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2023

A Report by the ADL Center on Extremism

# Hate in the Bay State: Extremism & Antisemitism in Massachusetts, 2021-2022

**ADL**<sup>®</sup>

## Our Mission:

To stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.

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## ABOUT

# THE CENTER ON EXTREMISM

The ADL Center on Extremism is the foremost authority on extremism, terrorism and hate, both foreign and domestic. We monitor extremism across the ideological spectrum. Our staff of investigators, analysts, researchers and technical experts strategically monitors, exposes and disrupts extremist threats—on the internet and on the ground. We provide resources, expertise and educational briefings that enable law enforcement officers, public officials and community leaders, as well as internet and technology companies to identify and counter emerging threats. Learn more about COE's work and the latest in the fight against extremism by visiting [adl.org/coe](https://adl.org/coe).

## ABOUT

# ADL

ADL is the leading anti-hate organization in the world. Founded in 1913, its timeless mission is "to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all." Today, ADL continues to fight all forms of antisemitism and bias, using innovation and partnerships to drive impact. A global leader in combating antisemitism, countering extremism and battling bigotry wherever and whenever it happens, ADL works to protect democracy and ensure a just and inclusive society for all.

ADL (Anti-Defamation League) fights antisemitism and promotes justice for all. Join ADL to give a voice to those without one and to protect our civil rights.

Learn more: [adl.org](https://adl.org)





# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Key Statistics</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Antisemitism</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. Three Key Extremist Trends in Massachusetts</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5. Additional Extremist Activity</b>	<b>10</b>
. Extremist Plots and Murders	10
. Nation of Islam (NOI)	10
. Black Hebrew Israelite Movement	10
. Sovereign Citizens	11
. Oath Keepers	12
. Super Happy Fun America	12
. January 6 Insurrection	12
<b>6. Recommendations for Policymakers</b>	<b>13</b>



# Introduction

Over the last two years, extremist activity in Massachusetts has mirrored developments on the national stage. Like the rest of the country, Massachusetts has seen white supremacists – including the Nationalist Social Club – increasingly make their presence felt. The Bay State has also reported extensive propaganda distribution efforts, especially by Patriot Front, which resulted in Massachusetts recording [the country's second-highest number](#) of white supremacist propaganda incidents in 2022.

Amidst increasing [nationwide threats](#) to the LGBTQ+ community, Massachusetts has also witnessed a spike in anti-LGBTQ+ activity, including waves of harassment against Boston Children's Hospital, drag performances and LGBTQ+ events. And as the numbers of antisemitic incidents continue to rise across the country, Massachusetts was no exception. According to [ADL's Audit of Antisemitic Incidents](#), it was the sixth most affected state in the country in 2022.

This report will explore the full range of extremist groups and movements operating in Massachusetts and highlight the key extremist and antisemitic trends and incidents in the state in 2021 and 2022.

