CARE Centers are and how they can help support communities?

CARE Centers are our partnership's effort to implement a community-based, public health approach to early-on extremism prevention. Rooted in the needs of each pilot region in Michigan and Georgia, CARE Centers work to equip each community with evidence-based resources to prevent political and hate-fueled violence, reduce the fertile ground by which hateful ideologies and narratives can thrive, and better support victims, survivors, and historically targeted communities impacted and affected by hate, discrimination, bias and supremacist ideologies. Informed by the 22-year-old German mobile advisory centers, this approach provides accessible and free workshops, trainings, support groups, evaluative assessments and referrals to local partners for specialized services to serve affected and concerned community members.

... CARE aims to amplify existing community resources to serve affected and concerned residents, collectively prioritize local areas of focus, identify resource-needs gaps, and collaboratively develop needed resources to meet those gaps.



Rashmi Chimmalgi, Program Coordinator for the Translational Research and Education Development (left) and Pete Kurtz-Glovas, Deputy Director of Regional Partnerships (below), PERIL





Wyatt Russell, Senior Program Manager and Policy Analyst, PERIL

Working with local partners, organizations and community members, CARE aims to amplify existing community resources to serve affected and concerned residents, collectively prioritize local areas of focus, identify resource-needs gaps and collaboratively develop needed resources to meet those gaps. Based on needs identified by communities, CARE Centers engage community members and practitioners including parents, educators, policymakers, mental health practitioners and issue-specific local community organizations in co-creating interventions and resources that help meet the need of complex challenges. CARE Centers also abide by a “do-no-harm” approach to community-based work, ensuring safe, inclusive and accessible resources, backed up by PERIL’s ethically vetted, rigorous research methods. Using mixed-methods research, we’re able to test impact, continuously improve program design and incorporate community feedback into our model using

pre- and post-testing impact testing, ethnographic research, interviews and focus groups. Through CARE Centers, PERIL and SPLC’s aim is to ensure community members feel supported and better equipped to prevent political and hate-fueled violence, while further strengthening the foundations of each community we serve.

Who will the CARE Centers be for, and how will the partnership strive to offer accessible, inclusive collaborations with community partners and members? How will the partnership continue to deliver on its promise to provide safe, evidence-informed resources and interventions?

CARE Centers are designed for local community members and practitioners who are concerned about or who want to support those impacted by hate, discrimination and supremacist ideologies as well as those susceptible to radicalization. CARE organizers and staff will be based in the communities where they are working, assist in the delivery of services and resources to the entire community and help provide community members with avenues for action and support. The services and resources created and offered through the CARE Centers will be free and rooted in community expertise and needs. In order to best meet the needs of the community, we will engage community members to develop tools and services informed by their experiences.

At PERIL we know that demonstrating effective interventions is vital to preventing harms in the future. We also recognize the harm done to marginalized communities who have been targeted by counterterrorism efforts in the United States in the past. Consequently, CARE Centers will not advocate for solutions that involve incarceration, monitoring, surveillance, censorship or any other security-based approach. Our community-centered and victim-survivor-focused approach is informed by a critical understanding of past harms, and we aim to safeguard and enrich the well-being of all community members involved with the CARE Centers. This ethos will lead our work as we develop new and innovative interventions against extremism and build evidence to help lead the way toward a more socially cohesive future. ●



A Year of Impact

The Intelligence Project's Data Lab Combats Digital Extremism in 2023

By **Elias-John Fernandez-Aubert**, **RJ Reinhart**, and **Megan Squire**

In 2023, the Intelligence Project's Data Lab marked its inaugural year with a flurry of activity aimed at combating extremism using digital methodologies. The groundbreaking tools and infrastructure developed by the Data Lab have bolstered the SPLC's ability to identify and address digital manifestations of hate, by leveraging technology in our effort to counter white supremacy and hard-right extremism.

One standout achievement of the Data Lab has been to develop a host of innovative digital tools and training materials tailored specifically for the Intelligence Project's unique mission. These new tools empower researchers and journalists with advanced resources to tackle digital hate, and to do it in a safe and secure manner, all while preserving the valuable historical record compiled by the team in prior decades.

The Data Lab also produced a number of scholarly and investigative research products. The team contributed numerous articles in the "Hatewatch" and "Techwatch" series, delving into complex and timely

issues such as the use of cryptocurrency by extremist groups and the financial mechanisms underpinning donor-funded extremism. Through these publications, the Data Lab has provided deep insights and raised awareness about the intricate financial networks that support hate groups, highlighting the critical role of financial tracking in understanding and combating extremism.

The Data Lab launched a series of deep dives into platforms and technologies that enable hate to flourish online. These "Digital Threat Reports" began with an investigation of the Odysee video hosting platform. The Data Lab identified the key hate-related channels on the site and the amounts of money the creators associated with those channels raked in as they spread hate.

In addition to these publications, the Data Lab staff members were frequent speakers and contributors at external conferences and meetings on the use of digital technology and platforms by hate groups and figures. The Data Lab also assisted with multiple active legal cases against extremists. This collaboration with external partners underscores the practical impact of the Data Lab in holding extremists accountable for their actions.

In all, 2023 was a remarkably successful foundational year for the Data Lab. Its contributions in tool development, impactful publications, and internal and external collaborations and partnerships will continue to bolster efforts against digital hate in 2024 and beyond. ●



To explore more Data Lab insights and stay informed about SPLC's ongoing efforts to combat extremism, visit the Data Lab articles hub at splcenter.org/techwatch or scan the QR.

THE STRUGGLE FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Florida's Blueprint for Ethnocide Through Public Education

By Maya Henson Carey

The United States has a long legacy of forced acculturation. Men, women and children stolen to the U.S. routinely had their names, religion and culture stripped away during enslavement. As they struggled to hold on to their history and native customs, enslaved individuals navigated the existence of not being considered American while also playing a vital role in building this country.

Indigenous people experienced similar tribulations. Although native to these lands, they were recognized only as savages, not Americans. After centuries of massacre and the widely spread belief that “the only good Indian is a dead one,” U.S. Army Capt. Richard Pratt instead declared: “All the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.”

Pratt's notion became central to the development of Indigenous boarding schools, focused on “civilizing,” “Christianizing” and “Americanizing” Indigenous children. Involuntary assimilation — “killing the Indian” — at these institutions included the forcible dispossession of native names, languages, religions, dress and customs, while necessitating the adoption of traditional American customs.

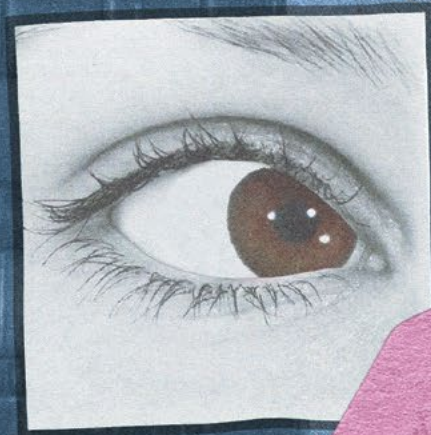
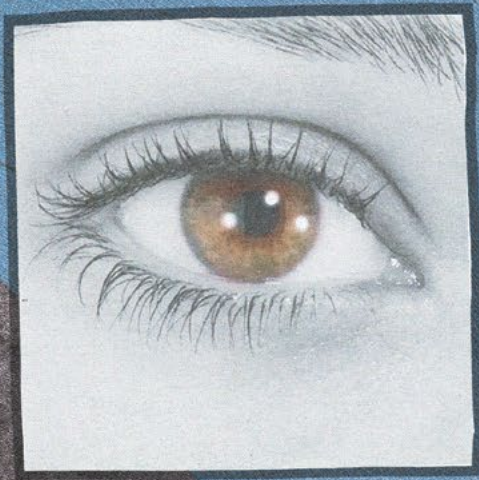


Illustration by Trevor Davis



Over two centuries later, efforts to erase the culture, history and contributions of historically marginalized people continue in public education, now in the form of whitewashed, revisionist teaching. While hiding behind false claims of protecting parental rights and saving children from indoctrination, politicians and anti-student inclusion groups, like Moms for Liberty and Parents Defending Education, seek to control what is taught in schools, including putting limitations on factual history and multicultural reading materials, while forcing diverse students to repress their identities and cultural histories.

Florida's ethnocide through authoritarianism

When historian Carter G. Woodson wrote, "When you can control a man's thinking, you don't have to worry about his actions. ... He will find his 'proper place' and stay in it," he was speaking to the necessity of Black education to truly gain knowledge to combat cultural indoctrination and dependence on others.

Today, nowhere is this concept truer than in Florida.

Florida currently leads the so-called "war on woke," which includes attacks against inclusive curriculum, identity expression and DEI programs. However, its governor and former presidential candidate, Ron DeSantis, admitted that most supporters of his crusade have no idea what it's truly about, saying: "Not everyone really knows what wokeness is. ... A lot of people who rail against wokeness can't even define it."

Despite his confession, DeSantis' battle against public education, which specifically impacts racially diverse and LGBTQ+ students, wages on. Under his strict guidance and bolstered by his close affiliation with anti-student inclusion groups, Florida has enacted education legislation and policies seeking to control K-12 public education through limits on teaching certain aspects of American history, bans on library and textbooks, and regulations on how LGBTQ+ students identify and exist at school.

In recent years, Florida has made national waves with its "Don't Say Gay" bill, prohibiting classroom discussion of gender and sexual orientation, and its "Stop WOKE" act, limiting the instruction on race.

This type of widely encompassing, vague legislation has put Florida at the forefront of book bans, restrictive teaching guidelines and policies against LGBTQ+ students.

Despite 70% of parents opposing book bans nationwide, according to American Library Associa-

tion polling, the removal of books from classrooms and libraries is at an all-time high, demonstrating increased censorship of materials on race, history, sexual orientation, gender and religion. Florida is a leader in this trend.

PEN America reported that during the 2022-23 school year, 40% of book bans across the country occurred in Florida. Furthermore, three anti-student inclusion groups — Moms for Liberty, Citizens Defending Freedom and Parents' Rights in Education — are particularly responsible for the bans across the country, which totaled 3,362. Two of these anti-student inclusion groups have a significant presence in Florida. Moms for Liberty has 32 chapters in the state, while Citizens Defending Freedom has seven. Several other anti-student inclusion groups are affiliated with different national organizations.

Across the country, 30% of bans pertained to subject matter involving characters of color or themes of race and racism; another 30% were related to LGBTQ+ characters or themes. These subjects are front and center in Florida's crusade to direct what students learn and who is reflected in school curriculum.

Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that over a quarter of high school students identify as LGBTQ+, the American Civil Liberties Union reported that 84 anti-LGBTQ+ bills passed into law during the 2023 legislative session; 40% of these included restrictions to student and educator rights. The restrictive policies limit the expression of LGBTQ+ students, including the elimination of affinity groups and safe spaces, the ban of using preferred names and pronouns, and the restriction to using facilities that align with a person's gender assigned at birth.

With the "Stop WOKE Act," Florida has suppressed the teaching of the true history of Black, Indigenous and others. The state's civics standards have come under fire, with some teachers even expressing concern about the strict focus on patriotism, while downplaying such important historical topics as slavery. The African American history standards also gained national attention because of revisionist teachings, including that "slaves developed skills which, in some instances, could be applied for their personal benefit." These were introduced just months after the state rejected the College Board's AP African American course for high school, saying that it lacked opposing viewpoints on such topics as slavery and lacked education value.

Florida's goal of controlling its public education

Distribution of Anti-Student Inclusion Groups

Comparison of anti-student inclusion organizations and Moms for Liberty chapters.

● FLORIDA ● UNITED STATES

Anti-Student Inclusion Organizations



Chapters* of Anti-Student Inclusion Organizations



Moms for Liberty Chapters



* Among the anti-student inclusion organizations nationwide, seven have a chapter structure, including Moms for Liberty, Moms for America, Citizens Defending Freedom, Mom Army, No Left Turn in Education, Parents Involved in Education, and Parents Rights in Education.

Source: Southern Poverty Law Center

also reaches to higher education. Gov. DeSantis commandeered New College of Florida in an attempt to recreate it as the Hillsdale College of the South. His bans on DEI programs are also forcing faculty and staff at state colleges and universities to update their professional titles, rewrite syllabi and censor their emails for fear of disciplinary action.

A measuring rod

Early in the 20th century, the “Lost Cause” myth, claiming that slavery was not the main cause for the Civil War, firmly gripped the American South. The United Daughters of the Confederacy went so far as to publish *A Measuring Rod To Test Text Books, and Reference Books in Schools, Colleges and Libraries*, which was a guide to how Southern history and culture should be reflected in textbooks. With the intent to eradicate any parts of history that painted the South in a bad light, the guide included instructions such as rejecting “a book that speaks of the slaveholder of the South as cruel and unjust.”

The trend at all levels of public education of banning or revising Black history goes beyond mere attacks on critical race theory and culture wars. They are a method of asserting control on public education to keep the culture and teachings white, straight and cisgender.

These efforts minimize the experiences and contributions of historically marginalized populations. These attacks on inclusive education, including how

educators can teach subjects like slavery, come in the form of challenging curriculum, banning books and passing policies. As censorship and authoritarianism in public education wages on, historically marginalized populations are once again experiencing the pressure to assimilate. This is particularly happening where politicians and anti-student inclusion groups are diligently working to tightly control public education and infuse their own political beliefs and doctrines, ignoring the irony that enslaved and Indigenous history is being attacked as un-American and open to interpretation when they actually make up a significant portion of true American history.

Anti-student inclusion groups maintain antigovernment ideals and use extremist tactics to combat student diversity and inclusive education. Most formed in response to COVID-19 mask and vaccine mandates in public schools. However, they quickly evolved their focus to attacks on historically marginalized students. Their tactics include challenging reading materials, mostly pertaining to people of color and the LGBTQ+ community, challenging school policies that allow LGBTQ+ students to be accepted and safe at school, and pushing to eliminate inclusive curriculum that includes the accurate teaching of hard parts of American history.

Moms for Liberty self reports 310 chapters in 48 states with 130,000 members. Other notable groups include Moms for America, Parents Defending Education and Citizens Defending Freedom. ●



Fighting Illiteracy, Preserving Democracy

The Power of Drag Story Hour

By R.G. Cravens

In 2023, the SPLC documented 86 active anti-LGBTQ+ hate groups — about 33% higher than 2022, and the highest number ever recorded by the SPLC. The increase is primarily the result of anti-trans organizing motivated by the hard right’s renewed focus on false conspiracy theories that paint LGBTQ+ people, notably trans people and drag artists, and their allies as sexual predators.

Throughout 2023, the activities of anti-LGBTQ+ groups overlapped with white nationalist, neo-Nazi, antisemitic and antigovernment groups who targeted LGBTQ+ people and events for intimidation and violent campaigns designed to drive LGBTQ+ people from public life.

In the lead-up to the 2023 summer Pride season, local events and corporate support for LGBTQ+ inclusive marketing practices were targeted as part of an online campaign intended to “make Pride toxic,” according to right-wing commentator Matt Walsh. At the same time, the frequency and intensity of in-person anti-LGBTQ+ activities grew so dramatically over the past year that a May 2023 Department of Home-

land Security (DHS) briefing warned of the potential for anti-LGBTQ+ attacks specifically “linked to drag-themed events, gender-affirming care and [LGBTQ+ inclusive] curricula in schools.”

In an eerie similarity to far-right anti-abortion demonstrations in the 1990s and 2000s, hard-right extremists have variously barricaded entrances to public facilities, hurled Molotov cocktails at churches, slashed the tires of event organizers, and led both online and in-person intimidation campaigns against businesses to prevent public drag performances. Members of Drag Story Hour (DSH), a nonprofit literacy program founded in 2015 to “use the art of drag to read books to kids in libraries, schools, and bookstores,” have experienced the surge in right-wing violence firsthand. In 2023, the SPLC tracked 195 such incidents of right-wing protesters targeting drag events across the country. Literacy events sponsored by DSH, alone, account for more than one-third of the incidents.

Drag, which often challenges strict adherence to binary gender roles, poses a problem for hate and antigovernment groups because it offers freedom from the restrictive ideologies they espouse. Drag in public is especially challenging to these groups because it not only showcases the diversity of human identity and experience, but it also represents the commitment of a free society to inclusive civil institutions— institutions that help guard against the spread of hate and antigovernment ideologies.

Across the country in 2023, the leaders and volunteers of DSH helped push back against the most recent manufactured moral panic targeting drag events and trans people. In the face of hate, they offered hope. In response to violent threats, they offered their communities tranquility, reassurance and a touch of glamor. Their work speaks to the importance of civic institutions to democracy. Namely, teaching kids and adults to read is a public good — it improves society by making it more educated and more politically engaged. Unfortunately, there were few issues more threatening to the hard-right in 2023.

Drag: The personification of pluralism

Drag is generally recognized as a satire of binary gender roles (the idea that men must always be masculine and women must always be feminine), and a send-up of strict adherence to the restrictions those roles place on everyone in society regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Both the term and its meaning (performing in clothing that may not match

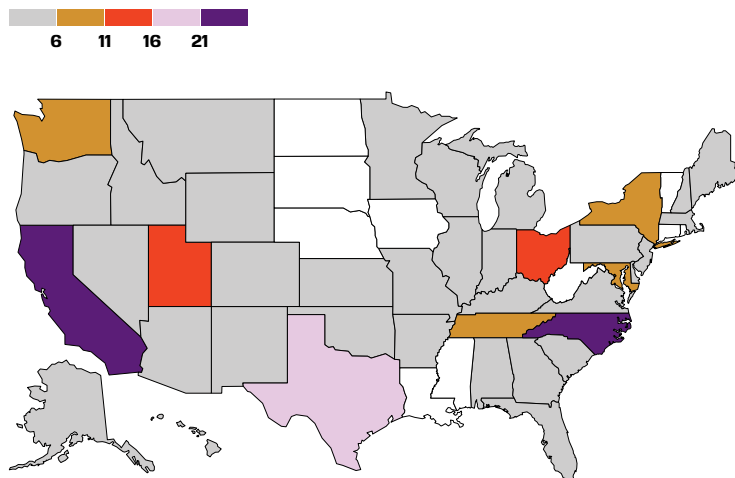
one’s gender identity) probably originated in the theater to describe cisgender male actors who were playing parts cisgender women were not allowed to. “Drag,” for example, was understood as a slang term with this meaning in the 19th century, according to Them magazine.

Throughout American history, the policing of gender roles has meant that people who do not always conform to the “male/masculine, woman/feminine” dichotomy in their gender expression (the way a person’s gender is perceived or expressed through “a person’s name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, voice, and/or behavior”) have been victimized by social and legal repression meant to force them to conform to society’s standards. “Masquerade laws,” for example, barred people from “appearing in public in disguise” in the 19th and 20th centuries and were generally enforced against people wearing fewer than three items of clothing in public that did not match their sex.

Tara “Lipsyncki” Lenae with their book at Mosaics Community Bookstore and Venue in Provo, Utah.

Observed Drag Event Protests

Instances of far-right protests at drag events were observed across multiple states in 2023, with demonstrations indicated if evidence was identified of their occurrence.



States with greater than six instances include California (21), Maryland (7), New York (8), North Carolina (26), Ohio (12), Tennessee (16), Texas (19), Utah (12), and Washington (6).

Evidence was not identified in Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and West Virginia.

Source: Southern Poverty Law Center

Throughout American history, the policing of gender roles has meant that people who do not always conform to the “male/masculine, woman/feminine” dichotomy in their gender expression have been victimized by social and legal repression meant to force them to conform to society’s standards.

In the decades since the 1969 Stonewall Uprising — during which LGBTQ+ people pushed back against police harassment and entrapment and the exploitation of LGBTQ+ people in New York City — drag has become a prominent feature of popular culture. According to [GLAAD](#), “drag performance is more popular than ever, and the term drag artist is being used to recognize that drag is an art form that is open to everyone.”

Drag performs an important role in American [democracy](#) in addition to its artistic value, according to Edward Kammerer, an associate professor of political science at Idaho State University who studies LGBTQ+ politics. From local artists and performers to international celebrities like RuPaul, drag artists “have a platform and an audience that can be used to educate people on the importance of voting and other forms of democratic engagement,” Kammerer said.

Along with helping facilitate education and political engagement, drag is a political statement, repre-

senting a visible challenge to sex- and gender-based discrimination. By upending the notion that women are inherently feminine and men are inherently masculine, for example, drag challenges long-held sexist notions that women are a “weaker sex” who should be subservient to men because they are only valuable for procreation.

Since many far-right ideologies are [premised on the subservience of women and restrictive notions of gender](#), drag offers a particularly devastating critique of the hard right by both personifying a more equitable worldview and exemplifying society’s acceptance of pluralism. Indeed, Kammerer notes, when drag falls under attack, local communities often counter-mobilize “to show why LGBTQ people, including drag performers, are an important part of the community.”

Enter Drag Story Hour

Drag Story Hour was “created by Michelle Tea and RADAR Productions, under the leadership of Julián Delgado Lopera and Virgie Tovar, in San Francisco in 2015,” according to the group’s website. Since then, the group has grown to more than 30 chapters in five countries. DSH builds on the successful concept of “[story hours](#),” popular since the turn of the 20th century, during which educators read books and stories aloud to children.

