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January 26, 2018

The Honorable John Thune
Chair
Commerce, Science and Transportation
Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Minority Member
Commerce, Science and Transportation
Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Thune and Ranking Member Nelson:

We write to provide the views of the Anti-Defamation League for the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee hearings on "Terrorism and Social Media: #IsBigTechDoingEnough?" held January 17, 2018. We would ask that this statement be included as part of the official hearings record.

The Anti-Defamation League

Since 1913, the mission of the Anti-Defamation League has been to "stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment for all." For decades, the League has fought against bigotry and anti-Semitism by exposing extremist groups who spread hate and incite violence. The League is now the foremost non-governmental authority on domestic terrorism, extremism, organized hate groups, hate crimes, and cyberhate. Through our Center on Extremism, whose experts monitor a variety of extremist and terrorist movements, ADL plays a leading role in exposing extremist movements and activities, online and offline, while helping communities and government agencies alike in combatting them. ADL's team of experts – analysts, investigators, researchers, and linguists – use cutting-edge technology to track and disrupt extremists and terrorists worldwide. The League provides law enforcement officials and the public with extensive resources, such as its analytic reports on extremist trends and its Hate Symbols¹ and Terror Symbols databases.

ADL's Center for Technology and Society

In 2017, ADL launched its Center for Technology and Society (CTS), based in Silicon Valley, California. In a society riddled with cyberhate, online harassment, and misuses of technology, CTS serves as a resource to technology platforms and develops proactive solutions. CTS aims for global impacts and applications in an increasingly borderless space. It is a force for innovation, producing cutting-edge research to enable online civility, protect vulnerable populations, support digital citizenship, and engage youth. CTS builds on ADL's century of experience promoting a world without hate, and supplies the tools to make that a possibility both online and offline.

¹ <https://www.adl.org/education/references/hate-symbols>

ADL Community Support Center

Anti-Defamation League, 605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158-3560 T 212.885.7700 www.adl.org

ADL's Center on Extremism

ADL's Center on Extremism is ADL's research and investigative arm, and a clearinghouse for valuable, up-to-the minute information about extremism of all types – from white supremacists to extremists motivated by a radical interpretation of Islam. For decades, Center on Extremism analysts have tracked extremist activity in the U.S. and abroad, assisted law enforcement with countless investigations, and helped disrupt and prevent multiple terror attacks

Assisting Law Enforcement

ADL is the largest non-governmental provider in the United States of training for law enforcement on terrorism, extremism, and hate crimes, as well as on building trust between police and the people and communities they serve. Each year, ADL experts deliver customized, in-depth training on these subjects to more than 15,000 federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel at hundreds of agencies. ADL's dual role as a preeminent civil rights organization, and as a strong and trusted partner of law enforcement, gives us the credibility to offer a continuum of service that influences the way law enforcement fights hate and interacts with the communities they serve. ADL provides law enforcement with information, expertise, and actionable intelligence to prevent, disrupt, and respond to those extremists who cross the line from espousing hateful ideologies to committing violent, criminal acts, thus protecting the Jewish community and all Americans. ADL's Advanced Training School, a highly acclaimed and sought after three-day program on domestic and international terror threats, has trained more than 1,100 senior law enforcement executives since it was launched in 2003.

The Impact and Disturbing Prevalence of Anti-Semitism and Hate Violence

All Americans have a stake in effective response to violent bigotry. These crimes demand priority attention because of their special impact. Bias crimes are intended to intimidate the victim and members of the victim's community, leaving them feeling fearful, isolated, and vulnerable. As former FBI Director James Comey said in a 2014 speech to the ADL, crimes motivated by hate and prejudice “strike at the heart of one's identity. They strike at our sense of self, our sense of belonging. The end result is loss: loss of trust, loss of dignity and, in the worst case, loss of life.” Failure to address this unique type of crime often causes an isolated incident to explode into widespread community tension. The damage done by hate crimes, therefore, cannot be measured solely in terms of physical injury or dollars and cents. By making members of targeted communities fearful, angry, and suspicious of other groups – and of the power structure that is supposed to protect them – these incidents can damage the fabric of our society and fragment communities.

Data must drive policy. The first step in addressing the problem of anti-Semitism and hate violence is to know its nature and magnitude.

