

SEPT  
2021

# The Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA) and Richard Mack:

## How Extremists Are Successfully Infiltrating Law Enforcement



## **Our Mission:**

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

---

## **THE CENTER ON EXTREMISM**

The ADL Center on Extremism (COE) is one of the world's foremost authorities on extremism, terrorism, antisemitism and all forms of hate. For decades, COE's staff of seasoned investigators, analysts and researchers have tracked extremist activity and hate in the U.S. and abroad — online and on the ground. The staff, which represent a combined total of substantially more than 100 years of experience in this arena, routinely assist law enforcement with extremist-related investigations, provide tech companies with critical data and expertise and respond to wide-ranging media requests.

As ADL's research and investigative arm, COE is a clearinghouse of real-time information about extremism and hate of all types. COE staff regularly serve as expert witnesses, provide congressional testimony and speak to national and international conference audiences about the threats posed by extremism and antisemitism. You can find the full complement of COE's research and publications at [ADL.org](https://www.adl.org).

ADL is a leading anti-hate organization that was founded in 1913 in response to an escalating climate of antisemitism and bigotry. Today, ADL is still the first call when acts of antisemitism occur and continues to fight all forms of hate. A global leader in exposing extremism, delivering anti-bias education and fighting hate online, ADL's ultimate goal is a world in which no group or individual suffers from bias, discrimination or hate.

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



*Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA) logo.*

- The Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA) is an anti-government extremist group whose primary purpose is to recruit sheriffs into the anti-government “patriot” movement.
- CSPOA is led by Richard Mack, a former Arizona sheriff who gained celebrity on the right in the 1990s after suing to overturn a prominent gun control measure, the Brady Law, especially after the Supreme Court ruled largely in his favor.
- The central tenet of CSPOA, borrowed from the anti-government extremist sovereign citizen movement, is that the county sheriff is the ultimate authority in the county, able to halt enforcement of any federal or state law or measure they deem unconstitutional.
- Mack primarily marketed this (false) claim as a way to oppose gun control measures, but in 2020-21, he has also used it to exploit anger and frustration over federal and state measures to combat Covid-19.
- Mack crisscrosses the country for speaking engagements where he promotes himself, CSPOA and his county sheriff thesis.
- Increasingly, he seeks out law enforcement audiences, billing his extremist events as “trainings.”
- In a disturbing development, in 2021, Mack was able to win official state approval for his “trainings” in Montana and Texas, which allows attendees to receive continuing education credit for attending Mack’s events.

# Introduction

**T**he Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA) is a large anti-government extremist group whose primary purpose it is to spread anti-government propaganda to, and recruit from, law enforcement personnel, especially county sheriffs and sheriff's deputies. The group was founded in 2011 by Richard Mack, a former sheriff of Graham County, Arizona, who has used CSPOA as a vehicle to gain stature and influence within both the far right and the mainstream right. Although the [Oath Keepers](#), another anti-government extremist group that recruits from law enforcement, have garnered more media attention in recent years, the CSPOA has arguably had more success infiltrating law enforcement, including at the executive level.

Mack and CSPOA's primary argument is the false claim that the powers of the county sheriff supersede those of any other federal, state or local authorities, as long as the intent is to protect American citizens from enemies foreign or domestic. County sheriffs may therefore refuse to enforce—and can even actively oppose—any federal, state or other governmental measure (law, regulation, tax, court order, etc.) that they deem unconstitutional. This notion—which has no basis in American law—was borrowed from the anti-government extremist [sovereign citizen](#) movement (CSPOA's staff has included people with ties to that movement). Mack has also claimed—again, falsely—that the county sheriff has the power to call out the “militia” to support him in his opposition to tyranny.

# The Emergence of Richard Mack



*Photo of Richard Mack.*

**R**ichard Mack is the founder and leader of CSPOA, and the organization would likely not exist long without him. Mack, however, was a “celebrity” within the far-right long before he launched CSPOA.

The Utah native began his law enforcement career as a police officer in Provo, Utah. Mack later moved to Arizona, where he was elected sheriff of sparsely populated Graham County in 1988 (serving two terms, both as a Democrat). His rise to prominence began in early 1994 when he sued the federal government over the constitutionality of the Brady Law, gun control legislation that established a waiting period for people who wished to purchase handguns, among other things. Mack, backed by the NRA (which named him officer of the year in 1994), embarked on a public campaign against the Brady Law, giving seemingly countless interviews in the press and on the air across the country. Several years later, the Supreme Court overturned key portions of the Brady Law, cementing Mack’s status as a defender of gun ownership.

