



May 17, 2022

Dear Members of Congress,

As organizations dedicated to addressing the proliferation of racism, xenophobia, and antisemitism, including the security and protection of all minorities and their institutions, we urge you to support legislation to combat domestic terrorism, hate crimes, and white supremacy, including the bipartisan *Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act* (H.R.350/S.964). We also call on members of Congress to join our organizations in calling on the White House to convene a National Summit on Hate and Extremism. This past weekend's shooting by an alleged violent white supremacist in Buffalo, New York further amplifies our nation's need to address domestic terrorism while safeguarding civil liberties.

Fatal attacks targeting racial and religious minorities have occurred with horrifying frequency in recent years; the most recent attack this past weekend in Buffalo, NY; the violent attack at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; the spa shootings in Atlanta, Georgia targeting Asian-American women; the murder of congregants at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina; and the terrorist attack targeting Latinos at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas. These are simply a few of the multitudinous and nefarious domestic terror attacks plotted and carried out by individuals who targeted and murdered innocent civilians on the basis of their race or religion.

According to ADL's Center on Extremism, [the vast majority of murders by extremists are motivated by right-wing extremist causes](#), most commonly white supremacy. While giving testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee earlier this year, Matthew Olsen, the head of the Justice Department's National Security Division noted that, "the threat posed by domestic terrorism is on the rise...[and that] the number of FBI investigations of suspected violent extremists has more than doubled since the spring of 2020." [According to the Department of Homeland Security 2020 Threat Assessment report, "among DVEs, racially and ethnically motivated violent extremists—specifically white supremacist extremists \(WSEs\)—will remain the most persistent and lethal threat in the Homeland."](#)

## **We call on Congress to pass the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act.**

This continuous rise in hate crimes is why we ask that Congress pass legislation that would effectively prevent and respond to these threats, including the *Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act* (DTPA). This is a bipartisan bill designed to combat the growing threat of domestic violent extremists. It authorizes domestic terrorism offices within the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in order to create a better understanding of the domestic terrorist threat and separate that specialization from tangentially related threats. It would also establish an interagency task force to address the critical threat of white supremacist infiltration of law enforcement to ensure that those who enforce our nation's national security laws do not espouse the very views they are charged to investigate. The DTPA does not create new surveillance or investigative authorities for law enforcement, but would rely on existing authorities managed more efficiently through new offices. The bill would also authorize support to communities grappling with the aftermath of a hate-fueled terrorist incident, ensure hate crimes are reviewed for a nexus to terrorism, and create training both on the threat of domestic terrorism and on anti-bias.

The rise in domestic violent extremist incidents in recent years is a threat to our nation's democratic values and to the innocent civilians affected by individuals fueled by extremist ideologies and a desire to cause harm. While there is no silver bullet to address domestic terrorism, it is important that Congress pass legislation that will lay a critical foundation to better understand and address the targeted hate that threatens violence against our communities while ensuring key civil rights protections from government overreach.

## **We call on the White House to hold a National Summit on Hate and Extremism**

All corners of our government must be engaged to address the drastic rise in hate and extremism across our nation. That is [why we also call on the White House to hold a summit to combat extremism](#) and call on members of Congress to join us in that effort. Interagency coordination is critical at this time. Although we appreciate the response efforts that the White House, DOJ, DHS, and others have made in the aftermath of the Buffalo attack, a summit would be a critical first step to develop a plan to improve the federal government's prevention strategy and execution and limit these tragic events from occurring in the future. A summit would also raise the national consciousness about the threat that white supremacy poses to our national security. Innocent people should not have to die for the nation to give this matter the attention it deserves. Let us not wait for the next act of mass, hate-fueled violence. Let's act now.

We thank you for your consideration of our views and stand as willing partners as we move forward in addressing hate together. Should you have any questions, please contact Jackie Subar (jsubar@adl.org) at ADL and Yvette Badu-Nimako (ybadu@nul.org) at the National Urban League.

Respectfully,

ADL (Anti-Defamation League)

National Urban League

Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC

The Asian American Foundation (TAAF)

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

NAACP

UnidosUS