ADL Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents

Since 1979, the Anti-Defamation League has been compiling an annual *Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents* (“the *Audit*”). We track anti-Semitic incidents not only because we are a Jewish community civil rights organization, but because anti-Semitism, the longest and most persistent form of prejudice, threatens security and democracy and is an indicator of the health of a society as a whole.

The *Audit* includes both criminal and non-criminal acts of harassment and intimidation, including distribution of hate propaganda, threats, and slurs. Compiled using information

provided by victims, law enforcement, and community leaders, each recorded incident specifically was evaluated by a member of ADL's professional staff who personally verified the information. In short, our *Audit* provides an annual snapshot of one specific aspect of the nationwide bias crime problem and sheds light on broader trends. The *Audit* assists ADL in developing and enhancing our education, training, and outreach programs to counter and prevent the spread of anti-Semitism and other forms of hate and bigotry.² Through the *Audit*, ADL has modeled the role that communities can take in elevating the need for monitoring and reporting hate crime. We strongly have promoted the notion that if the Jewish community wants law enforcement officials to take anti-Semitic acts seriously, we must do so – and report them to the police.

New *Audit* data released in late 2017 shows that the number of anti-Semitic incidents remained significantly higher in 2017 compared to 2016, with an increase of 67 percent over the first three quarters of the year. In addition to the significant bump in the first quarter of 2017, we also saw a distinct increase after the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in August.

Specifically, our report³ documented that from January 1 to September 30 there were 1,299 anti-Semitic incidents across the United States, including physical assaults, vandalism, and attacks on Jewish institutions. And that total already exceeds the 1,266 incidents reported in all of last year.

Compared to 2016, each of the first three quarters of 2017 had a higher number of reported incidents. These incidents peaked during the first quarter of 2017, and the pace slowed somewhat in the second and third quarters. An additional 632 anti-Semitic incidents were reported in the second and third quarters of the year, surpassing the 488 incidents reported during the same period in 2016.

Tracking and Responding to Hate Crimes in the United States

The FBI has been tracking and documenting hate crimes reported from federal, state, and local law enforcement officials since 1991 under the Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990 (HCSA).⁴ Though clearly incomplete (as discussed below), the Bureau's annual HCSA reports provide the best single national snapshot of bias-motivated criminal activity in the United States.⁵

In 2016, the most recent report available, the FBI documented 6,121 hate crimes reported by 15,254 law enforcement agencies across the country – a five percent increase over 2015 figures (5,850), with nearly one hate crime committed every 86 minutes of every

² For example, after three years of tracking significant data increases, ADL drafted the first model state hate crime penalty-enhancement law and promoted its enactment across the country. Today, the federal government and 45 states and the District of Columbia have enacted hate crime laws, modeled on, or similar to, our original draft. <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/ADL-updated-2016-Excel-State-Hate-Crime-Statutes.pdf>

³ <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-data-shows-anti-semitic-incidents-continue-surge-in-2017-compared-to-2016>

⁴ 28 U.S.C. § 534 (1990).

⁵ The Act has also proven to be a powerful mechanism to confront violent bigotry, increasing public awareness of the problem and sparking improvements in the local response of the criminal justice system to hate violence – since in order to effectively report hate crimes, police officials must be trained to identify and respond to them.

day.⁶ Of the 6,121 total incidents, 2,922 were motivated by racial bias (47.7 percent), 1,076 by sexual orientation bias (17.6 percent), and 1,273 by religious bias (20.8 percent).

Crimes directed against Jews increased three percent,⁷ and reported crimes against Muslims increased 16.3 percent, from 257 in 2015 to 307 in 2016. The number of reported anti-Muslim hate crimes in 2016 was, in fact, the second most ever – second only to the series of backlash crimes in 2001 after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.⁸

In 2016, 15,254 law enforcement agencies participated in the HCSA data collection effort – the second highest participation rate ever. However, the FBI report documented 92 cities over 100,000 in population that either affirmatively reported zero (0) hate crimes – or did not participate in the program at all.⁹ Accurate, reliable data is essential to build community trust and shape law enforcement tactics and deterrent policies.

Extremists and Hate Groups Emboldened

It is important to understand that the vast majority of anti-Semitic incidents and other hate crimes are not carried out by extremists or organized hate groups. But the extraordinarily polarizing and divisive election campaign – which featured harshly anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric, as well as anti-Semitic dog whistles – coarsened the public discourse and fostered an atmosphere in which white supremacists and other anti-Semites and bigots felt emboldened and believed that their views were becoming more broadly acceptable. This trend has continued with the Trump administration's repeated flirtation with these elements – retweeting their content and quoting their heroes. And the President's repeated reluctance to address extremism, racism, and anti-Semitism – or his implied approval or promotion of the same – has helped to mainstream these toxic ideas.