At home, voters were less impressed with Mack, who lost a primary bid for a third term by a 3-1 margin, ending Mack’s law enforcement career by 1997. To make ends meet, Mack worked as a car salesman and, briefly, as a “consultant” for the American Institute for Research, a Utah-based company led by tax protester Albert E. Carter, until Carter was raided by the FBI during a fraud investigation (in 2004, Carter pleaded guilty to tax evasion and mail fraud for operating what was essentially a Ponzi scheme).

As Mack’s celebrity grew, he had more opportunities to express his views, many of which were extremist. One of Mack’s earliest influences was W. Cleon Skousen, the far right-wing conspiracy theorist and promoter of divinely inspired limited government who influenced many anti-government extremists over the decades, primarily in Western states. Mack has even taught at the Heritage Academy charter school in Arizona, a school founded by an acolyte of Skousen.

Mack’s ideological orientation has primarily been far right-wing and anti-government in nature, with many of his views adopted from or influenced by the anti-government “patriot” movement (an umbrella movement that includes the militia movement, the sovereign citizen movement, and the tax protest movement). From the tax protest movement, Mack has claimed that the 16th Amendment (which authorized an income tax) was never

lawfully ratified, and he adopted his expansive views on the powers of the county sheriff from the sovereign citizen movement. However, he may have been most influenced by the militia movement's hostility towards the federal government. In 1994, Mack claimed he took an oath to defend the U.S. from all enemies, foreign and domestic, "and it appears that our own Washington D.C. bureaucracy has become one of the domestic enemies." In March 1995, Mack urged an audience not to give up their guns because they were the best weapon against government tyranny and the "[New World Order](#)."

Mack was an early, vocal supporter of the militia movement, which emerged in the mid-1990s, claiming to have formed a militia of his own in Graham County (at different times, he called it a "militia" and a "posse,") and urging people not to demonize militia groups. Even the [Oklahoma City bombing](#) in April 1995 failed to sway him. "[The bombing] no more changes my opinion of the militias than the O. J. Simpson trial changes my opinion of retired black professional football players," he told a *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter a month after the bombing. A 1996 Christian Science Monitor story quoted Mack, referring to the [1992 Ruby Ridge standoff](#), as saying, "I don't know of any militias that have shot a young boy in the back or a woman in the face who was holding a baby." After militia members were arrested in Arizona on weapons charges in 1996, Mack told the *Inquirer* that, "What I see in most militias is the type of courage to stand for freedom as exemplified by the Chinese students in Tiananmen Square."

Borrowing from militia movement conspiracy theories, Mack has argued that "power-hungry government officials backed by people with hidden agendas" are engaged in a plot to "control and enslave Americans." In his 2014 book *Are You a David?*, Mack claimed that the federal government has reached a "zenith of corruption, abuse, greed, deceit and debt" and that "criminals in government parade around as heroes while attacking Americans." On numerous occasions, Mack has stated that the federal government is the greatest threat to Americans.

After he lost his race for sheriff's office in 1996, Mack spent a number of years running unsuccessfully for a variety of offices in several states. He moved to Utah in 1998 to run for sheriff in Utah County, but lost the Republican primary. In 2004, he announced his run for the governor of Utah (as a Libertarian) on a militia shortwave radio show. His bid went nowhere, as did a 2006 bid to become a U.S. Senator from Utah. In 2011, Mack announced to an audience at the extremist [John Birch Society](#) in Texas that he planned to run for Congress. As late as 2018, back in Arizona, Mack ran for Arizona's 8th Congressional District, but came in eighth in the Republican primary [with 1.42% of the vote](#).

# Mack's Public Speaking Crusade—Including White Supremacist Venues

**F**or the past 25-plus years, Richard Mack has been an indefatigable public speaker, constantly crisscrossing the country in search of audiences. Clean-cut, with an appealing speaking voice, Mack has addressed groups small and large, typically using the story of his Brady Law victory as a way to attack the federal government or, more recently, to help introduce his views about county sheriffs.

Initially, many of Mack's speaking engagements and personal appearances were connected to either the NRA or to the John Birch Society. Soon, Mack was speaking regularly to every imaginable type of conservative or right-wing audience, mainstream or extreme. Beginning in 2009-2010, Mack became a regular at Tea Party events around the country. At one point in the early 2010s he estimated he had spoken with about 70 Tea Party groups over the previous two years, which was likely no exaggeration.