“Public libraries have been producing story hour events for over a hundred years,” said DSH program coordinator and grant writer Regan Lopez-deVictoria. “This is simply another variation, with glitter, made to reflect the diversity of the human experience,” she said. When asked to describe DSH, Los Angeles chapter director [Pickle](#) said, “It is just what it sounds like — drag performers reading to kids in libraries, bookstores, and all sorts of fun places.”

Tara Lipsyncki, executive director of DSH Intermountain West, echoes this sentiment: “Drag Story Hour is an amazing tool to encourage children to pick up a book and use their imagination.”

DSH events are often filled not only with whimsy and imagination, but also a deep sense of solidarity and commitment to helping entire communities flourish. “Ready or not, our children live in a world that is rich with color and sparkling with variation,” Lopez-deVictoria told the SPLC. “Kids build up their empathy muscles by looking through windows into lives that differ from their own.” Indeed, a [2020 study](#) in the journal *Curriculum Inquiry*, co-authored by DSH board member Lil Miss Hot Mess, suggests programs like Drag Story Hour help both “destigmatize



shame” associated with restrictive societal norms that make marginalized children feel like outsiders in their classrooms and foster “kinship” between students from diverse backgrounds.

By leveraging the talents of drag artists, DSH extends the educational and solidary benefits of literacy programs to adults, too. DSH board president David Boyles recounted hearing from one caregiver who was forced to disassociate with their unsupportive religious community after their child came out as trans. “They told me that coming to a DSH event was the first time since that traumatic experience that they felt like they once again had a community,” Boyles said.

Boyles characterizes DSH’s “focus on stories relevant to the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized groups” as a key component of the program because, more so than other literacy programs, DSH can “serve children and families who are often overlooked in more traditional early childhood literacy programs.”

A Violent Response: Legal and extra-legal attacks on drag

Sixty-eight of the nearly 200 anti-drag incidents the SPLC documented in 2023 specifically targeted events organized by Drag Story Hour. Based on available data, on average, the anti-drag demonstrations were attended by about three dozen people. In more than one-third of the cases where information is available, at least one hate or antigovernment group was involved.

Proud Boys — the hate group infamous for being represented at the deadly 2017 “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, and for attempting to prevent the peaceful transition of power on Jan. 6, 2021 — are the most common group in the dataset of incidents targeting DSH. At one event in Tempe, Arizona, in February 2023, a coffee shop was forced to end a story event early after a bomb threat was made against the business — with patrons, including children, in attendance. According to local reporting, “Police confirmed Proud Boys were ‘in the area’ when



Tara "Lipsyncki" Lenae poses in their empty home in the Salt Lake Valley. After being doxxed they moved out and put the home up for sale. This is also Tara's childhood home.

the incident happened but could not [get] inside the business.”

Both private and public venues are targeted by anti-drag extremists. In Arizona in 2023, DSH board president David Boyles was followed and harassed by two members of the far-right Turning Point USA for his work with DSH. The incident occurred on the campus of Arizona State University, the state’s largest public university, where Boyles teaches English. “Safety and security has been a major focus of my time and energy,” Boyles told the SPLC. That focus, Boyles says, can divert attention away from one of his primary goals for the organization, “expanding LGBTQ+ inclusive educational programs, which are still so lacking in most places,” he said.

A bomb threat also targeted a DSH event in Utah in September featuring Tara Lipsyncki. Lipsyncki also told the SPLC they have been targeted personally through online harassment and death threats. “This year has nearly broken me,” they said. Still, they said, “I would not change a single thing that I have done with Drag Story Hour.”

Among other hate groups that participated in anti-drag demonstrations targeting DSH in 2023 are the white nationalist National Justice Party, which targeted an event at First Lutheran Church in Nashville, Tennessee, on July 22; the antisemitic group Goyim Defense League, who hurled antisemitic slurs outside an event at Temple Beth Israel in Macon, Georgia, on June 23; and the anti-LGBTQ+ hate group Gays Against Groomers (GAG), a Wisconsin-based organization with chapters across the country that made amplifying anti-trans and anti-drag messaging key to its online and in-person activity. GAG’s North Carolina chapter claims to hold anti-drag protests targeting the same Monroe, North Carolina, restaurant every two weeks. GAG’s other chapters have participated in rallies with hate or antigovernment groups, including Proud Boys and members of the neo-Nazi group Blood Tribe.

According to Kammerer, this activity fits a pattern of “conservative resistance to visible signs of a pluralistic and accepting society,” noting that similar protests and violence came in the wake of other civil rights victories such as school desegregation, voting rights, women’s advancement in the workplace. In addition to reusing intimidation tactics from previous decades, the far right is recycling old tropes — including the “groomer” myth — to target contemporary LGBTQ+ inclusion. In February 2023, Maryland Proud Boys reportedly protested the children’s literacy

event with a sign that read: “Proud Boys love children. Proud Boys hate pedophiles.”

“Abstain if you object to Drag Story Hour,” Lopez-deVictoria said, “but if you think rhinestones or finger puppets or platform Crocs are innately sexual, that’s a bigger issue than a simple literacy program can address.”

Looking to the future

In addition to hate and antigovernment attacks against drag, far-right state and local governments have enacted new legislation to restrict such core democratic freedoms as expression and assembly in the name of stopping drag. Tennessee enacted the first such strict legislation in 2023. The law, signed by Gov. Bill Lee, assumes that all drag is sexually explicit and classifies drag in public as a form of “adult entertainment.” The law threatened to shutter Pride events featuring drag artists and drag story hours in the state until federal courts stopped the state from enforcing it. Florida passed a similar law in 2023, and some Pride celebrations planned in the state did not happen for fear of the legal consequences.

Despite the hate and violence, DSH is a successful and effective literacy program that helps build bridges and reinforce pluralistic and democratic values. “Parents are overjoyed to have a place to bring their kids that is not only educational but deeply impactful for their capacity to empathize and express themselves,” Pickle reflected. Boyles adds that he participates in DSH because “it combined two of my great passions: creating spaces for LGBTQ+ people, especially young people and their families, to feel safe and accepted; and promoting a love of reading.”

Lipsyncki says participating in DSH is also about carrying these values into the future. They participate “because children need to have their futures protected from those trying to take away their rights,” they said. “The entire library profession, arm-in-arm with parents, pediatricians, and early childhood educators, should be speaking out against the hostile debasing of this most-beloved of literacy programs,” Lopez-deVictoria says.

In the meantime, Pickle said, “I love it and will never stop!” ●

Jeff Tischauser and Emerson Hodges contributed to this report.

ANTI-GOVERNMENT MOVEMENT ADAPTS & GROWS

New Recruits

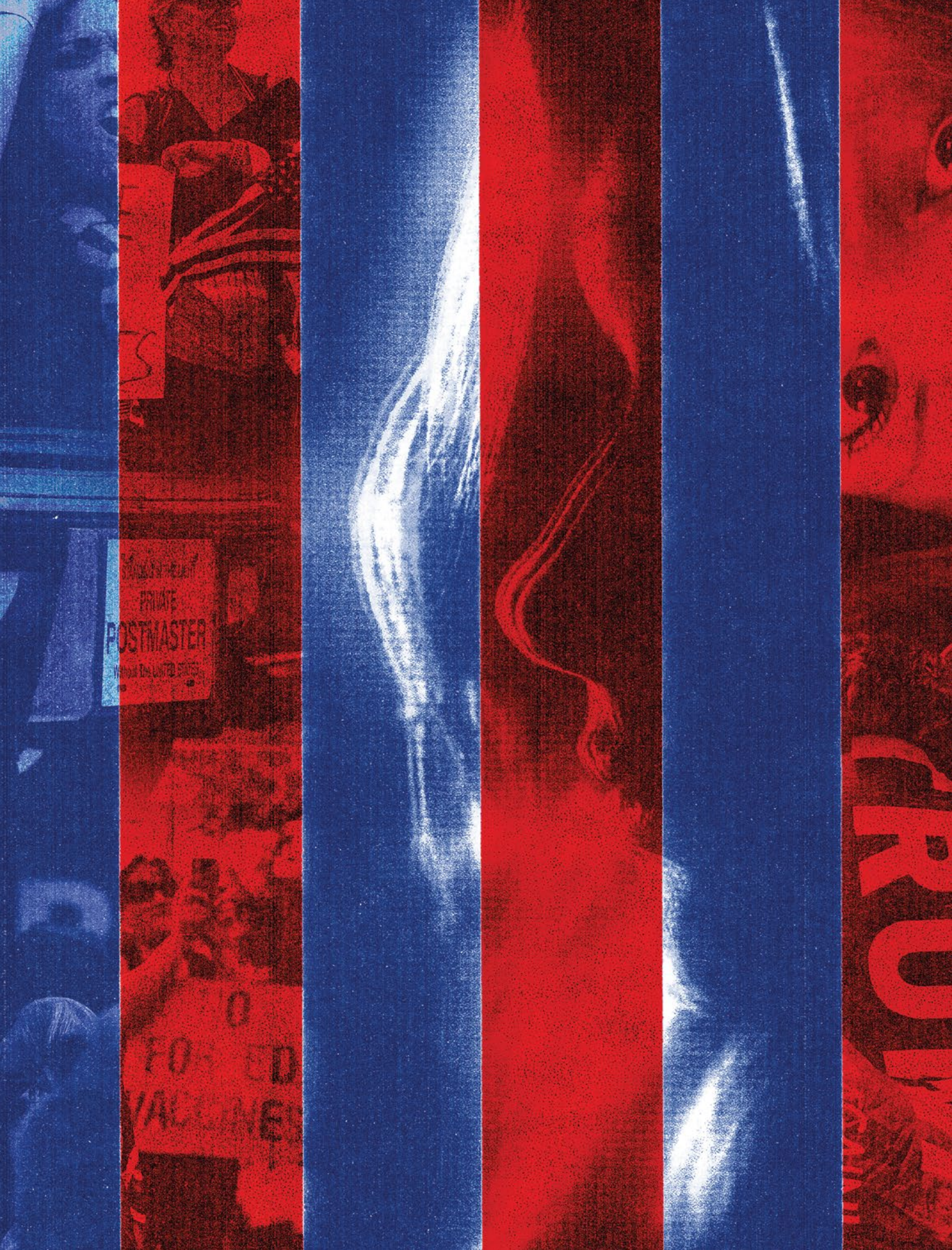
Sovereign Citizenship Takes Hold Among Younger, Affluent, Female Communities

By Rachel Goldwasser

The growth of the sovereign citizen movement, which the SPLC has documented over the years, is a growing threat to families, public officials and society. This conspiratorial ideology in which followers believe they are no longer active citizens of the United States, and so need not follow its laws, has grown and thrived amid the increase in disinformation during recent election cycles and a global health pandemic. For some, these events forged distrust in government and institutions, making them vulnerable to antigovernment conspiracy theories such as sovereign citizenship. This has shifted the demographics of American sovereign citizens, bringing in younger and more affluent members alongside longtime adherents. Sovereign citizen beliefs are also rapidly expanding outside the U.S.