Right Wing Extremism

Over the past 10 years (2007-2016), domestic extremists of all kinds have killed at least 372 people in the United States. Of those deaths, approximately 71% were at the hands of right-wing extremists such as white supremacists, sovereign citizens, and militia adherents.¹⁰ Right-wing extremists have been responsible for plotting at least 150 acts of terror in the United States over the past 25 years.¹¹

⁶ <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016>. The FBI's HCSA training manual is now the single most important, most inclusive hate crime training resource available for law enforcement officials. <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime-data-collection-guidelines-and-training-manual.pdf>

⁷ As has happened every year since 1990, a disturbingly high and disproportionate percentage of the total number of reported religion-based crimes (54 percent) were directed against Jews and Jewish institutions. In fact, since 1990, anti-Jewish hate crimes have been between 50 and 85 percent of the religious-based hate crimes – an especially disturbing fact when you consider that Jews are less than three percent of Americans.

⁸ Primarily because of mistrust of police, crimes against Muslim Americans are underreported. Muslim Advocates has earned a reputation as an essential complement to FBI numbers, the most important non-governmental source of information on anti-Muslim hate crimes and vandalism directed against Mosques. The organization maps anti-Muslim hate crimes and maintains a portal for individuals to report incidents online. <https://www.muslimadvocates.org/map-anti-muslim-hate-crimes/>

⁹ <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/FBI%20HCSA%202015%20Cities%20that%20DNR%20or%20Reported%20Zero%20ML.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/murder-and-extremism-in-the-united-states-in-2016>

¹¹ <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-report-exposes-right-wing-terrorism-threat-in-the-us>

Right-wing extremists choose many targets for their anger, most frequently government, law enforcement, and racial and religious targets. The most common religious targets are Jews and Muslims, while the most common racial targets were African Americans, including multi-racial targets.

The white supremacists that target minority communities for acts of terror and violence include adherents of every major segment of their movement, including neo-Nazis, racist skinheads, the religious sect Christian Identity, and the Alt Right. The militia movement has especially embraced a particular type of bigotry: anti-Muslim hatred. This Islamophobia has taken numerous forms, from armed protests in front of mosques to a major terrorist plot in October 2016 in Garden City, Kansas, where three militia members were arrested in connection with an alleged plot to blow up an apartment complex that primarily housed Muslim Somali-American residents. We should be concerned that the militia movement could produce similar terror attempts aimed at Muslims in the future.¹²

The social networking revolution from 2006-2009 made it easier for extremist ideas and tactics to spread very far, very quickly. This facilitated the emergence of new extremist movements, such as the white supremacist alt right, to quickly gain followers, and helped established movements, such as the sovereign citizen movement, to rapidly resurge. Social networking has also provided opportunities for extremists to meet each other and even to plot online. The October 2008 school attack plot in Tennessee and the Georgia militia plot of February 2014 are two examples where extremists who connected online later met in person to plot terrorist acts.¹³

White Supremacist Murders More Than Double in 2017

The number of white supremacist murders in the United States more than doubled in 2017 compared to the previous year, far surpassing murders committed by domestic Islamic extremists and making 2017 the fifth deadliest year on record for extremist violence since 1970. In its annual assessment of extremist-related killings, ADL's Center on Extremism found white supremacists and other far-right extremists were responsible for 59 percent of all extremist-related fatalities (18 in total) in the U.S. in 2017, up dramatically from 20 percent in 2016. The most recent ADL data shows that over the last decade a total of 71 percent of all fatalities have been linked to domestic right-wing extremists, while 26 percent of the killings were committed by Islamic extremists. The other 3 percent of deaths were carried out by extremists not falling into either category. The 18 white supremacist murders included several killings linked to the alt right as that movement expanded its operations in 2017 from the internet into the physical world – raising the likely possibility of more such violent acts in the future.