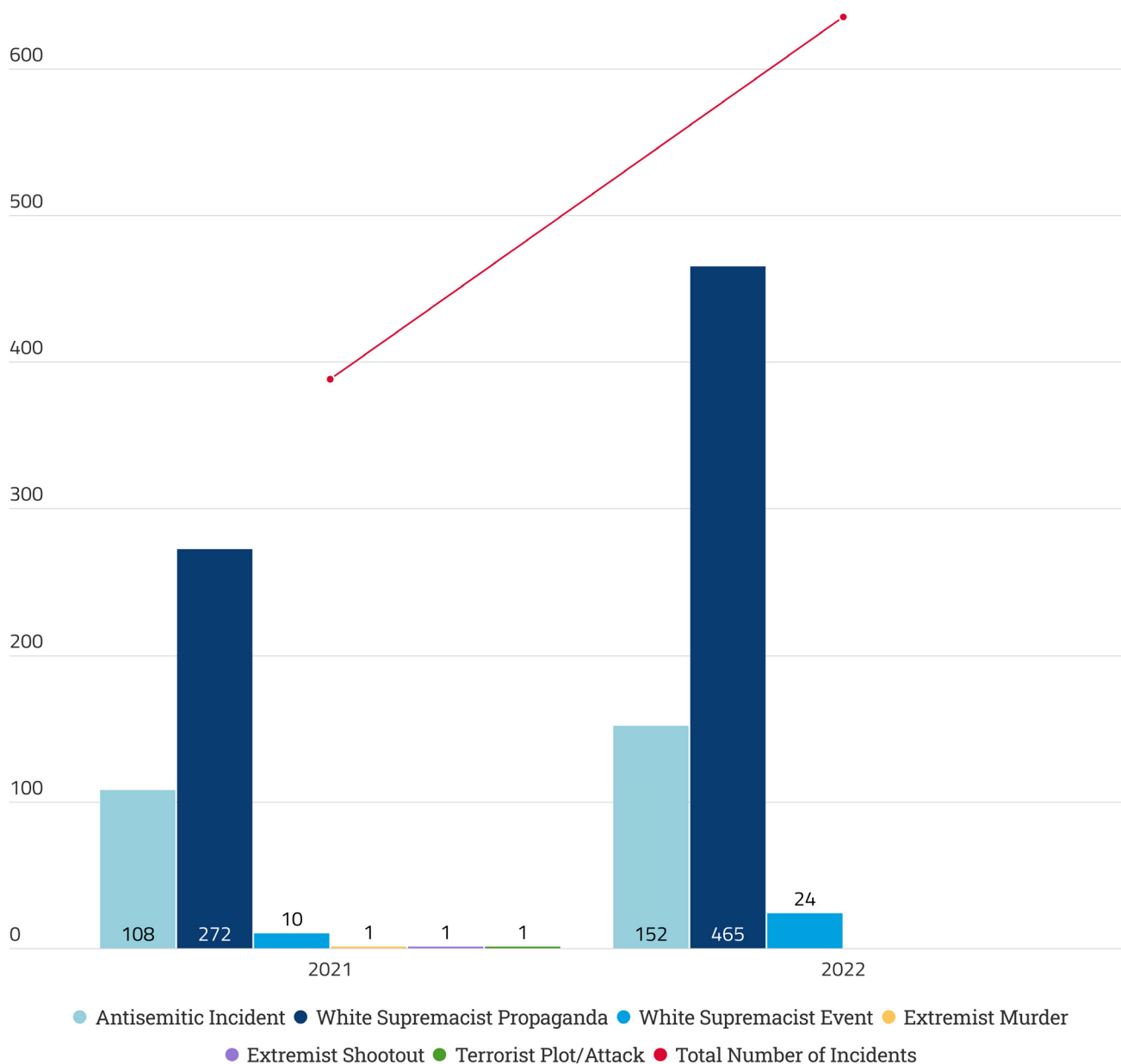


# Key Statistics

- **Antisemitic Incidents:** Massachusetts saw a dramatic rise in antisemitic incidents, according to ADL's annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents. In 2022, the number of incidents increased 41% over 2021 levels, rising from 108 to 152. That increase followed a similar spike between 2020 and 2021, when incidents leapt from 73 to 108 incidents.
- **Extremist Events:** ADL documented 34 white supremacist events in the state in 2021 and 2022, including protests, meetings, flash demonstrations, banner drops and marches.
- **White Supremacist Propaganda:** White supremacist propaganda distributions are on the rise in Massachusetts. In 2022, ADL documented 465 instances of white supremacist propaganda distribution across the state, an increase of 71% from 2021 (272). The groups responsible for the majority of the incidents include [Patriot Front](#), [NSC-131](#) and the [Goyim Defense League](#) (GDL).
- **Extremist Plots and Murders:** In 2021 and 2022, ADL documented one extremist attack in Massachusetts, resulting in two deaths.
- **Hate Crime Statistics:** According to the [latest](#) FBI hate crime statistics for 2021, there were 412 reported hate crimes in Massachusetts, an increase of 33% from the 310 incidents recorded in 2020.
- **Insurrection Statistics:** Nine of the 968 individuals charged in relation to the [January 6, 2021, attack](#) on the U.S. Capitol are residents of Massachusetts, according to data compiled by the [George Washington University Program on Extremism](#).