In 2023, the SPLC documented 93 organized sovereign citizens groups across the country. The year 2023, and a few years preceding it, have shown a marked increase in sovereign citizen groups, especially those known as “American State Nationals” (ASNs) who are “helping grow the movement,” according to sovereign citizen expert Christine Sarteschi of Chatham University, author of “Sovereign Citizens: A Psychological and Criminological Analysis.”

Illustration by **Alicia Tatone**



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93

organized sovereign citizens groups across the United States were documented by the SPLC

52

groups operated in 2023 under the American State Nationals (ASN) umbrella

For decades, older men and women have dominated the movement, many of whom are rustic, hippies, fundamentally religious or fighting for Hawaiian independence. Joining them now is a new crop of young men, new-age and naturopathic moms, and more affluent individuals.

ASNs are a branch of sovereign citizens who refuse to identify themselves using the term “sovereigns” because of its association with extremist activity. However, these groups still use the same rhetoric and practices defined as sovereign citizenship and “are increasingly embracing QAnon/conspiratorial ideas,” according to Sarteschi.

The main organizations under the ASN umbrella are the American States Assembly, the National Assembly, American Meeting Group and ASN Study Guide & University. All these organizations have similar beliefs and are familiar with one another. However, none are the same and not all are friendly with each other. They operated at least 52 groups in 2023.

American Meeting Group is led by David Straight, Ron Gibson and Robert William, while ASN Study Guide & University is headed by Straight and Bobby Lawrence. Both are geared toward teaching Americans how to become sovereign citizens. The groups hold seminars and workshops across the U.S. sharing their version of American history and current events, which are mired in inaccuracies and conspiracy theories. These sessions cost \$100 per person or more, and some have attracted hundreds of people. Sarteschi noted that the group is also highlighting “quantum energy high frequency wellness beds” at their seminars, an idea that is in line with med beds, a product marketed based on a conspiracy theory that magical medical pods can cure all medical ailments. They also sell sovereign citizen-related merchandise and course materials.

In March 2023, Straight was removed from his position with longtime sovereign group Republic of Texas for selling ASN license plates. The group later accused Straight of making over \$179,400 from sales of the plates and 9-foot parcels of land in Texas. Straight and Lawrence attempted to crowdfund a feature film about sovereign citizenship that could radicalize many people into the movement.

Also in March, Chase Allen, whose family was a member of ASN Study Guide & University, was killed by police after he refused to comply with a traffic stop in Farmington, Utah. The sovereign groups National Assembly and American States Assembly recruit members by telling people they need to separate themselves from the U.S. government. They claim the federal government is a not-so-secret corporation, and the groups seek to create their own parallel governments called assemblies.

American States Assembly, led by Anna von Reitz, gained members across many U.S. states by exploit-



In this July 2, 2010, file photo, two vehicles with no registered license plates are parked outside an apartment complex in Columbus, Ohio. James T. McBride, a member of the Sovereign Citizens movement, owns the vehicles and claims he doesn't have to register them because the U.S. government has no authority over citizens.

ing QAnon, using its hashtags on the group's posts and videos. Groups that have exploited the QAnon phenomenon are often told by sovereigns that they must remove themselves from the "matrix" and protect themselves against the "deep state," according to Sarteschi. American States Assembly also welcomed new anti-vaccination adherents. Conspiracy theorists fueled many online campaigns claiming, without proof, that the government was being deceitful, and the vaccine was meant to kill the population rather than save it. The group has a strong online presence that has helped it reach a wide swath of the American population.

National Assembly, which has been run by prominent sovereigns Destry Payne aka Freewill and Roger Dowdell subscribed to the QAnon conspiracy theory and passed their beliefs along to the group's new and current members. The group's faith in Donald Trump grew stronger after they wrote him a letter in August 2019 and then believed he had agreed to their requests, due to their interpretation of a series of numeric codes, Twitter posts by Trump, timed segments on the Laura Ingraham show and quotes from actor

Charlie Sheen. This helped to solidify membership among supporters of former President Trump and "The Big Lie." The group also used video and rhetoric by antisemitic tax protester Red Beckman and 1980s actor Kirk Cameron to recruit new members who related to these figures.

For decades, older men and women have dominated the movement, many of whom are rustic, hippies, fundamentally religious or fighting for Hawaiian independence. Joining them now is a new crop of young men, new-age and naturopathic moms, and more affluent individuals. These new recruits are joining sovereign groups and participating in their extremist activities.

This growth in sovereign citizenship is not only a problem nationally but internationally. "What struck me," said Joe McIntyre, a University of South Australia associate professor of law, after holding a 2023 summit on sovereign citizens, "was how common these problems were around the globe. Germany, England, North America, Canada and us [Australia], this is a global movement now, and it is causing harm all around the globe." ●



Continued Insurrection Fallout Forces Militias To Adapt

By Travis McAdam

The U.S. militia movement is a fragment of what it once was. Not many years ago, veterans and first responders, often joined by weekend wannabe combat warriors and even elected officials, were arming up under the Oath Keepers banner. Chapters of Oath Keepers and other national militia groups sprouted across the country. Then came the insurrection of Jan. 6, 2021, and its aftermath.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) identified 52 active militia groups throughout the United States in 2023, a decline from 61 in 2022. This decrease stems from continued fallout from the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection. More than 1,200 people faced charges for their actions on Jan. 6. Over 80 of them were either members of identified antigovernment organizations or said to be motivated by the movement's conspiracies.

The antigovernment movement is a conspiratorial movement focused on disputing the authority of both state and federal governments. It is composed of sub-ideologies, each using a different tactic to challenge the legitimacy of government. The militia movement acts as the paramilitary arm.

Militias were integral to the insurrection and have faced the consequences. The Oath Keepers militia helped orchestrate Jan. 6, and about 20 followers have been convicted for their insurrectionist activities. This included the sentence handed down in 2023 to the group’s leader and founder, Stewart Rhodes. He received 18 years in prison for seditious conspiracy. Oath Keepers is a shell of what it once was, going from 79 active militia chapters in 2021 to 10 in 2023.

Back to local roots

The national structure that such militias as Oath Keepers and Three Percenters used proved a liability in the law enforcement crackdown after Jan. 6. This resulted in many militias reverting to a local/regional structure used in past decades.

Locally structured militias often portray themselves as benign entities training to help communities during emergencies. Their trainings, however, often feature followers who are heavily armed and sport specialized military-style tactical gear. These combat trainings are illustrative of their ideology, as they see themselves as engaged in an inevitable battle with one-world government forces.

This intentional disconnect between their public messaging and actual purpose isn’t new. John Trochmann, a leader of the 1990s militia movement, once told Congress that militias were merely versions of a neighborhood watch. That type of deliberate misdirection continued through Oath Keepers leader Rhodes, who repeatedly said his militia was about emergency preparedness, even as he planned an insurrection.

The Oath Keepers field trainings provide a good example of this deception. Training attendees would spend a short time talking about first aid and the rest of the time engaging in combat training. As former Oath Keeper Jason Van Tatenhove told the SPLC, 99% of trainings were “down-and-dirty warfighting taught by actual warfighters that had done it.” He said the trainings were pitched as community preparedness, because Rhodes wanted to avoid being labeled “the ‘M word’ or the militia.” While inaccurate euphemisms have always been used, current militia efforts are recycling these public relations games.

While these local militias haven’t reformed under a single nationwide banner, like Oath Keepers, they aren’t always acting in isolation. Militia members communicate in unregulated online forums and through old-fashioned radios, and they come together to train. An example is the formation of the Overmountain

Men. This is an “alliance” among four militias around Tennessee, West Virginia, South Carolina and North Carolina; they have however, included a Vermont militia and an Arizona one as well. The local/regional model doesn’t mean operating in a vacuum.

The ghost of Oklahoma City

2023 found the militia movement in transition. Law-enforcement arrests and successful prosecutions caused a decrease in numbers. Similar to the years following the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing by militia adherents, increased law enforcement pressure, along with more public scrutiny, caused a decline in the movement.

Many predicted the end of militias following Oklahoma City, and yet more than two decades later, Jan. 6 flashed on TV screens as democracy was under attack. A decrease in numbers doesn’t mean an end to militia ideas that motivate members and recruits. While Rhodes’ Oath Keepers organization continues unraveling, a Utah group led by remaining leaders is taking up the banner. Oath Keepers USA says it will uphold “the original spirit” of Rhodes’ organization.