Funding Hate and Terrorism Online

Most white supremacists fund their own activities in the movement – whatever those activities may be. They rely on their own paychecks or, occasionally, a side job, such as giving white supremacist tattoos or selling white supremacist paraphernalia. Many online selling sites, such as E-bay, have long since cracked down on the sale of white supremacist merchandise, making even such items more difficult to vend. Other avenues still remain

¹² <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/dark-constant-rage-25-years-of-right-wing-terrorism-in-united-states>

¹³ <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/dark-constant-rage-25-years-of-right-wing-terrorism-in-united-states>

open. Many white supremacist writers, for example, use Amazon's CreateSpace self-publishing service to sell their racist books and pamphlets. Hate music, too, can frequently be found for sale on Amazon, as MP3 files or other formats. Some music services, such as Spotify and iTunes, have started to remove some such music.

Most hate groups seeking dues and donations cannot easily use electronic forms of payment, because companies like PayPal will not let white supremacists use their services. The Knights Party, for example, allows people to "purchase" donations online but they must send checks or money orders by mail. The National Policy Institute, the "think tank" of alt right ideologue Richard Spencer, complains on its own site that "each of our online donation processors has been successively torpedoed by Silicon Valley," and asks that people send the traditional check or money order. Some white supremacists have had more success with credit card processing than PayPal but, even here, groups run into problems. In September 2017, the Institute for Historical Review, a Holocaust denier organization, claimed that it was "a target of bigotry" after the company that had been processing its credit card donations cancelled their account. Another Holocaust denier entity, The Barnes Review, similarly lost their credit card services in 2017, as did the anti-Semitic American Free Press. "As you can imagine," the Press informed its followers and subscribers, "this is creating a very large funding problem for us."

Organizations who have lost services in this manner can often eventually find another processor but it is time-consuming and, in the meantime, it is harder for them to raise funds. This is particularly problematic for white supremacist entities that are or that also run businesses, because it interrupts the cash flow.

Crowdfunding

The most significant new type of funding for the white supremacist movement is crowdfunding or crowdsourcing and can be used by both individuals and groups. Essentially an extension of social media, crowdfunding consists of using dedicated Internet platforms such as GoFundMe, Patreon, FundRazr, Indiegogo and Kickstarter, among others, to solicit and raise money for specific products, projects, or general support from among a wide base of people. Today, crowdfunding is used to finance an amazing range of activities, from moviemaking to wrestling camps.

White supremacists quickly discovered for themselves the usefulness of such platforms. One early effort by white supremacists occurred on Indiegogo, where white supremacist Kyle Hunt launched a fund drive in 2014 to produce "Stop White Genocide" banners for planned White Man March events across the country. With 50 backers contributing money, Hunt quickly raised over \$3,500, well over his stated goal of \$2,000. A similar campaign to purchase an aerial "March against White Genocide" sign (i.e., one pulled by a plane) was also successful. Canadian white supremacist Veronica "Evalion" Bouchard successfully raised over \$1,600 on Indiegogo in 2016 for a "new studio set up" to use to make racist videos. Other white supremacists have rushed to take advantage of such opportunities. The American Freedom Party started a campaign on GoFundMe ostensibly to protect white South Africans from "genocide," while the Aryan Renaissance Society used the same platform to raise money to commemorate the birthday of Adolf Hitler.

The very visibility of crowdfunding efforts tends to work against white supremacists in the long run, as non-racists notice such campaigns and complain to the sites hosting them. As most of the larger, mainstream crowdfunding platforms have policies prohibiting racist uses

of the platforms, this frequently results in campaigns being suspended or deleted. Some platforms became more sensitive to such issues after the Charlottesville “Unite the Right” white supremacist event, where there was considerable violence, including one fatal incident. White supremacists sometimes try to get around such policing efforts by creating misleading or generic campaigns, explaining their real purpose to other white supremacists via social media or white supremacist websites. For example, some white supremacists set up GoFundMe pages to raise money to attend the Charlottesville rally, using innocuous terms like “attend a family reunion.” Elsewhere, they would reveal the real purpose to other white supremacists and urge people to contribute. However, such efforts usually have limited effectiveness because of their cloaked nature. Consequently, one of the most recent shifts in white supremacist crowdfunding has been an attempt to find – or create – platforms that could be used by and for explicitly white supremacist groups and individuals. In 2017, a variety of such fringe platforms appeared, including GoyFundMe, Hatreon, and WeSearchr. White supremacists use such platforms to raise money to produce white supremacist merchandise, to pay legal fees for white supremacists with civil or criminal legal issues, to fund book projects and speaking tours, and even to raise money for people to attend extremist events. The platforms have the advantage that they can process credit card donations (and in some cases, bitcoin). Some white supremacists refer to the people who create such platforms as the “Alt-Tech.”