# Incidents in Massachusetts by Type, 2021-2022

Data from the Center on Extremism Hate, Extremism, Antisemitism, Terrorism (H.E.A.T.) Map



*Note: Some incidents are coded as multiple incident types.*



# Antisemitism

As noted in the ADL's annual [Audit of Antisemitic Incidents](#), in 2022, the ADL documented the highest number of antisemitic incidents since tabulation began in 1979, with more than 3,697 acts of assault, vandalism and harassment nationwide, a 36% increase from 2021.

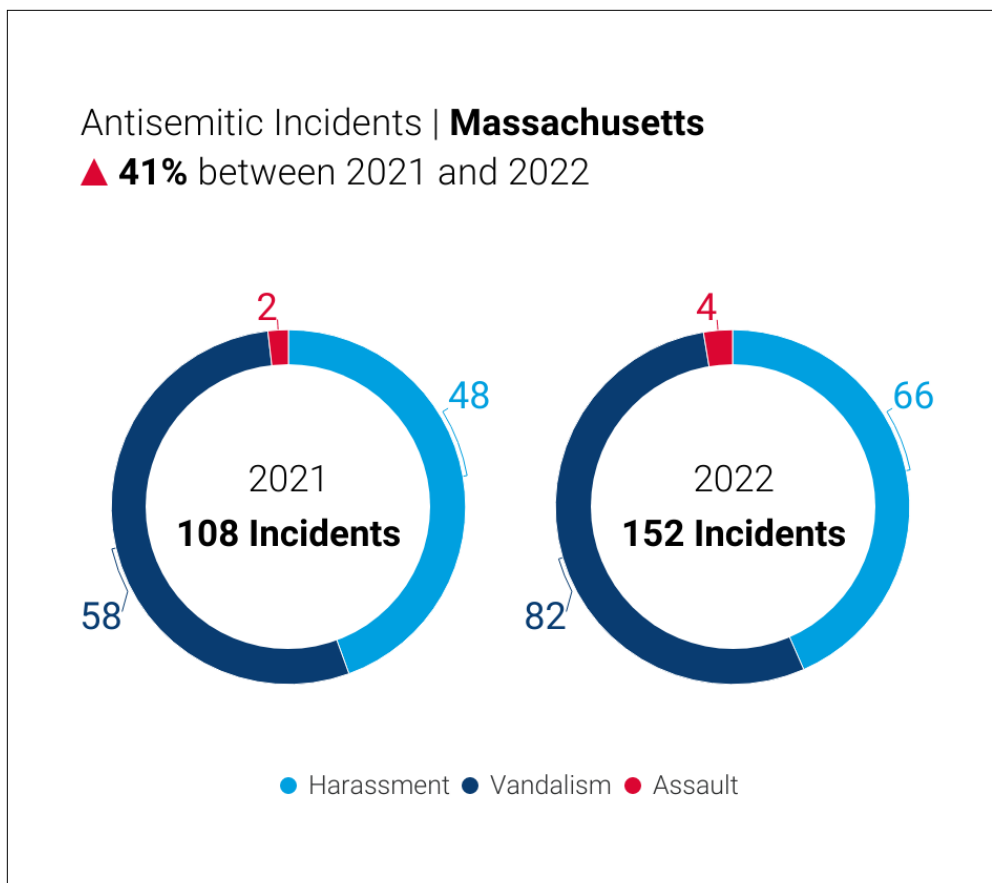
Massachusetts had the sixth-highest number of reported antisemitic incidents in 2022, with 152. Instances of vandalism increased by 41% (82 incidents in 2022, compared to 58 in 2021), while instances of harassment increased by 38% (66 incidents in 2022, compared to 48 in 2021). Massachusetts also recorded four assaults, double the number recorded in 2021.