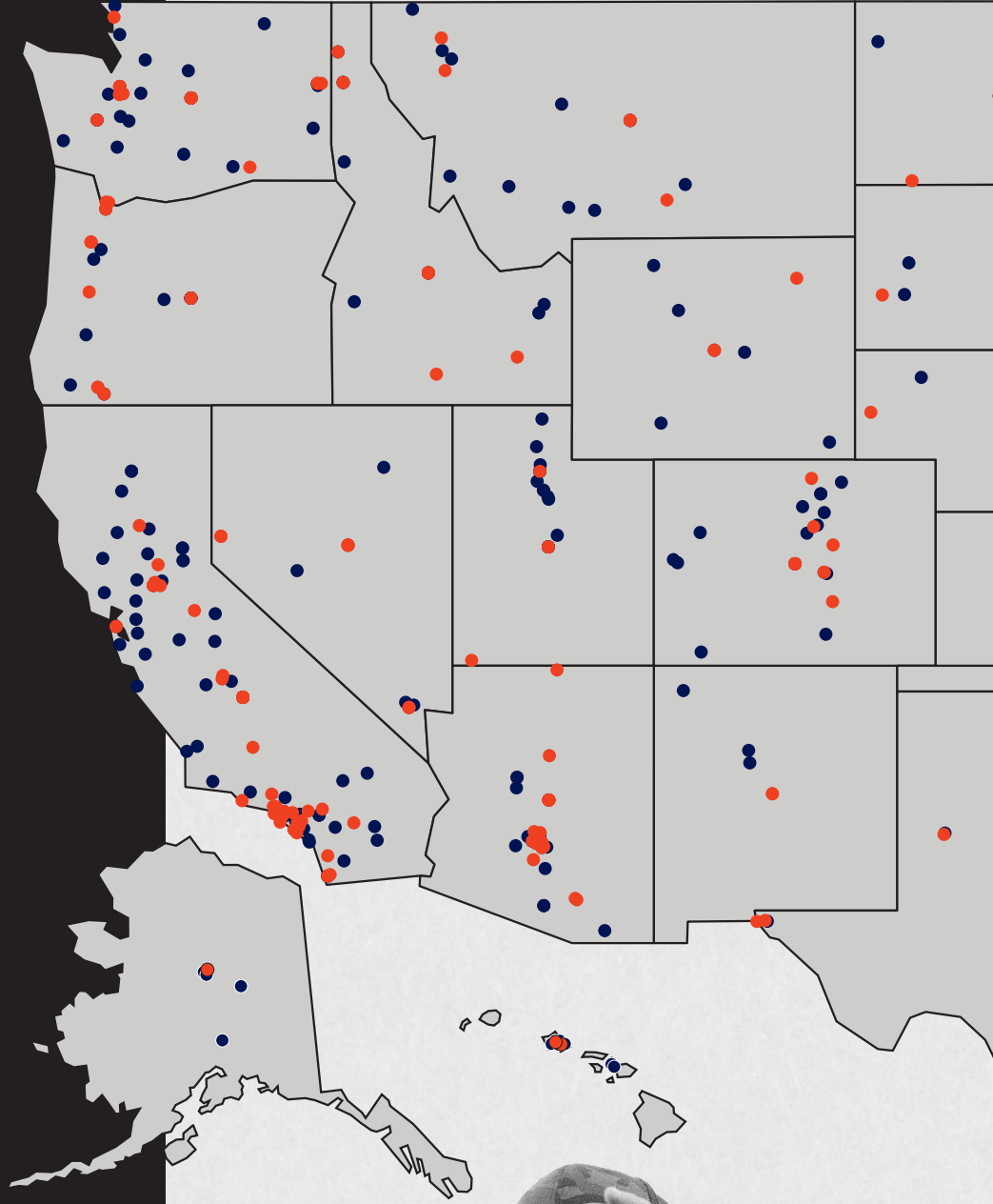
While returning to a more local/regional structure is a strategic decision for militias, it also reflects a broader trend of extremists seeking to build political power at the local level. Creators of the modern militia movement of the 1980s and 1990s wanted it to interact easily with the conservative mainstream, meaning it would continue to change and transform over time to meet various challenges and opportunities. Jan. 6 fallout has greatly affected the movement, but it is adapting to stay relevant and rebuild. Communities and leaders must remain vigilant and push back with all the tools at their disposal, from policy and law enforcement to community organizing and education. ●

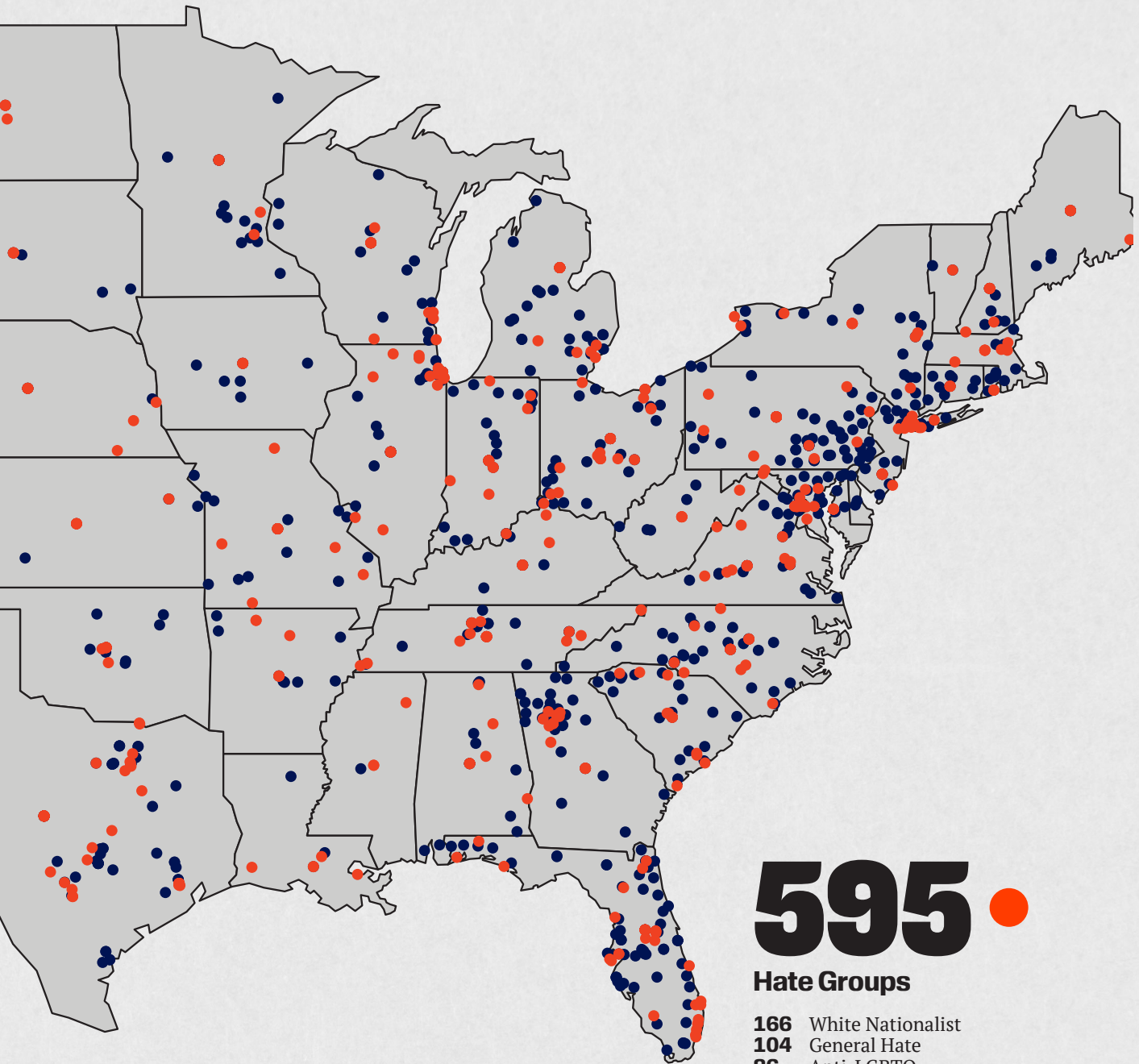
Disguised behind a neighborhood watch sign, armed militia members blend in, masking their true allegiance with concealed weapons and, in the case of so-called “constitutional sheriffs,” even badges. The illustration unveils the deceptive facade of some militia members, who operate within communities while harboring antigovernment sentiments and paramilitary affiliations.



Report citations and references for each essay can be found online by scanning the QR code or visiting splcenter.org

ACTIVE HATE & ANTI-GOVERNMENT GROUPS





835 ●

Antigovernment Groups

- 634** General Antigovernment
- 93** Sovereign Citizens
- 52** Militia
- 50** Conspiracy Propagandist
- 6** Constitutional Sheriffs

595 ●

Hate Groups

- 166** White Nationalist
- 104** General Hate
- 86** Anti-LGBTQ
- 59** Neo-Nazi
- 43** Neo-Völkisch
- 34** Anti-Muslim
- 20** Antisemitism
- 18** Anti-Immigrant
- 12** Racist Skinhead
- 11** Hate Music
- 10** Ku Klux Klan
- 10** Christian Identity
- 9** Male Supremacy
- 8** Radical Traditional Catholicism
- 5** Neo-Confederate



Explore our interactive Hate Map by scanning the QR code or by visiting splcenter.org/hate-map

Extremist Ideologies and Definitions

Hate Groups

Anti-immigrant hate groups are the most extreme of the hundreds of nativist and vigilante groups that have proliferated since the late 1990s, when anti-immigrant xenophobia began to rise to levels not seen in the U.S. since the 1920s.

A central theme of **anti-LGBTQ** organizing and ideology is the opposition to LGBTQ rights or support of homophobia, heterosexism and/or cisnormativity often expressed through demonizing rhetoric and grounded in harmful pseudoscience that portrays LGBTQ people as threats to children, society and often public health.

Anti-Muslim hate groups broadly defame Islam and traffic in conspiracy theories of Muslims being a subversive threat to the nation. These groups largely appeared after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and mix racism and anti-immigrant ideas. Their rise breeds a climate of fear, hate and intimidation directed toward Muslims or those perceived to be Muslim.

Antisemitic hate groups seek to racialize Jewish people and vilify them as the manipulative puppet masters behind an economic, political and social scheme to undermine white people. Antisemitism also undergirds much of the far right, unifying adherents across various extremist ideologies around efforts to subvert and misconstrue the collective suffering of Jewish people in the Holocaust and cast them as conniving opportunists.

Christian Identity is an antisemitic, racist theology that rose to a position of commanding influence on the racist right in the 1980s. “Christian” in name only, it asserts that white people, not Jewish people, are the true Israelites favored by God in the Bible. The movement’s relationship with evangelicals and fundamentalists has generally been hostile due to the latter’s belief that the return of Jewish people to Israel is essential to the fulfillment of end-time prophecy.

General hate groups in this category peddle a combination of well-known hate and conspiracy theories, in addition to unique bigotries that are not easily categorized. Several of the groups seek to profit off their bigotry by selling hate materials from several different sectors of the white supremacist movement.

Hate music groups are typically music labels that record, publish and distribute racist music of a variety of genres along with products that promote their hateful, often terroristic worldview.

The **Ku Klux Klan**, with its long history of violence, is the oldest and most infamous of American hate groups. Although Black Americans have typically been the Klan’s primary target, adherents also attack Jewish people, persons who have immigrated to the United States, and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Male supremacy is a hateful ideology rooted in the belief of the innate superiority of cisgender men and their right to subjugate women, trans people, and nonbinary people. While male supremacy is often seen as secondary to other hateful ideologies — if it is seen at all — it is important to recognize it as a toxic and dangerous ideology in and of itself.

Neo-Confederacy is a reactionary, revisionist branch of American white nationalism typified by its predilection for symbols of the Confederate States of America, typically paired with a strong belief in the validity of the failed doctrines of nullification and secession — in the specific context of the antebellum South — that rose to prominence in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Neo-Nazi groups share a hatred for Jews and a love for Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany. While they also hate nonwhite people, LGBTQ people and even sometimes Christians, they perceive “the Jew” as their cardinal enemy.

Born out of an atavistic defiance of modernity and rationalism, present-day **neo-Völkisch**, or Folkish, adherents and groups are organized around ethnocentricity and archaic notions of gender.

For “**radical traditionalist**” Catholics, antisemitism is an inextricable part of their theology. They subscribe to an ideology that is rejected by the Vatican and some 70 million mainstream American Catholics.

Racist skinheads have long been among the most violent-minded elements of the white power movement. During the 1980s, 1990s and the mid-2000s, particularly, the movement rose to prominence through the lucrative, international hate music scene. The movement has shrunk steadily since.

