

# PROTECT Plan to Fight Domestic Terrorism



On January 6, Americans watched as an insurrection fueled by violent conspiracy theories and white supremacy gripped the nation and attacked our democracy. This was a predictable act of political violence fueled by years of increasing extremism; the forces that led to the attack on our Capitol continue to pose a threat to American security and democracy.

To address this challenge, ADL is announcing the PROTECT plan to mitigate the threat of domestic terrorism while protecting civil liberties. It is a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, including actions for federal, state and local officials, as well as the tech industry. Together, these seven actions should significantly help prevent and counter domestic terrorism – more so than any one policy or law – and should do so while protecting vulnerable people and communities against the risk of government overreach.

- **Prioritize Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism**
- **Resource According to the Threat**
- **Oppose Extremists in Government Service**
- **Take Domestic Terrorism Prevention Measures**
- **End the Complicity of Social Media in Facilitating Extremism**
- **Create an Independent Clearinghouse for Online Extremist Content**
- **Target Foreign White Supremacist Terrorist Groups**

## THE PROTECT PLAN

### **Prioritize Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism**

A whole-of-government strategy must be accompanied by a whole-of-society approach. This requires interagency coordination, as well as coordination among federal, state and local stakeholders, civil society and the private sector. The Biden-Harris Administration should ensure civil society input by kicking off the strategy process with a Preventing Domestic Terrorism Summit with civil society, and then creating a comprehensive interagency strategy that calls out domestic terrorism and prioritizes preventing and countering it.

State governments should determine a point person – ideally at least one full office with federal support – to specialize in domestic terrorist threats and oversee work across state government offices, law enforcement, and with partners in government and civil society to address domestic terrorism.

### **Resource According to the Threat**

Congress should insist on immediate passage of the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act (DTPA) to enhance the government's efforts to prevent domestic terrorism by formally authorizing offices to address it and requiring law enforcement agencies to regularly report on domestic terrorist threats. Congress and the Administration must ensure that those offices have and deploy resources proportionate to the threats.

State legislatures should consider a state equivalent of the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act, and states should work toward transparently sharing an annual report on the state of domestic terrorism and apportioning state resources according to the lethality of those threats.





### **Oppose Extremists in Government Service**

Federal and state officials must take steps to ensure that individuals associated with violent extremist movements or engaged in violent extremist activity are deemed unsuitable for government employment in positions responsible for public safety or well-being – including law enforcement and military – and are not given security clearances, to the extent permitted by law. Federal and state officials should conduct a review and take appropriate steps against any current such employees.

Leadership must identify any elected officials who have endorsed, given credence to, or intentionally promoted QAnon or other dangerous conspiracy theories, and decline to assign them to positions of authority.

### **Take Domestic Terrorism Prevention Measures**

Congress and state legislatures must fund civil society and academic programs to address violent extremist radicalization and recruitment. These initiatives, which might include education, counseling, and off-ramping, require careful oversight and safeguards that ensure they do not stigmatize communities and are responsive to such concerns.

### **End the Complicity of Social Media in Facilitating Extremism**

Congress must investigate any complicity between social media companies and extremists, and make social media platforms more transparent and accountable for dangerous disinformation and misinformation, as well as hate content. A menu of options should include the careful reform, not elimination, of Section 230, the law that currently affords social media platforms unprecedented immunity from legal accountability. It also should include measures to independently and transparently verify the amount, nature and impact of extremism online, as well as the effectiveness of current efforts.

States should ensure that law enforcement understands the nature of online extremism and how to process digital evidence, and provide better recourse for victims of doxing, swatting and other forms of online harassment.

### **Create an Independent Clearinghouse for Online Extremist**

#### **Content**

Congress should work with the Biden-Harris Administration to create a publicly funded, independent nonprofit center, modeled in part on the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), to help streamline national security tips and resources while preserving civil liberties.

State governments should work with federal partners to create a centralized nationwide clearinghouse, and then create complementary efforts at the state level.

### **Target Foreign White Supremacist Terrorist Groups**

The National Security Council should urgently hold a Deputies Committee meeting to review terrorist designations to ensure that any foreign extremist groups, particularly white supremacist groups, that have reached the threshold for the designation should be so designated.

The Biden-Harris Administration must ensure consistent analysis of the global nature of the white supremacist terrorist threat, such as by empowering the National Counterterrorism Center to analyze the threat to the fullest extent permitted by law.

State law enforcement should report suspicious white supremacist behavior to the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center to determine whether a suspect is on the terrorist watch list. If and when a white supremacist terrorist group is designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, states should enhance their capabilities to address the threat and coordinate with federal entities.