A total of 71 cities and towns in Massachusetts saw at least one antisemitic incident in 2022, an increase from 54 towns in 2021. This count includes antisemitic assaults, incidents in K-12 schools and college campuses and vandalism of Jewish institutions.

- In December 2022, a Westwood synagogue's "Rabbi" parking sign was vandalized with swastikas.
- In October 2022, vandalism containing swastikas was found on the campus of Middlesex Community College in Bedford.
- In May 2022, a student in Waltham brought a knife to school, threatened his Jewish classmates and held the knife to the throat of a Jewish classmate.
- In April 2022, someone carved a swastika into a corkboard on the campus of Harvard University in Cambridge.
- In July 2021, a rabbi was stabbed outside of the Shaloh House Jewish Day School in Boston.
- In February 2021, the host of a live cable access TV program and then-Lowell School Committee member referred to a former school employee as "the kike" during a live broadcast.



*Antisemitic message spray-painted on a wall in Marblehead, Massachusetts in September 2022.*



College campuses in Massachusetts also experienced at least three documented **Israel-related** antisemitic incidents in 2021 and 2022, including: a large, wooden sign reading “Zionism is racism” displayed in Harvard Yard; the Tufts University Hillel office received two calls from an unidentified individual expressing anti-Israel sentiments; and a Palestinian flag reading “Fuck 12” (an anti-police message) zip-tied to the front door of Harvard’s Hillel, in what could be interpreted as an attempt to intimidate Jewish/Zionist students.

In 2022, Massachusetts was also targeted by the “**Mapping Project**,” an interactive map that pinpointed the locations of Jewish communal and other community organizations that the unknown creators believe are responsible for the “colonization of Palestine” and other perceived “harms that we see linked, such as policing, US imperialism and displacement.” The map lists the names and addresses for approximately 500 organizations in total. This project included a disturbing call to “dismantle” and “disrupt” most of Boston’s Jewish community and included a thinly veiled threat: “Every entity has an address, every network can be disrupted.”



# Three Key Extremist Trends in Massachusetts

## NSC-131 increases its activity in Massachusetts

Since 2021, the [Nationalist Social Club](#), also known as NSC-131, has grown rapidly to become one of New England's most active white supremacist groups; their presence is particularly robust in Massachusetts. In the last two years, NSC-131 has held at least 30 events in Massachusetts – 22 in 2022 alone – including hanging antisemitic banners over highways, demonstrating against LGBTQ+ events and on-the-ground intimidation campaigns. These events drew an average of 20 members, and as many as 38 people.

In the past two years, NSC-131 has demonstrated an increased willingness to physically engage with their perceived enemies. In July 2022, NSC-131's founder and leader was arrested in Boston and charged with fighting in public as 20 members [protested](#) outside a drag queen story hour. A few months later, approximately nine members [demonstrated](#) outside an anarchist book fair in Cambridge, banging on the windows and trying to gain access to the event.

Despite their regional focus, NSC-131 has collaborated with multiple other white supremacist movements. In 2021, NSC-131 often coordinated their activity with [White Lives Matter](#), and in 2022 the group held an event that included Jon Minadeo of the antisemitic [Goyim Defense League](#), as well as neo-Nazi Christopher Pohlhaus.

On January 17, 2023, the New Hampshire Attorney General filed a civil action against NSC-131, the group's leader Christopher Hood and a second member, Leo Anthony Cullinan, for violating the state's Civil Rights Act. The [complaint](#) stems from an alleged July 2022 banner drop orchestrated by Hood and Cullinan. Since the charges were filed, NSC-131 claims to have raised more than \$10,000 to pay for legal fees. The pace at which NSC-131 was able to fundraise for these expenses highlights the outsized influence of this small group.

Most recently, NSC-131 created People's Initiative of New England (PINE) to engage in local political activism. Since its formation in April 2023, PINE has advocated for their five-point plan for New England, a more sanitized version of NSC-131's agenda that includes seceding from the U.S. to create a "white homeland" and ending all non-white immigration. Their goal is to eventually run a candidate for local office. Since their inception, members have held group meetups across New England, including Massachusetts.