In 2012, when living in Texas, Mack spoke at local events such as the Tax Day Tea Party Rally in Texarkana, the Boerne (TX) Tea Party Candidate Forum, a Constitutional Study Group in Bergheim, Libertyfest West in Odessa, a 9/12 Meet Greet in Kerrville, and to audiences at the John Birch Society in Houston as well as the North Shore Republicans in Lago Vista. This was in addition to events in Alabama, Nevada and Indiana, among other places.

Mack's incessant need for an audience means he has spoken to or shared the stage with a variety of other extremists, including people associated with the militia and sovereign citizen movements. His associations have also included white supremacists and antisemites. Though Mack has [condemned white supremacy](#), claiming it has no place in a free society, he does seem to be willing to make exceptions as long as doing so provides him with a microphone. According to the Coalition for Human Dignity, Mack was a keynote speaker at a 1995 conference hosted by the white supremacist America's Promise Ministries in Prescott, Arizona. In 2012, Mack appeared as a guest on the Political Cesspool radio program [hosted by white supremacist James Edwards](#). In 2015, Mack spoke at an event funded by America's Foundation, a Mississippi organization [created by white supremacist Richard Barrett](#). Two years later, in April 2017, Mack appeared on another white supremacist radio program, "By Yahweh's Design," in an episode titled "Meet Richard Mack."

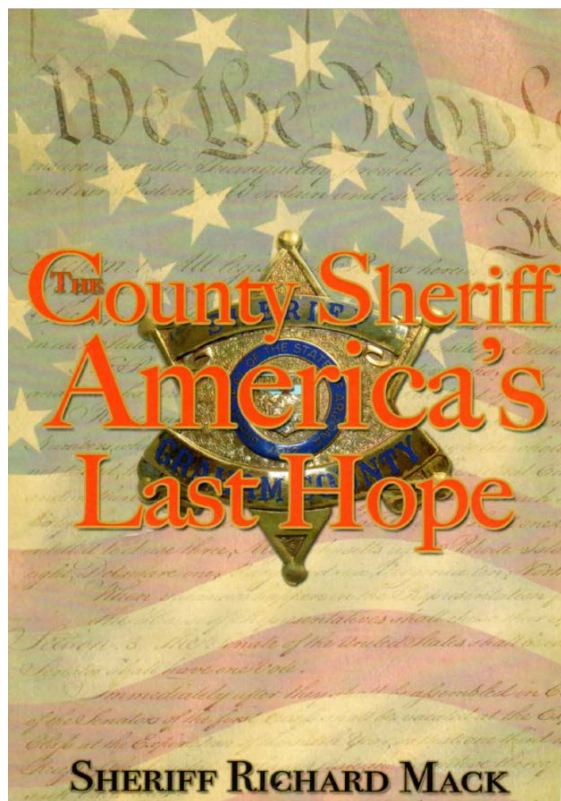
Mack's willingness to overlook racism and antisemitism is evident in his most recent speaking campaign —a planned series of 84 events over 111 days in 2021. "Arise USA! The Resurrection Tour" features a variety of right-wing and conspiratorial speakers, highlighting Mack and fellow organizer Robert David Steele. Steele, who claims to be a former CIA agent, is a prominent [QAnon](#) conspiracy theorist as well as an outspoken antisemite.

Steele, [outed by the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights](#) as a "prolific purveyor of antisemitism," has claimed that "virtually all Jews" are "complicit in the Zionist global plan to use open orders and multiculturalism" to eradicate opposition to "Zionist hegemony" and the subservience of all others. In 2017, Steele chatted with former Klan leader [David Duke](#) on the latter's website about "his [Steele's] activities in the struggle against Zionist supremacy." The United States, Steele [told an Iranian newspaper](#) in 2019, "must eradicate the Zionist pest from our homeland."

Although the Arise USA! Tour was announced with great fanfare, attendance (and revenue) from early events was underwhelming, and the tour had to be scaled back significantly.



# Richard Mack and Indoctrinating Law Enforcement



*Richard Mack pamphlet promoting his county sheriff theory.*

**A**lthough anti-government extremists tend to be hostile to law enforcement—and have assaulted or even killed a number of law enforcement officers over the years—they have also exhibited a longstanding interest in sharing their ideas with that community, especially local law enforcement, based on the premise that sympathetic law enforcement officers would not enforce unpopular laws, such as income tax laws or gun regulations.