As with mainstream crowdfunding sites, the fringe sites are most successful when white supremacists seek relatively small amounts of money, but occasionally they can generate substantial returns. In 2017, a WeSearchr campaign to raise money to help white supremacist Andrew Anglin defend himself and his notorious Daily Stormer website from civil lawsuits has so far raised over \$159,399 from more than 2,000 contributors – a truly extraordinary amount. A number of contributors actually donated \$1,000 or more to Anglin’s defense. Less spectacular but still significant is the more than \$28,000 white supremacist Christopher Cantwell has raised through GoyFundMe for a legal defense against criminal charges brought against him for allegedly illegally using tear gas at Charlottesville.

The site Hatreon – a white supremacist clone of Patreon – allows people to become “patrons” of various white supremacist groups or individuals, supporting their work by monthly contributions. Examples of Hatreon supplicants include white supremacist hacker/troller Andrew “Weev” Auernheimer, currently receiving \$639 per month from 52 patrons; Stormfront creator Don Black, receiving \$302 per month from 13 patrons; Richard Spencer, receiving \$839 per month from 67 patrons; Counter-Currents publisher Greg Johnson, receiving \$703 per month from 48 patrons, and Andrew Anglin, whose 214 patrons are currently delivering to him \$7,863 per month. In other words, assuming people honor their commitments and the website successfully makes transactions, Anglin could theoretically generate nearly \$100,000 a year from this site alone. The future of such extremist crowdfunding sites is not clear. Several, such as Counter.Fund and Rootbocks, have had problems even getting off the ground, such as finding a payment processor willing to accept them. Others are likely to experience similar troubles in the future. It may be worth noting that past efforts by white supremacists to mimic other types of social networking sites have typically ended in failure. Moreover, given the size of the white supremacist movement, only modest campaigns or those involving a small group of white supremacist “celebrities,” are likely to have significant success. However, crowdfunding is a new money stream for white supremacists that simply did not exist before, which is troublesome enough.

White Supremacists on Campus: Unprecedented Recruitment Efforts Underway

ADL has documented that white supremacists are engaged in unprecedented outreach efforts on American college campuses – another sign that these hate groups feel emboldened by the current political climate.¹⁴ ADL's Center on Extremism has documented 309 incidents of white supremacist flyers, posters, stickers, or banners on 201 different college campuses in 42 states since September 1, 2016. Of those 309 incidents, 127 have occurred since the beginning of the fall semester this year (September 1, 2017). This is a significant increase compared to the same period in 2016 (from September 1, 2016, to November 27, 2016, we counted 30 incidents). Furthermore, Richard Spencer continues to make efforts to speak at public universities around the country in an attempt to promote white nationalism to young audiences.

White supremacists are mobilizing in hopes of translating their online activism to “real world” action, and campuses – and young people – are prime targets, in part because they are still figuring out who they are, and what they believe. Extremists also undoubtedly see value in recruiting a new generation that can carry the movement for years to come.

Longtime white supremacist Jared Taylor recently wrote on his website, American Renaissance, that colleges are of special interest “because they are bastions of anti-white propaganda.” Before he imploded publicly in February, Islamophobic and misogynist gadfly Milo Yiannopoulos told CNN, “I am speaking on college campuses because education ... is really what matters. It's a crucible where these bad ideas are formed. Bad ideas like ... progressive social justice, feminists, Black Lives Matter...”¹⁵

Yiannopoulos' appearances (some of which were cancelled) seem to have had an energizing impact on other racists. Nathan Damigo, founder of the white supremacist group Identity Evropa, has called Yiannopoulos “an inspiration,” and showed up at the (ultimately cancelled) Yiannopoulos speech at UC Davis, hoping to poach a few fans for his own cause, which he outlined in a tweet: “We will not rest until Alt-Right ideas are represented on campuses nationwide.”