*Approximately 23 individuals associated with NSC-131 protested on December 10, 2022, outside of a Drag Queen Story Hour reading at the Fall River Public Library.*

## Massachusetts had the second-highest number of documented white supremacist propaganda incidents in 2022



On July 2, 2022, an estimated 100 members of Patriot Front held a flash demonstration in Boston, Massachusetts.

On July 2, 2022, approximately 100 members of Patriot Front [marched through downtown Boston](#) carrying riot shields, Patriot Front flags and banners reading “Reclaim America” and “Strong Families Make Strong Nations.”

## Massachusetts is a hotbed for anti-LGBTQ+ extremism, which increased nationwide in 2022

2022 saw a national wave of bigoted action against the LGBTQ+ community perpetrated by [extremists](#) and those espousing [conspiracy theories](#). Extremists mobilized across the country to [disrupt Pride celebrations](#) and in November 2022, a shooting at an LGBTQ+ club in Colorado left five people dead.

Massachusetts also witnessed considerable anti-LGBTQ+ hate in 2022. Over the last year, extremists targeted LGBTQ+ events, particularly drag shows, throughout the state. Throughout 2022, Boston Children’s Hospital endured [multiple waves of threats and harassment](#) stemming from the hateful and false narratives surrounding gender-affirming care. At least two individuals have been [arrested](#) for sending threats, including one [Texas resident](#). The harassment campaign against the hospital was [amplified](#) by the anti-LGBTQ+ extremist Chaya Raichik, who runs the social media account LibsofTikTok.

According to ADL Center on Extremism (COE) data, Massachusetts had the second-highest number of white supremacist propaganda incidents in the United States in 2022, trailing only Texas. The overwhelming majority of the propaganda content was produced by the white supremacist group [Patriot Front](#), which was responsible for at least 447 instances of white supremacist propaganda in the state, an 83 percent increase from the previous year.

Patriot Front is a Texas-based white supremacist group with members all over the country, but they have become increasingly active in Massachusetts because of the state’s ties to the founding of the United States. Patriot Front most frequently distributes banners,



An anti-trans activist demonstrates outside Boston Children’s Hospital in September 2022 (Carlin Stiehl for The Boston Globe).



# Additional Extremist Activity

## Extremist Plots and Murders

In 2021 and 2022, ADL documented one extremist attack in Massachusetts, resulting in two deaths. On June 26, 2021, Nathan Allen, 28, allegedly shot two people, both fatally, after driving a truck into a building in Winthrop. A responding law enforcement officer then shot and killed Allen. After the murders, investigators reportedly found white supremacist writings in Allen's handwriting.

## Nation of Islam (NOI)

The **Nation of Islam (NOI)**, the notoriously antisemitic Black nationalist organization, operates multiple local chapters in Massachusetts, including Muhammad Mosque No. 11 in Boston and Muhammad Mosque No. 13 in Springfield. Both the Boston and Springfield chapters amplify the NOI's characteristic antisemitism and bigotry in their online and on-the-ground activities.

Despite the Nation of Islam's well-established record of bigotry and antisemitism, the NOI's Massachusetts chapters — like many of the group's chapters across the country — are sometimes supported by elected officials, interfaith coalitions or other mainstream sources, particularly around the NOI's community-focused initiatives. For example, mainstream sources have praised and financially supported both **10,000 Fearless Peacemakers** and **Torchlight Recovery Group** — organizations that work to counter gun violence and provide support for those recovering from substance use disorders, respectively — which are directly tied to Muhammad Mosque No. 11.

## Black Hebrew Israelite Movement



Members of the Boston chapter of the Israelite School of Universal Practical Knowledge (ISUPK) conduct street preaching activities in Downtown Crossing.