In the 1990s, the most prominent police recruiter within the “patriot” movement was former Phoenix police officer Jack McLamb, founder of the group Police Against the New World Order and publisher of the related *Aid & Abet* magazine. As McLamb became less active with age and infirmity (he died in 2014), a successor arose in 2009, when Stewart Rhodes, an attorney and former Army officer, started [The Oath Keepers](#). This new group had the particular goal of spreading militia ideology to current and former military personnel, first responders and police officers. The Oath Keepers soon became one of the largest groups associated with the militia movement.

Richard Mack was one of the founding members of The Oath Keepers, served on its board and actively promoted the group. For Rhodes—who has no law enforcement background himself—Mack was an ideal spokesperson, and the Oath Keepers featured him as often as they could.

His involvement with the Oath Keepers seems to have reenergized Mack as well. In 2009, Mack published his pamphlet, “County Sheriff: America’s Last Hope,” which promoted his thesis that the county sheriff was the “last line of defense” for the preservation of liberty, that the sheriff had the power to oppose any perceived

“tyranny” (including a federal or state law) in their jurisdiction and that the sheriff even has the power to call out the militia to support their efforts. As many people recognized, Mack’s argument was not original but was borrowed wholesale from [the Posse Comitatus](#), a violent anti-government extremist group active in the 1970s-80s that eventually evolved into the sovereign citizen movement.

From 2009-2011, Mack promoted his county sheriff thesis at Oath Keepers events and anywhere else he could find an audience. Eventually, Mack decided to start his own organization and use his stature as a former sheriff to reach other sheriffs; he founded the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA) in 2011.

# Mack and CSPOA

**W**ith CSPOA at his disposal, Mack no longer needed Rhodes and the Oath Keepers (he eventually parted ways with them, departing from the board). CSPOA would be very Mack-centric, although Mack did bring on board Rick Dalton as his right-hand man. Dalton, a retired Mesa, Arizona, police officer, previously served as a key figure in Jack McLamb's Police Against the New World Order.

Like the Oath Keepers, CSPOA would be open to anybody (the cost of yearly membership is currently \$99), but unlike the Oath Keepers, it had a narrow focus: the office of the county sheriff. There are around 3100 sheriffs in the United States, and they became Mack's key audience and target. When a California anti-immigrant group held an early fundraiser for CSPOA in March 2011, it declared that Mack "is working tirelessly to educate Sheriffs nationwide to understand their Oath of Office and enforce the Constitutionally protected rights of the people they serve."

Mack reached out to sheriffs via mailers and surveys, as well as individually. When Mack held a speaking event, he invited nearby sheriffs to attend. Mack was also vocal in praising sheriffs who took actions he approved of, calling them "constitutional sheriffs." Soon, CSPOA began handing out the "Constitutional Sheriff of the Year" award; winners have included controversial Wisconsin sheriff [David Clarke, Jr.](#), who described Black Lives Matter as a hate group and claimed [they would join with the terrorist group ISIS to destroy American society](#), as well as Nick Finch, [a Florida sheriff who unlawfully released a man arrested for a firearms felony and was suspended by the governor](#). A Washington state sheriff, Bob Songer, received the award for refusing to enforce a state gun control initiative.

It didn't take long before some sheriffs responded favorably to Mack's entreaties, joining CSPOA, showing up for or even speaking at his events, or referring to themselves as "constitutional sheriffs" and repeating or paraphrasing Mack's claims about the powers of the sheriff. A number of sheriffs, especially in Western states, already had a long history of right-wing activism or opposition to the federal government. These included [Glenn Palmer](#), the long-time sheriff of Grant County, Oregon, who vocally supported Ammon Bundy and his band of anti-government extremists who seized control of the [Malheur National Wildlife Refuge](#) in 2016, meeting with them and calling them "patriots." (Palmer's support of the Bundy extremists may have cost him his next election). Another prominent CSPOA supporter was [Dar Leaf](#), sheriff of Barry County, Michigan. In 2020, Leaf [appeared onstage at a protest with militia members who later would be charged with plotting to kidnap the governor of Michigan](#). After their arrest, he suggested the plotters might have been trying to make a citizen's arrest of the governor.

A few Eastern state sheriffs—where the powers of the sheriff had been significantly curtailed—also joined Mack's group.