White nationalist groups espouse white supremacist or white separatist ideologies, often focusing on the alleged inferiority of people of color. They frequently claim that white people are unfairly persecuted by society and even the victims of a racial genocide. Their primary goal is to create a white ethnostate. Groups listed in a variety of other categories, including Ku Klux Klan, neo-Confederate, neo-Nazi, racist skinhead and Christian Identity, could also be fairly described as white nationalist.

Antigovernment Groups

Antigovernment groups are part of the antidemocratic hard-right movement. They believe the federal government is tyrannical, and they traffic in conspiracy theories about an illegitimate government of leftist elites seeking a “New World Order.” In addition to groups that generally espouse these ideas, the movement is composed of sovereign citizens, militias, overt conspiracy propagandists and constitutional sheriff groups. In the past, this movement was referred to as the “Patriot” movement by adherents and critics.

Conspiracy propagandist groups aim to delegitimize government institutions or government officials by stoking fears concerning door-to-door gun confiscations, martial law, supposed takeover of the U.S. by the “New World Order” and anxieties around the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

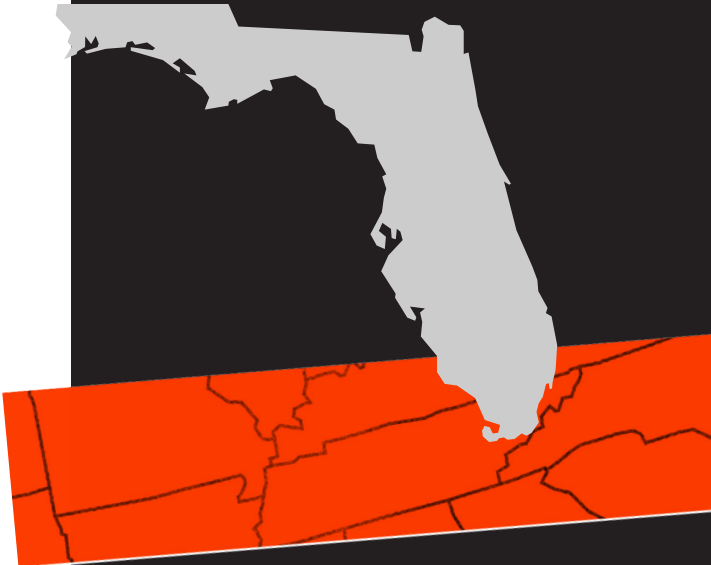
The origins of **constitutional sheriff** ideology lie in the two concepts of the county supremacy movement: The county — not the state or federal governments — should control all land within its borders, and the county sheriff should be the ultimate law enforcement authority in the U.S. These ideas were pioneered by Christian Identity minister William Potter Gale in the 1970s and described as “Posse Comitatus.”

Militia groups are characterized by their obsession with field training exercises (FTXs), guns, uniforms typically resembling those worn in the armed forces and a warped interpretation of the Second Amendment. Antigovernment militia groups engage in firearm training and maintain internal hierarchical command structures.

The **Moorish sovereign citizen movement** is a collection of independent organizations and individuals that emerged in the early 1990s as an offshoot of the antigovernment sovereign citizens movement, adherents of which believe that individual citizens hold sovereignty over, and are independent of, the authority of federal and state governments.



For more information scan the QR code or visit spicenter.org/hate-groups-faq



Hate and Antigovernment Groups by State and Region

Each year since 1990, the SPLC has published an annual census of hate and antigovernment groups in the United States. The number is one barometer of the level of hard-right activity in the country. The map depicts approximate locations and is the result of a year of monitoring.

The SPLC tracks both hate groups and antigovernment extremist groups — which, combined, make up some of the most extreme elements of the hard right. These groups often overlap, work alongside one another and often converge around a willingness to engage in political violence, either inflict or accept harm, and deny legally established rights to historically oppressed groups of people.

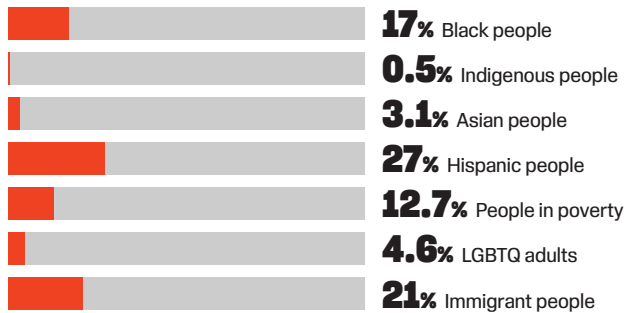
In 1981, the SPLC created Klanwatch to monitor Ku Klux Klan activity. The information was used in groundbreaking legal cases. Renamed the Intelligence Project in 1998, the reporting continues to be rooted in the experiences of communities, especially in the South. This closer look at the Deep South shines a light on a place still beset by hate but is also practiced in using information to forge a path of transformation to reverse the tide of white nationalism.

State of Hate in **FLORIDA**

Florida had the second highest number of hate and antigovernment groups in the U.S. The groups used various tactics from direct-action protest and flyering to political action and local organizing. They also covered a range of ideological affiliations from overtly bigoted neo-Nazi and anti-immigrant organizations to those pushing election conspiracies and mobilizing the anti-student inclusion efforts. Florida acted as the Southern base and headquarters for many national hate and anti-government groups.

43	Hate	3	Skinhead
1	Anti-Immigrant	5	White Nationalist
7	Anti-LGBTQ	71	Antigovernment
4	Anti-Muslim	58	Antigovernment General
3	Antisemitism	5	Conspiracy Propagandist
1	Christian Identity	1	Militia
9	General Hate	7	Sovereign Citizen
1	Neo-Confederate		
8	Neo-Nazi		
1	neo-Völkisch		

The Landscape

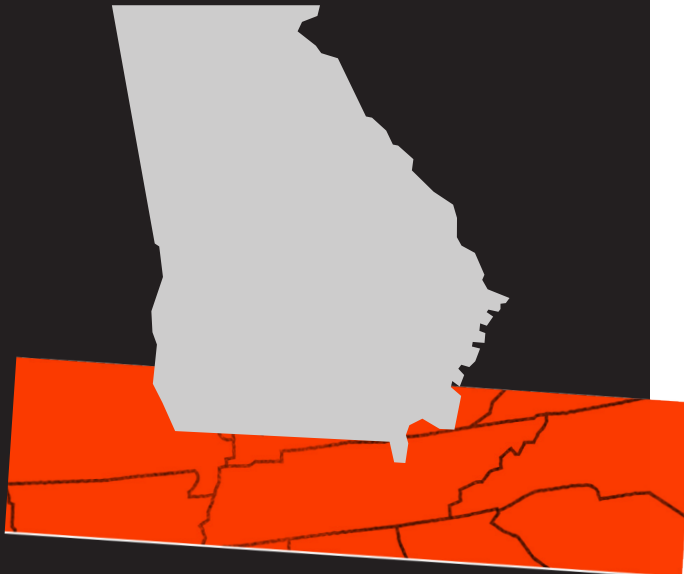


Groups

- 2119 Blood and Soil Crew
- ActionUp America
- America First Foundation
- America Project
- American College of Pediatricians
- American Patriots Three Percent
- American States Assembly
- Aryan Freedom Network
- Asatru Folk Assembly
- Bill Keller Ministries
- Blood Tribe
- Christogenea
- Citizens Defending Freedom
- Citizens for National Security
- Cultures In Context Incorporated/
Turning Point Project
- D. James Kennedy Ministries
- Dixieland Nationalists
- Firm 22
- Florida Family Association
- Florida Family Policy Council
- Florida Parents Involved in Education
- Floridians for Immigration Enforcement
- Freedom Law School
- Goyim Defense League
- Gun Owners of America
- KrisAnne Hall
- League of the South
- Liberty Counsel
- Liberty First University
- Liberty Hangout
- Moms for America
- Moms for Liberty
- Money Tree Publishing
- Nation of Islam
- Nation of Kings and Priests
- National Assembly
- National Justice Party
- National Socialist Movement
- NatSoc Florida
- New Columbia Movement
- No Left Turn in Education
- Order of the Black Sun
- Pacific Justice Institute
- Patriot Front
- Proud Boys in
- Reign of the Heavens Society
- Revival Baptist Church
- Righteous Army
- Sarasota Patriots
- Statewide Common Law Grand Jury
- Stay in the Light Stay in the Fight
- Stormfront
- Tactical Civics
- TruNews
- Uncle Sam’s Misguided Children
- United Skinhead Nation
- United West
- Vinland Rebels
- Vinlanders Social Club
- We Are Change
- Wild Bill for America
- Women Fighting for America

Incidents

- 116 hate-flyering incidents
- There were 33 attempts to ban public library books, including 2,672 titles.
- In June, anti-student inclusion group Moms for Liberty held its national convention in Florida.
- In November, a leader of an antisemitic group Goyim Defense League faced charges related to distributing flyers to private residences. In late February, the leader also harassed a Jewish gathering with Hitler salutes and antisemitic comments referencing the Holocaust.
- In July, the Florida State Guard became a state-sanctioned militia entity praised by hard-right extremists.

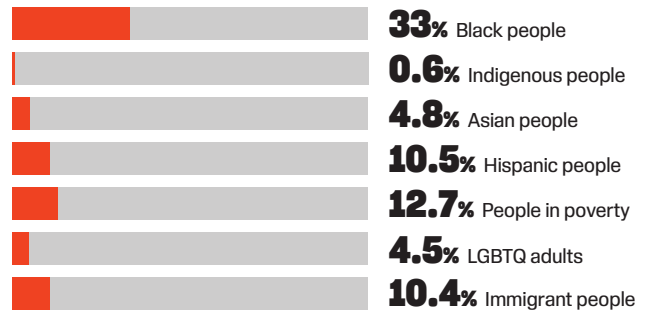


State of Hate in **GEORGIA**

With 49 combined hate and antigovernment groups in the state, Georgia faced some of the more violent edge of the white nationalist movement, including activists engaged in fight training. Militia groups that had taken a step back since Jan. 6, 2021, reestablished themselves in Georgia, while conspiracy propagandist groups like the John Birch Society continued their steady presence.