The **Black Hebrew Israelite (BHI) movement** is a fringe religious movement that rejects widely accepted definitions of Judaism and asserts that people of color are the true children of Israel; the movement includes both extremist and non-extremist sects. Both **Israel United in Christ (IUIC)** and the **Israelite School of Universal Practical Knowledge (ISUPK)**, two of the most prominent **extremist sects of the BHI movement**, have active Massachusetts chapters. In addition to their active social media presence, these groups frequently engage in organized street preaching activities in and around Boston, during which they advertise their organization and antagonize passersby with antisemitic and other bigoted commentary.

## Sovereign Citizens

The **sovereign citizen movement** has a small presence in Massachusetts. However, one of the more significant recent arrests took place there in 2021. On July 3, 2021, 11 individuals associated with “Rise of the Moors,” a **Moorish sovereign citizen** group based in Rhode Island, were **arrested** following an hours-long armed standoff with Massachusetts police on I-95 in Wakefield. The standoff started when the Moors failed to provide proper identification and firearms permits and refused to comply with orders. Since their arrest, the Moors have continued to cause problems, filing a \$70 million lawsuit challenging Massachusetts state courts’ jurisdiction over their case and a second lawsuit claiming that the group’s Second Amendment rights were violated and that they were falsely imprisoned. Both lawsuits were quickly dismissed by federal judges.

Aside from the Rise of the Moors standoff, other sovereigns in Massachusetts have faced occasional arrests or court sanctions for filing frivolous lawsuits and other documents. For example, in October 2022, a federal judge **ruled** that Deric Marcell Thompson had to pay over \$41,000 to attorneys for a car dealership after the dealership sued him for filing frivolous IRS and UCC documents against them, interfering with the dealership’s ability to obtain financing for the vehicles it sold. Thompson had filed the frivolous documents because he was upset that the dealership rejected his \$3.5 quintillion “certificate of deposit” for the SUV he wanted.

## Oath Keepers

According to a published database, 550 Massachusetts residents have paid membership dues to the **Oath Keepers** since the group’s founding in 2009. A COE **analysis** of this information found that at the time of publication this list included two individuals holding or running for public office, seven individuals believed to be active members of law enforcement, one individual believed to be an active member of the military and two individuals believed to currently be first responders.

## Super Happy Fun America

**Super Happy Fun America (SHFA)** is a Massachusetts-based right-wing group primarily known for organizing a 2019 “straight pride” parade in Boston. In addition to its anti-LGBTQ+ activity, the group has organized demonstrations and events targeting “liberal” policies, such as COVID-19 related restrictions, vaccine mandates and support for the Black Lives Matter movement. Two members of the group, both Massachusetts residents, were arrested for their participation in the January 6 attack.

In 2021 and 2022, the group held at least four events in Massachusetts, including a “festival” featuring speeches from the group’s two January 6, 2021 riot participants, an anti-vaccine demonstration which resulted in two arrests and a demonstration outside of the Chelsea FBI office to call out the “crimes of the FBI.”



## January 6 Insurrection

Nine of the 968 individuals charged in relation to the [January 6, 2021 attack](#) on the U.S. Capitol are residents of Massachusetts, according to data compiled by the [George Washington University Program on Extremism](#). ADL found that this includes at least two people with extremist ties, both of whom were connected to [Super Happy Fun America](#). While individuals affiliated with NSC-131 were present during the insurrection, none have been arrested or charged.



*Nine Massachusetts residents have been charged in relation to the January 6, 2021 Capitol attack. (Jon Cherry for Getty Images)*



# Recommendations for Policymakers

ADL advocates for a range of policies and activities that can help address antisemitism, hate and extremism while preserving civil liberties. The following suggestions are intended as potential policy items for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to consider as lawmakers address the challenges raised in this report.

## 1. Protect Individuals from Online Hate and Harassment

The threats posed by online hate and harassment are all too real for the Jewish community of Massachusetts.