ADL has identified dozens of sheriffs who have joined CSPOA or otherwise associated themselves with the group (this includes some who joined while sheriff but no longer hold the position), as well as a handful of police officers and a few state and local elected officials. It is remarkable that serving, high-ranking law enforcement officers would so readily link themselves to an extremist group.

The broader influence of the CSPOA is even more notable; a number of sheriffs across the country now refer to themselves as “constitutional sheriffs” even while leaving open the question of whether they have any formal ties to CSPOA. CSPOA has moreover inspired many people across the country—sometimes with no law enforcement experience at all—to run for the office of sheriff. For example, after the sheriff of Idaho’s Ada County resigned in 2021, several candidates stepped forward for consideration by county commissioners who had the responsibility of selecting a replacement sheriff to serve for the remainder of the term. These candidates, included Doug Traubel, author of a book called *Red Badge: A Veteran Peace Officer’s Commentary on the Marxist Subversion of American Law Enforcement & Culture*. Traubel claimed that “Islam is the culture of death” and that “Jews” were to blame for the creation of the Soviet Union and “led the Bolshevik revolution.” Traubel openly identified himself with the “constitutional sheriffs.” He was not selected.

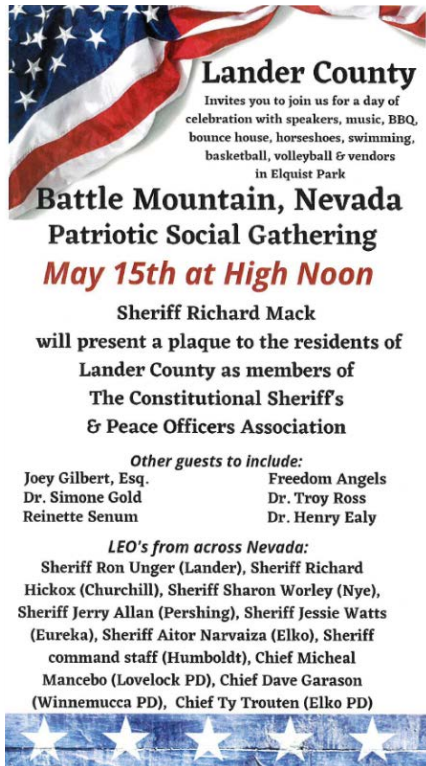
Several years ago, the Southern Poverty Law Center attempted to find out how many sheriffs actually supported Mack, and reached out to 500 or so sheriffs whom Mack had publicly praised. Reportedly, 50-60 were willing to confirm their support. Based on that, as well as other sheriffs who had public ties or who had made statements, the SPLC estimated that “probably...several hundred sheriffs” were supportive of Mack.

Mack has claimed that some of his national CSPOA events have been attended by more than 100 sheriffs and that several hundred sheriffs are members. The organization Political Research Associates has noted that nearly a quarter (7 of 30) of the people who make up the leadership of the National Sheriffs Association Board of Directors and Executive Committee had ties to CSPOA.

What is clear is that over the past 10 years, Richard Mack has succeeded in spreading his extremist ideas to a substantial minority of sheriff’s offices in the United States. This has been possible in large part because Mack has successfully framed his sheriff concepts as an antidote to gun control measures. Many of the people who have adopted the “constitutional sheriff” position have done so because of their views on firearms.

Mack has also exhibited considerable ability to exploit any current situation to promote his views. In 2020-2021, Mack helped engineer a considerable—and successful— CSPOA pivot from guns to the coronavirus, promoting the idea of “constitutional sheriffs” protecting citizens from the tyranny of lockdowns, mask-wearing and other virus containment measures. Numerous sheriffs have come forward to oppose stay-at-home orders or similar decrees, and right-wing media, including Fox News, have given many of them prominent platforms. Many (though not all) of these sheriffs have ties to CSPOA, but even those who do not help spread the notion of “sheriff’s resistance,” which indirectly but substantially benefits CSPOA.

# County Membership



CSPOA event flyer announcing Lander County joining CSPOA.

“in Washington [state] the sheriff [Brad Rogers] has declared Klickitat County to be a Constitutional County against the opposition of the Commissioners loyal to the deep state.”

Most recently, in August 2021, Clay County, Nebraska, Board member L. Wayne Johnson received a proposed resolution from CSPOA that would have Clay County join the group. Johnson allegedly “considered, but ultimately rejected” the resolution to join. However, he did say he would introduce a different resolution that “includes many of the beliefs of [CSPOA],” including its contention that sheriffs can reject enforcement of federal and state laws.