While the vast majority of white supremacist campus actions involve hateful fliers (e.g., “Imagine a Muslim-Free America,”) and stickers (e.g., “Make America White Again”), white supremacists have also sent anti-Semitic faxes and, in the case of white supremacist Richard Spencer, delivered speeches on campus. Many of these incidents are linked to larger coordinated promotional efforts by white supremacist groups, like Identity Evropa's “Project Siege,” which includes actual campus recruitment visits, and American Vanguard's “Northern Propaganda Campaign.” Not coincidentally, these two groups are responsible for the majority of the white supremacist fliers and events tracked over the last several months.

In January, American Renaissance launched a hate-filled campus campaign, which for now seems to be limited to hanging “pro-white” propaganda posters. “Racial activists,” Jared Taylor wrote on the American Renaissance website, should place the “attractive posters” in “high-traffic areas” around campus. Racist fliers and posters have adorned parking garages, street signs, billboards, utility poles, and corridors.

¹⁴ <https://www.adl.org/blog/white-supremacists-on-campus-unprecedented-recruitment-efforts-underway>

¹⁵ <http://www.cnn.com/2017/02/02/us/milo-yiannopoulos-ivory-tower/index.html>

Andrew Auernheimer, a white supremacist hacker known as “Weev,” took targeting to the next technological level when he sent out anti-Semitic and racist fliers via many thousands of campus printers across the country. One flier, decorated with swastikas, read in part, “I unequivocally support the killing of children. I believe that our enemies need such a level of atrocity inflicted upon them ... So the hordes of our enemies from the blacks to the Jews to the federal agents are deserving of fates of violence so extreme that there is no limit to the acts by which can be done upon them in defense of the white race.” The fliers referenced *The Daily Stormer*, Andrew Anglin’s notoriously hateful neo-Nazi website.

These days, white supremacists are taking more forceful steps to establish a physical presence on campus. Identity Evropa was clear in its goals – and used fittingly “academic” language – when describing its “Project Siege” plans for the 2016-17 school year of talking to actual students: “Project Siege is the beginning of a long-term cultural war of attrition against the academia’s cultural Marxist narrative that is maintained and propagated into society through the indoctrination of the future managerial class. If we are to be successful in combating the current paradigm,” the online message read. “It is imperative that we create space for our ideas at universities across the country. Speaking with students and helping them unpack some of their assumptions while gaining name recognition for our organizations are the ways in which we will create the foundation for that space.”

White supremacist events on campus face particular scrutiny and, in some cases, speakers are able to circumvent the school altogether, avoiding heated debates over free speech rights. In December, when Richard Spencer spoke on the Texas A&M campus, he wasn’t there as a guest of the University. Instead, he spoke to supporters and onlookers in a room rented for the occasion by local neo-Nazi Preston Wiginton.

The Alt Right

The alt right is the newest segment of the white supremacist movement, a movement that already encompasses neo-Nazis, racist skinheads, “traditional” white supremacists such as Ku Klux Klan groups, Christian Identity adherents, and white supremacist prison gangs. The alt right emerged in the late 2000s from a variety of sources, including the online subculture of message boards and image boards like 4chan, 8chan, and Reddit, the online gaming subculture, the so-called men’s rights movement, and others. Richard Spencer emerged as its most well-known American spokesperson.

The ideology of the alt right, such as it is, is based on standard white supremacist beliefs about the need to protect the white race from a “rising tide of color,” combined with anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, nationalism, misogyny, and anti-LGBTQ beliefs. Demographically, the alt right is quite young and largely male; significantly, most adherents of the alt right are new to white supremacy and have not previously been part of other segments of the movement.

For most of its brief history, the alt right has largely existed online, with few entities that could be considered alt right “groups,” and few events related to the alt right taking place in the physical world. The 2016 presidential election campaign, however, changed the trajectory of the alt right, luring it more into the real world. Generally speaking, the alt right strongly supported Donald Trump’s candidacy and became active in supporting Trump and attacking his foes. After his victory, the alt right – mistakenly thinking it had played a significant role in Trump’s election, but correctly realizing it had grown considerably in 2016

thanks in large part to all the media attention it garnered – became emboldened, with many alt right activists more eager to organize or attend events in the real world.

As the alt right became more and more identified as part of the white supremacist movement, those adherents who shared most or all of its convictions – except overt white supremacy – sought to distance themselves from the white supremacists. Some of them began to refer to themselves as the “New Right,” but alt right white supremacists derisively referred to them as the “alt lite.” A public feud developed between the two factions in 2017.