Many individuals throughout both Massachusetts and nationally are targets of doxing, or the publishing of private, personally identifiable information with malicious intent. Increasing online activity has the ugly consequence of a growth in online harassment, and state laws need to evolve to protect these individuals from harmful targeting.

In response to these and other growing threats, ADL is supporting both S.971/H.1707 and S.1116 in the Massachusetts State Legislature: these crucial bills would ensure the establishment of civil remedies for targets of doxing, or the release of a person's personal identifying information with the intent to cause physical harm or stalking.

## 2. Hold Social Media Platforms Accountable

Last year, the State of California signed into law Assembly Bill (AB) 587, a first-of-its-kind measure that requires greater transparency on content moderation protocols from major social media platforms. While social media companies have taken some steps to rein in hate and harassment, their lack of transparency has meant that users and policymakers have no way to know if companies actually abide by and enforce their own policies. Under this law, social media platforms are now required to publicly disclose their corporate policies as well as provide biannual and quarterly filings with California's Attorney General on key data and metrics on the enforcement of their policies. As enacted, the legislation will work to address the ways in which social media foments hate speech, disinformation, conspiracy theories and violent extremism that allows for the harassment and targeting of marginalized groups. State legislators in Massachusetts should similarly introduce a bill that holds social media platforms accountable and ensures they are effectively moderating hate and abiding by their own guidelines.

### 3. Strengthen Hate Crime Reporting and Response

Comprehensive approaches to address hate crimes are critical to address antisemitism, hate, and extremism. Governor Healey should reprise the Commonwealth's Hate Crimes Task Force and consider its prior recommendations, as well as consider approaches to:

- **Mandate that law enforcement agencies report comprehensive hate crimes data:** Law enforcement agencies in Massachusetts should be required to report comprehensive hate crime data on a quarterly basis. Procedures should also be put in place to collect hate crime information and reports voluntarily produced by non-law enforcement entities such as community groups, advocacy groups and civil rights agencies.
- **Strengthen hate crimes laws:** Legislators should consider opportunities to strengthen hate crimes laws, including by passing S.914 (a bill that would add sex and gender as protected identity characteristics under Massachusetts's hate crime statutes) and S.924/H.1392 (a bill that would ensure that associational hate crimes are covered under Massachusetts law, specifically in the landlord/tenant context).

### 4. Protect Civil Rights

Protecting the rights of all people in Massachusetts can help reduce bias and discrimination and create a safer and more equitable Commonwealth. For example, ADL supports S.1510/ H.2288, legislation that would protect the civil rights and safety of all Massachusetts residents by prohibiting state and local involvement in civil immigration enforcement, increasing immigrant access to court and police protection.

## Support

### The work of ADL's Center on Extremism is made possible by the generous support of:

Anonymous (4)

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# Join the Fight Against Antisemitism

## 1. SPEAK UP

**Report an incident.** If you have experienced or witnessed an incident of antisemitism, please [contact ADL](#). Together, we can work toward making our communities, country and world a safer place for all.

## 2. SHARE FACTS

**Learn about antisemitism.** Explore [Antisemitism Uncovered: A Guide to Old Myths in a New Era](#) for historical, fact-based descriptions of antisemitic myths, contemporary examples and calls-to-action for addressing this hate.

## 3. SHOW STRENGTH

**Sign the [Pledge to Fight Antisemitism](#).** Sign online or text Audit to 72572 and commit to being an ally of the Jewish community, publicly condemning acts of antisemitism, advocating for policy solutions and encourage your elected officials to do the same.

Visit [adl.org](#) to sign up for our email newsletters to stay informed about ADL's work in your community, across the U.S. and around the world and how ADL is responding.

## Featured Resources on this topic:



Hate on Display™ Hate Symbols Database



Glossary Of Extremism



ADL Tracker™

### New England:

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### National:

 Anti-Defamation League

 @ADL\_National

 @adl\_national

For more information on antisemitism in Massachusetts, go to <https://newengland.adl.org/news/audit2022/>

To learn more about extremism in America, please visit [adl.org/coe](https://adl.org/coe)

  
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