**T**he general growth of “sheriff’s resistance” may have played a role in one of the latest CSPOA developments: the rise of “memberships” linked not to individuals (sheriffs or otherwise) – but rather to entire counties.

In May 2021, Mack announced that Nevada’s Lander County was the first “CSPOA County.” According to Mack, Lander county manager Bert Ramos reached out to CSPOA and asked to be listed as a member county, marking the first time that an entire governmental entity had aligned itself with CSPOA. According to Ramos, the county commissioners voted 4-1 to join CSPOA. A local official confirmed to ADL that the county—or, rather, its taxpayers—had paid CSPOA a \$2,500 membership fee.

In June 2021, county commissioners in Elko County, Nevada, approved a measure linking their county to CSPOA. This was celebrated by an “Arise USA” tour event at which Mack was the main speaker and Robert David Steele provided his own thoughts on “Traitors, Wall Street criminals and satanic pedophiles.”

The Arise USA! website reported in July that Lyon County, Nevada, had similarly become a “constitutional county” and that

# “Training” Law Enforcement

**T**he most disturbing tactic used by Mack (and CSPOA) are efforts to use “trainings” as a way to indoctrinate law enforcement officers into the ideology of anti-government extremist movement. This ploy plays into Mack’s strengths as a speaker and exploits his background in law enforcement, as well as his role in overturning the Brady Law. Mack’s trainings are often described as teaching “Constitutional principles.”

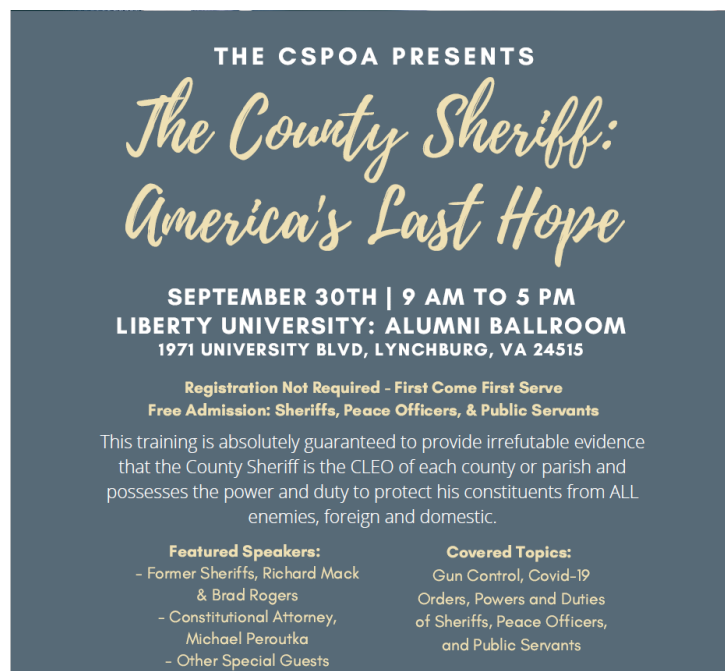
Mack’s efforts to secure law enforcement audiences predate CSPOA itself. In 2010, for example, Mack circulated an online petition to convince the Sheriff’s Association of Texas to let him present at their 132nd Annual Training Conference. That same year, he issued an “open invitation” to all law enforcement officers to attend his “Sheriff Mack Seminar” in Maine, where he divided his presentation into two sessions, one for law enforcement only and the other for the general public.

Mack intended from the beginning that a big part of CSPOA’s agenda would be training law enforcement. He fundraised on the idea of sponsoring a “National Training Program” and covering the travel costs for sheriffs around the country to attend his seminars. CSPOA’s first big event was its first national convention, held in Las Vegas in January 2012 and dubbed “No Sheriff Left Behind.” Mack subsequently claimed that between 115-120 sheriffs appeared at the event, a figure that is impossible to confirm.

Over the years, Mack continued CSPOA’s outreach efforts to law enforcement, alerting local sheriffs whenever he was presenting in their area and typically offering them free access to his events. In 2016, Mack toyed with the idea of offering “certification training,” in which law enforcement officers would come to a two-day seminar, get “certified,” then return to their states and offer that training locally. That same year, he claimed to have trained more than 400 sheriffs.