15	Hate	34	Antigovernment
1	Anti-Immigrant	28	Antigovernment General
4	Anti-LGBTQ	1	Conspiracy Propagandist
1	Antisemitism	1	Militia
1	Christian Identity	4	Sovereign Citizen
1	General Hate		
1	neo-Völkisch		
6	White Nationalist		

The Landscape



Groups

- Active Club
- American States Assembly
- American Vision
- Asatru Folk Assembly
- Child and Parent Rights Campaign
- Citizens Defending Freedom
- Constitution Party
- Covenant People's Ministry
- Discount Book Distributors/The Patriot Depot
- Dustin Inman Society
- Education Veritas
- Frontline Policy Council
- Georgia Parents Involved in Education
- III% Security Force
- John Birch Society
- Moms for Liberty
- Moorish Science Temple of America 1928
- Nation of Islam
- National Assembly
- National Justice Party
- New Columbia Movement
- Occidental Quarterly/Charles Martel Society
- Patriot Front
- Proud Boys
- Sovereign Filing Solutions
- Strong Hold Baptist Church
- Tactical Civics
- Truth in Education
- William McKinley Institute

Incidents

- 106 hate-flyering incidents
- There were 18 attempts to ban public library books, including 77 titles
- In April, a Georgia teen was charged after he allegedly made bomb threats on X, former known as Twitter, to a local synagogue

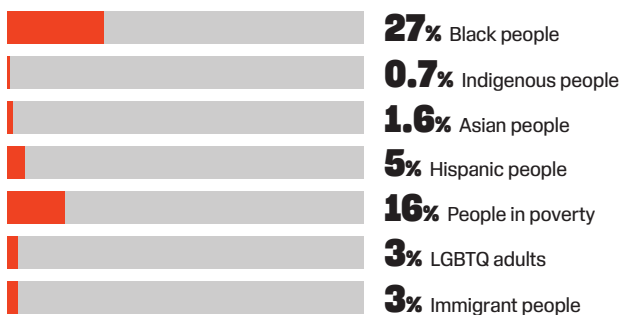


State of Hate in ALABAMA

While the number of groups in Alabama remains small, Alabamians were subjected to hateful threats, flyers, protests and gatherings that attempted to intimidate and harass a community actively working to build a more inclusive state.

8	Hate	12	Antigovernment
1	Ku Klux Klan	6	Antigovernment General
1	Male Supremacy	2	Conspiracy Propagandist
2	Neo-Confederate	1	Militia
1	neo-Völkisch	3	Sovereign Citizen
3	White Nationalist		

The Landscape

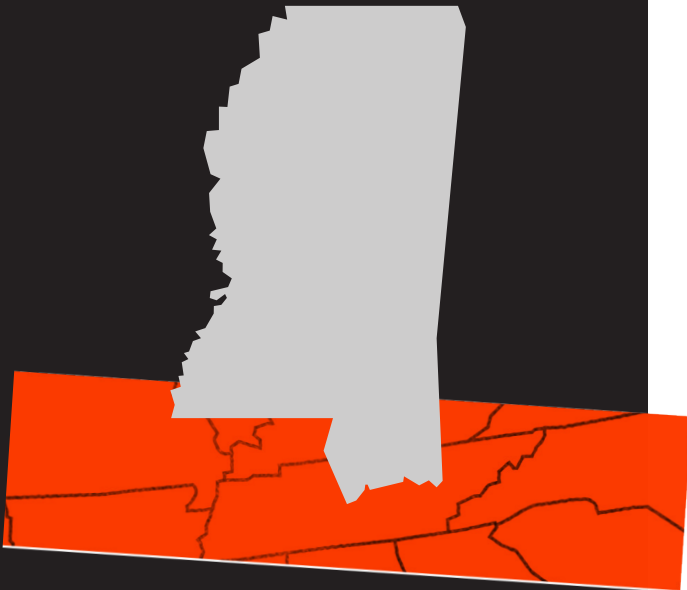


Groups

- Active Club
- Alabama Parents Involved in Education
- Asatru Folk Assembly
- Church of the Keystone Knights of the Ku Klux Klan
- Eagle Forum
- Incels
- League of the South
- LewRockwell.com
- Moms for Liberty
- Occidental Dissent
- Patriot Front
- Southern Cultural Center

Incidents

- 120 hate flyering incidents
- There were 12 attempts to ban public library books, including 74 titles
- In June, masked Patriot Front members targeted Prattville's first-ever Pride picnic with hate signs and chants
- In May, white nationalists from Patriot Front hacked a road sign on Interstate 65 near Clanton with hate slogans
- In August, speakers from white nationalist groups that support anti-black eugenics gathered for the second annual neo-Confederate conference in Wetumpka
- In October, Jewish houses of worship in Montgomery, Dothan, Auburn, Mobile and Birmingham received bomb threat

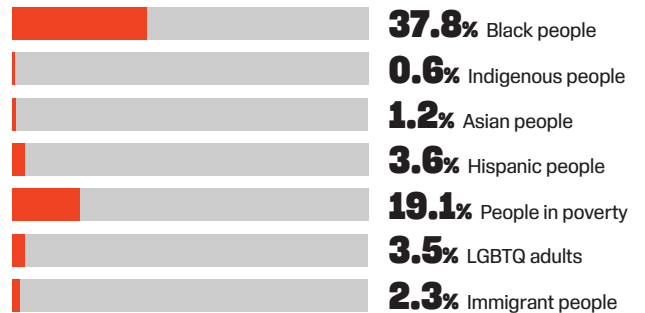


State of Hate in **MISSISSIPPI**

Mississippi had the fewest number of hate and antigovernment groups in the region. Groups like Moms for Liberty focused their strategy on the political process, including joining anti-LGBTQ activist Matt Walsh for an anti-transgender bill signing. Mississippi was also littered with hate flyers, banners, stickers and large road signs by two white nationalist groups using false patriotic language and conspiracies.

3	Hate	1	Antigovernment
1	Anti-LGBTQ	1	Antigovernment General
2	White Nationalist		

The Landscape



Groups

- American Family Association
- Moms for Liberty
- National Justice Party
- Patriot Front

Incidents

- 185 hate flyering incidents
- Two attempts to ban public library books, including 15 titles
- In March, white nationalist activists with the group Patriot Front filmed a few hours of clean-up efforts for a white Mississippi family affected by the tornado. The group used the video footage for propaganda and recruitment, taking advantage of the natural disaster

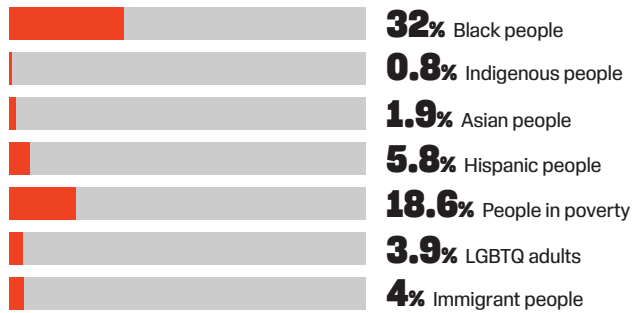


State of Hate in LOUISIANA

Hard-right activity in Louisiana was emblematic of 2023 activity across the U.S. Louisiana’s local chapter of Act for America, the nation’s largest anti-Muslim organization, mimicked fellow chapters and reemerged in fall in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war. American States Assembly, the second largest sovereign citizen organization in the U.S., maintained a chapter in Louisiana amid a growing movement that is flush with false conspiracies.

5	Hate	3	Antigovernment
2	Anti-LGBTQ	1	Antigovernment General
1	Anti-Muslim	2	Sovereign Citizen
2	White Nationalist		

The Landscape



Groups

- ACT for America
- American States Assembly
- Empire Washitaw de Dugdahmoundyah
- Louisiana Family Forum
- Moms for Liberty
- National Justice Party
- Patriot Front
- Ruth Institute

Incidents

- 117 Hate flyering incidents
- Three attempts to ban public library books, including 24 titles
- In May, homes in New Orleans were littered with little packages filled with hate messages
- In August, the white nationalist group Patriot Front targeted the predominantly Black city of Baton Rouge with large banners using coded nationalist language

South & Southwest

ARIZONA

- 18 Hate**
- 5 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 4 General Hate
 - 1 Male Supremacy
 - 2 Neo-Nazi
 - 2 neo-Völkisch
 - 5 White Nationalist

20 Antigovernment

- 9 Antigovernment General
- 2 Conspiracy Propagandist
- 3 Constitutional Sheriff
- 5 Militia
- 1 Sovereign Citizen

KENTUCKY

- 8 Hate**
- 1 Christian Identity
 - 2 General Hate
 - 1 Ku Klux Klan
 - 1 Neo-Nazi
 - 1 neo-Völkisch
 - 2 White Nationalist

10 Antigovernment

- 8 Antigovernment General
- 2 Sovereign Citizen

NEW MEXICO

- 2 Hate**
- 2 White Nationalist
- 3 Antigovernment**
- 3 Antigovernment General

NORTH CAROLINA

- 16 Hate**
- 2 Anti-Immigrant
 - 1 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 1 Antisemitism
 - 6 General Hate
 - 1 Ku Klux Klan
 - 1 Neo-Confederate
 - 1 neo-Völkisch
 - 3 White Nationalist

34 Antigovernment

- 25 Antigovernment General
- 5 Militia
- 4 Sovereign Citizen

OKLAHOMA

- 7 Hate**
- 1 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 1 General Hate
 - 1 Male Supremacy
 - 1 Neo-Nazi
 - 1 neo-Völkisch
 - 2 White Nationalist

10 Antigovernment

- 9 Antigovernment General
- 1 Sovereign Citizen

SOUTH CAROLINA

- 13 Hate**
- 1 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 1 Antisemitism
 - 2 General Hate
 - 1 Neo-Confederate
 - 2 neo-Völkisch
 - 6 White Nationalist
- 20 Antigovernment**
- 18 Antigovernment General
 - 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
 - 1 Sovereign Citizen

TENNESSEE

- 22 Hate**
- 2 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 2 Anti-Muslim
 - 1 Christian Identity
 - 4 General Hate
 - 2 Ku Klux Klan
 - 3 Neo-Nazi
 - 1 neo-Völkisch
 - 1 Skinhead
 - 6 White Nationalist

15 Antigovernment

- 14 Antigovernment General
- 1 Militia

TEXAS

- 39 Hate**
- 3 Anti-Immigrant
 - 5 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 4 Anti-Muslim
 - 3 Antisemitism
 - 9 General Hate
 - 1 Hate Music
 - 1 Male Supremacy
 - 4 Neo-Nazi
 - 1 neo-Völkisch
 - 1 Radical Traditional Catholicism
 - 7 White Nationalist
- 58 Antigovernment**
- 45 Antigovernment General
 - 7 Conspiracy Propagandist
 - 1 Constitutional Sheriff
 - 3 Militia
 - 2 Sovereign Citizen

Midwest

ARKANSAS

- 6 Hate**
- 1 Christian Identity
 - 1 Ku Klux Klan
 - 1 neo-Völkisch
 - 3 White Nationalist
- 9 Antigovernment**
- 9 Antigovernment General