A typical CSPOA training might be like one held at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, in September 2020. Dubbed a “Free Constitutional Training Seminar for all Sheriffs, Peace Officers and Public Servants,” it featured Mack, former Indiana sheriff Brad Rogers, and “constitutional attorney” Michael Peroutka (best known for running for president in 2004 on the far right Constitution Party ticket, and for having been a member of the racist neo-Confederate group [League of the South](#)).

In a video advertising the training, Mack asked, “How many of you have been sick and tired of this mask stuff? And how many of you are tired of being pushed around and victimized by our own government officials? Can you believe this is all happening?” Mack urged viewers to ask their own sheriffs to attend, and to offer them financial assistance to do so.



Advertisement for a CSPOA Training session in Lynchburg, VA, September 2020.

the Texas equivalent of POST), for which attendees could get educational credit. The event was cohosted by CSPOA and the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office. During the event, "constitutional attorney" KrisAnne Hall, a frequent Mack collaborator, reportedly told law enforcement attendees that state and county laws are superior to federal law and that the county sheriff is the most powerful elected official in the country. According to a reporter with the *New American*, the publication of the right-wing extremist John Birch Society, which covered the event, Hall also explained to the audience that it is a sheriff's duty to ignore federal gun laws. It is not clear how many sheriffs or other law enforcement officers attended, but nearly 40 people posed for photographs afterwards.

In June 2021, the Montana Department of Justice announced a four-hour POST-certified "Constitutional Training" event by Mack in Flathead County later that month. The announcement openly proclaimed that Mack asserts sheriffs can refuse to enforce federal laws they claim are unconstitutional. After news got out, the Flathead County Sheriff's Office—which had sponsored the event—cancelled it because of alleged staffing limitations. However, the course remains POST-certified, and theoretically Mack could offer it again. An ADL inquiry subsequently revealed that state officials had not been provided with lesson plans before they certified it. Mack told a local newspaper that he had hosted state-approved law enforcement trainings in 10 different states.

In 2021, Mack and CSPOA organized three trainings—one in Montana and two in Texas—that were actually officially certified by POST ("Peace Officer Standards and Training") officials in those states, thus qualifying law enforcement attendees at these extremist events for continuing education credits. The idea behind POST certification of law enforcement trainings is to maintain minimum standards of quality, objectivity and relevance for programs designed for law enforcement.

In late February 2021, CSPOA held a two-day training in The Woodlands north of Houston. CSPOA billed "The County Sheriff: America's Last Hope" as an official training event of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Training (TCOLE,

**Sheriff Richard Mack**  
Presents  
**CONSTITUTIONAL TRAINING**

Friday, June 25, 2021  
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM  
(Lunch will be provided)

**\$30 per officer**

Red Lion Hotel  
20 N. Main Street  
Kalispell, MT 59901

This is a 4-hour POST Credit educational program for Sheriffs, Deputies and Peace Officers only

CONSTITUTIONAL SHERIFFS & PEACE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION  
UPHOLD - DEFEND - PROTECT - SERVE

Former Arizona Sheriff Richard Mack is founder of CSPOA and established the "County Sheriff Project" movement, both of whom reaffirm the constitutional power of the Sheriff to refuse to enforce unconstitutional federal laws.

Richard Mack is also known for his leading role in the Supreme Court victory (*Printz v United States*) for State Sovereignty.

Advertisement for Richard Mack's "Constitutional Training" course in Kalispell, Montana, June 2021.

CSPOA returned to Texas in July 2021 for two additional "The County Sheriff: America's Last Hope" training events for "sheriffs, peace officers and elected officials." Held back-to-back in Burnet and Crockett, Texas, with the assistance of the Burnet County Sheriff's Department and the Houston County Sheriff's Department, these events were billed as official TCOLE training opportunities. A flier for the trainings informed attendees that they would, among other things, learn "Why sheriffs should not enforce Covid-19 lockdowns, restrictions and mask wearing decrees & legislation," and why "Sheriffs should also prevent others from forcing citizens to submit to unlawful Covid-19 restrictions."

As was the case in Montana, it is not clear that TCOLE took any precautions to ensure that Mack's "trainings" were suitable for law enforcement, that they taught accurate law and policy, were taught by people with appropriate qualifications and credentials or were in any way different from Mack's typical extremist events.

Collectively, these events represent one of the most successful attempts in recent decades by anti-government extremists to infiltrate law enforcement, even securing the official imprimaturs and approvals of the states of Montana and Texas. It is almost a certainty that Mack will continue his efforts to acquire official approvals from more states for his "trainings" of law enforcement officers—events that are not professional trainings at all but rather delivery platforms for potentially dangerous anti-government propaganda.



# Policy Recommendations

The tactics used by Richard Mack and CSPOA to spread anti-government extremist propaganda to law enforcement officials and to recruit them into that cause are troubling, especially because Mack can boast of some success.

Particularly problematic are his attempts to pass off extremist propaganda presentations as trainings for law enforcement and to get official sanction for them from state-level Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) agencies. His successes in Texas and Montana raise concerns for agencies around the country.

ADL recommends that states:

**Review training procedures for law enforcement.** States should review training curricula to ensure that trainings serve a legitimate and specific law enforcement purpose, teach principles that are in accord with current federal and state law and judicial rulings, and do not attempt to spread partisan or ideological viewpoints. Agencies should also consider vetting outside entities offering such trainings to ensure they are not connected to or part of an extremist-related group and specifically to ensure they are not connected to an extremist group seeking to infiltrate or propagandize law enforcement. Agencies should establish a process for external review to verify training complies with these values. Agencies should keep careful records of training and be responsive to concerns about trainings. Training methods that do not comply with these principles must be immediately halted.

**Review policies and procedures for addressing law enforcement affiliations with extremist movements.** State and local law enforcement agencies should ensure that officers do not promote (including via tattoos, vehicle decals, and clothing patches) extremist groups or movements that jeopardize community security. Agencies should consider implementing policies and procedures to better prevent extremists from being hired as law enforcement officers. This may include additional background evaluation to ensure potential recruits are not engaging in extremist activity, promoting extremist ideologies or are members of an extremist group or cause. Implementation of these recommendations should be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the U.S. Constitution and applicable laws.

ADL urges federal officials to:

**Ensure adequate budgets to assist states with needed training.** Throughout the appropriations process, Members of Congress should provide resources for training opportunities for law enforcement to recognize and combat extremism.

All officials must:

**Speak out against hate and raise awareness of extremist propaganda.** Americans nationwide must be better aware of extremist indicators and propaganda, some of which may not be obviously extremist in nature for people with no background knowledge. Further, hearing officials echo the need for hope over hate, and justice and fair treatment over discrimination, can help build momentum in communities to reject hateful rhetoric.

## Support

This report is a project of ADL's Center on Extremism, whose work is supported in part by the following generous donors as well as numerous others:

Roman Abramovich

The ADL Lewy Family Institute for Combating Antisemitism

Anonymous

Catena Foundation

Charles and Mildred Schnurmacher Foundation

Crown Family Philanthropies

David Berg Foundation

Joyce and Irving Goldman Family Foundation

Lillian and Larry Goodman Foundations

The Marlene Nathan Meyerson Family Foundation

The Nancy K. Silverman Foundation

Nathan Cummings Foundation

New England Revolution Foundation

Quadrivium Foundation

Zegar Family Foundation

## ADL Leadership

**Esta Gordon Epstein**  
Chair, Board of Directors

**Glen S. Lewy**  
President, Anti-Defamation League Foundation

**Jonathan A. Greenblatt**  
CEO and National Director

## The ADL Center on Extremism

**Adam Neufeld**  
SVP, Programs

**Oren Segal**  
Vice President,  
Center on Extremism

**Mark Pitcavage**  
Senior Research Fellow,  
Center on Extremism

For additional and updated resources please see:  
[www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org)

Copies of this publication are available in the Rita and Leo Greenland Library and Research Center.

©2021 Anti-Defamation League  
Printed in the United States of America All Rights Reserved.

## Take Action

**You can make a difference in the fight against antisemitism and hate in your community and beyond.**

- **Sign up at [adl.org](https://www.adl.org)** for our email newsletters to learn more about fighting antisemitism, extremism and hate of all kinds – and ways you can get more involved.
- If you have experienced or witnessed an incident of antisemitism, extremism, bias, bigotry or hate, please **report it** to ADL.
- **Engage in** respectful dialogue to build understanding among people with different views.
- Connect with your local **ADL region** for more ways to take action in your community.

 [adl.org](https://www.adl.org)

 [Anti-Defamation League](https://www.facebook.com/ADL)

 [@ADL](https://twitter.com/ADL)

 [@adl\\_national](https://www.instagram.com/adl_national)

**ADL**<sup>®</sup>  
FIGHTING HATE FOR GOOD