ILLINOIS

- 19 Hate**
- 6 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 1 Antisemitism
 - 1 Christian Identity
 - 2 General Hate
 - 1 Hate Music
 - 1 Ku Klux Klan
 - 1 Male Supremacy
 - 1 neo-Völkisch
 - 1 Skinhead
 - 4 White Nationalist
- 20 Antigovernment**
- 16 Antigovernment General
 - 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
 - 3 Sovereign Citizen

INDIANA

- 12 Hate**
- 2 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 2 General Hate
 - 1 Ku Klux Klan
 - 1 Neo-Nazi
 - 2 neo-Völkisch
 - 1 Radical Traditional Catholicism
 - 3 White Nationalist
- 19 Antigovernment**
- 15 Antigovernment General
 - 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
 - 1 Militia
 - 2 Sovereign Citizen

IOWA

- 3 Hate**
- 1 Neo-Nazi
 - 2 White Nationalist
- 7 Antigovernment**
- 5 Antigovernment General
 - 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
 - 1 Sovereign Citizen

KANSAS

- 6 Hate**
- 1 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 1 General Hate
 - 1 neo-Völkisch
 - 3 White Nationalist
- 4 Antigovernment**
- 3 Antigovernment General
 - 1 Conspiracy Propagandist

MICHIGAN

- 12 Hate**
- 1 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 1 Anti-Muslim
 - 1 Antisemitism
 - 1 General Hate
 - 3 Neo-Nazi
 - 5 White Nationalist
- 24 Antigovernment**
- 19 Antigovernment General
 - 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
 - 3 Militia
 - 1 Sovereign Citizen

MINNESOTA

- 6 Hate**
- 1 General Hate
 - 1 Male Supremacy
 - 1 neo-Völkisch
 - 1 Radical Traditional Catholicism
 - 2 White Nationalist
- 16 Antigovernment**
- 12 Antigovernment General
 - 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
 - 3 Sovereign Citizen

MISSOURI

- 12 Hate**
- 2 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 1 Anti-Muslim
 - 1 Christian Identity
 - 2 General Hate
 - 1 Neo-Nazi
 - 1 neo-Völkisch
 - 4 White Nationalist
- 15 Antigovernment**
- 10 Antigovernment General
 - 2 Militia
 - 3 Sovereign Citizen

NEBRASKA

- 8 Hate**
- 1 Anti-Muslim
 - 1 Christian Identity
 - 1 Hate Music
 - 2 Neo-Nazi
 - 1 neo-Völkisch
 - 2 White Nationalist
- 5 Antigovernment**
- 5 Antigovernment General

NORTH DAKOTA

- 5 Hate**
- 1 General Hate
 - 2 neo-Völkisch
 - 2 White Nationalist
- 2 Antigovernment**
- 2 Antigovernment General

OHIO

- 23 Hate**
- 5 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 1 Anti-Muslim
 - 1 Christian Identity
 - 5 General Hate
 - 1 Hate Music
 - 5 Neo-Nazi
 - 2 neo-Völkisch
 - 3 White Nationalist
- 27 Antigovernment**
- 19 Antigovernment General
 - 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
 - 6 Militia
 - 1 Sovereign Citizen

SOUTH DAKOTA

- 5 Hate**
- 1 General Hate
 - 1 Neo-Nazi
 - 1 neo-Völkisch
 - 2 White Nationalist
- 7 Antigovernment**
- 5 Antigovernment General
 - 2 Sovereign Citizen

WISCONSIN

- 12 Hate**
- 3 Anti-LGBTQ
 - 1 Hate Music
 - 1 Male Supremacy
 - 2 Neo-Nazi
 - 2 neo-Völkisch
 - 3 White Nationalist
- 16 Antigovernment**
- 13 Antigovernment General
 - 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
 - 2 Sovereign Citizen

Mid-Atlantic

DELAWARE

- 3 Antigovernment**
 2 Antigovernment General
 1 Militia

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- 11 Hate**
 4 Anti-Immigrant
 1 Anti-LGBTQ
 2 Anti-Muslim
 1 Antisemitism
 1 General Hate
 2 White Nationalist
- 2 Antigovernment**
 1 Antigovernment General
 1 Conspiracy Propagandist

MARYLAND

- 10 Hate**
 1 Anti-Immigrant
 1 Antisemitism
 3 General Hate
 1 Neo-Nazi
 1 Radical Traditional Catholicism
 3 White Nationalist
- 15 Antigovernment**
 13 Antigovernment General
 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
 1 Sovereign Citizen

PENNSYLVANIA

- 20 Hate**
 2 Anti-LGBTQ
 1 Antisemitism
 1 General Hate
 1 Hate Music
 1 Ku Klux Klan
 3 Neo-Nazi
 1 neo-Völkisch
 2 Skinhead
 8 White Nationalist
- 57 Antigovernment**
 48 Antigovernment General
 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
 1 Constitutional Sheriff
 4 Militia
 3 Sovereign Citizen

VIRGINIA

- 17 Hate**
 1 Anti-Immigrant
 4 Anti-LGBTQ
 2 General Hate
 1 Ku Klux Klan
 1 Male Supremacy
 2 neo-Völkisch
 6 White Nationalist
- 28 Antigovernment**
 20 Antigovernment General
 1 Constitutional Sheriff
 5 Militia
 2 Sovereign Citizen

Mountain West

COLORADO

- 13 Hate**
 1 Anti-Immigrant
 4 Anti-LGBTQ
 1 Christian Identity
 2 General Hate
 1 Neo-Nazi
 1 neo-Völkisch
 3 White Nationalist
- 17 Antigovernment**
 10 Antigovernment General
 2 Conspiracy Propagandist
 1 Militia
 4 Sovereign Citizen

IDAHO

- 12 Hate**
 3 Anti-LGBTQ
 1 Antisemitism
 2 General Hate
 1 Neo-Nazi
 1 neo-Völkisch
 4 White Nationalist
- 13 Antigovernment**
 9 Antigovernment General
 2 Conspiracy Propagandist
 1 Militia
 1 Sovereign Citizen

MONTANA

- 6 Hate**
 1 Anti-LGBTQ
 1 Anti-Muslim
 2 Neo-Nazi
 2 White Nationalist
- 11 Antigovernment**
 7 Antigovernment General
 3 Conspiracy Propagandist
 1 Sovereign Citizen

UTAH

- 4 Hate**
 1 General Hate
 3 White Nationalist
- 16 Antigovernment**
 14 Antigovernment General
 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
 1 Sovereign Citizen

NEVADA

- 9 Hate**
 1 Anti-LGBTQ
 2 General Hate
 1 Neo-Nazi
 1 neo-Völkisch
 4 White Nationalist
- 6 Antigovernment**
 4 Antigovernment General
 2 Sovereign Citizen

WYOMING

- 3 Hate**
 1 Anti-LGBTQ
 2 White Nationalist
- 6 Antigovernment**
 5 Antigovernment General
 1 Conspiracy Propagandist

New England

CONNECTICUT

4 Hate

- 1 Anti-Muslim
- 1 Neo-Nazi
- 2 White Nationalist

10 Antigovernment

- 7 Antigovernment General
- 2 Conspiracy Propagandist
- 1 Sovereign Citizen

MAINE

5 Hate

- 2 Neo-Nazi
- 1 neo-Völkisch
- 2 White Nationalist

7 Antigovernment

- 6 Antigovernment General
- 1 Sovereign Citizen

MASSACHUSETTS

8 Hate

- 3 Anti-LGBTQ
- 1 Hate Music
- 2 Neo-Nazi
- 2 White Nationalist

5 Antigovernment

- 5 Antigovernment General

NEW HAMPSHIRE

8 Hate

- 1 Anti-Muslim
- 1 General Hate
- 2 Neo-Nazi
- 1 neo-Völkisch
- 1 Radical Traditional Catholicism
- 2 White Nationalist

8 Antigovernment

- 6 Antigovernment General
- 1 Militia
- 1 Sovereign Citizen

NEW JERSEY

7 Hate

- 1 Anti-Immigrant
- 1 General Hate
- 2 Neo-Nazi
- 1 Skinhead
- 2 White Nationalist

14 Antigovernment

- 11 Antigovernment General
- 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
- 2 Sovereign Citizen

NEW YORK

34 Hate

- 2 Anti-LGBTQ
- 6 Anti-Muslim
- 2 Antisemitism
- 13 General Hate

1 Hate Music

- 2 Neo-Nazi
- 2 neo-Völkisch
- 2 Radical Traditional Catholicism
- 4 White Nationalist

29 Antigovernment

- 21 Antigovernment General
- 2 Conspiracy Propagandist
- 4 Militia
- 2 Sovereign Citizen

RHODE ISLAND

3 Hate

- 1 Neo-Nazi
- 2 White Nationalist

7 Antigovernment

- 5 Antigovernment General
- 1 Conspiracy Propagandist
- 1 Sovereign Citizen

VERMONT

1 Hate

- 1 White Nationalist

2 Antigovernment

- 2 Antigovernment General

WEST VIRGINIA

7 Hate

- 1 Neo-Nazi
- 1 neo-Völkisch
- 5 White Nationalist

5 Antigovernment

- 3 Antigovernment General
- 2 Militia

Pacific

ALASKA

- 1 Hate**
- 1 neo-Völkisch
- 4 Antigovernment**
- 3 Antigovernment General
- 1 Sovereign Citizen

CALIFORNIA

- 51 Hate**
- 1 Anti-Immigrant
- 9 Anti-LGBTQ
- 6 Anti-Muslim
- 3 Antisemitism
- 13 General Hate
- 3 Hate Music
- 1 Male Supremacy
- 2 neo-Völkisch
- 1 Radical Traditional Catholicism
- 2 Skinhead
- 10 White Nationalist
- 66 Antigovernment**
- 46 Antigovernment General
- 3 Conspiracy Propagandist
- 2 Militia
- 15 Sovereign Citizen

HAWAII

- 2 Hate**
- 1 General Hate
- 1 Neo-Nazi
- 7 Antigovernment**
- 2 Antigovernment General
- 5 Sovereign Citizen

OREGON

- 10 Hate**
- 1 Anti-Immigrant
- 1 Anti-LGBTQ
- 4 General Hate
- 1 neo-Völkisch
- 3 White Nationalist
- 13 Antigovernment**
- 10 Antigovernment General
- 3 Sovereign Citizen

WASHINGTON

- 19 Hate**
- 1 Anti-Immigrant
- 5 Anti-LGBTQ
- 2 Anti-Muslim
- 3 General Hate
- 1 Neo-Nazi
- 1 neo-Völkisch
- 2 Skinhead
- 4 White Nationalist
- 22 Antigovernment**
- 16 Antigovernment General
- 3 Conspiracy Propagandist
- 2 Militia
- 1 Sovereign Citizen

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