One thing the factions could still agree on was hatred of the left. Left and progressive groups and movements in the United States reacted negatively to the election of Donald Trump, holding large protests after the election, at the inauguration, and afterwards. In particular, the antifa (short for anti-fascist), a collection of anarchist and far left groups, networks and individuals, became active protesting at some events involving hateful speakers such as Milo Yiannopoulos and Ann Coulter.

As antifa targeted what they perceived as bigotry and hate speech, the alt right and alt lite began showing up in public to confront them. So too did another segment of the far right, the militia movement. Part of the anti-government extremist sphere of the American far right rather than the white supremacist sphere, the militia movement has historically concentrated its anger on the federal government, which it views through a hostile, suspicious, and highly conspiratorial lens. However, the election of Trump, a candidate supported by the militia movement, caused the movement to look for new enemies other than the federal government and it quickly found them in the antifa, whom they described as “domestic terrorists,” and claimed were being trained in Syrian terrorist training camps, and who were covertly led and funded by liberal, Jewish philanthropist George Soros in an attempt to undermine and overthrow the Trump administration.

Throughout 2017, then, adherents from these various far right movements showed up at events, or arranged their own events, designed to clash with protesters from the left, especially antifa. From Boston to Berkeley, Portland to Houston, these confrontations took place, some of them violent. Often the only meaningful result from these events was to leave people wanting even more confrontation.

It is against this backdrop that the events at Charlottesville played themselves out.

Spotlight on Charlottesville: What Happened and Why

In the broadest sense, what took place in Charlottesville was due primarily to two factors: 1) the growth of the alt right and its transition from being largely an online phenomenon into one also active in “real world” events and activities, and 2) the effects the 2016 presidential election results have had on a number of ideological movements in the United States.

On August 11-12, 2017, a large white supremacist event, dubbed “Unite the Right,” occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia, ostensibly to protest the removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee in a local park. A torchlit parade the first evening of the event became violent, with clashes between white supremacists/neo-Nazis and counter-protesters; the violence continued and increased the next day, with the white supremacists responsible for the bulk of it. The worst example of such violence occurred when a white nationalist from Ohio drove his car into a crowd of protesters, killing one woman and injuring many more.

The Unite the Right rally was actually the third white supremacist event Charlottesville residents had had to endure last year. The first event occurred on May 13, when around 100 white supremacists gathered to protest the city council's decision to remove Confederate monuments from local parks. In the afternoon, they arranged a "flash mob" march to the Robert E. Lee monument, where speakers such as Richard Spencer and Nathan Damigo addressed the crowd of white supremacists. The crowd, in turn, chanted slogans such as "they will not replace us" and "Russia is our friend." That evening, the white supremacists returned to the park, with Tiki torches, to hold a torchlight parade.

That torchlight parade got considerable attention from both traditional and social media, causing organizers of the event to consider it a major success and to seek more of the same.

On July 8, the Loyal White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan staged their own rally in Charlottesville, with around 50 Klan members and supporters attending. They were opposed by more than a thousand counter-protesters, but law enforcement used physical barriers to separate the sides and escorted the white supremacists in and out of the park where they rallied. Several counter-protesters were arrested prior to the event for trying to block entrance to the park, while more were arrested after the event. Eventually police fired several tear gas canisters into the crowd to force its dispersal. Overall, 22 people were arrested at the event. Authorities were criticized after the event by counter-protesters for what they termed an overreaction.

Indeed, well before the Klan event took place, organizers of the May Charlottesville event and others had already begun to plan and organize the United the Right rally, which they viewed as a larger and grander sequel to their May event. They began their preparations months in advance, reaching out for speakers, publicizing the event on social media, and getting groups and individuals alike interested in attending.

The Violence

Historically, white supremacists are often on the defense in clashes at events involving white supremacists and counter-protesters, in part because they are typically heavily outnumbered and in part because antifa are often determined to physically confront the white supremacists.

Unite the Right was different, however. In part, this was because there were more than 10 times as many white supremacists at the event than at a typical public white supremacist event, giving them numbers they do not usually have. Indeed, ADL identified white supremacists from at least 35 states at the Unite the Right rally. Another factor was that throughout the spring and summer, far right groups at such events had increasingly been adopting "street fighting" stances, including manufacturing or purchasing a wide variety of offensive and defensive gear to employ during street confrontations. In fact, a significant number of white supremacists and militia members came to the Unite the Right rally openly carrying firearms. The right-wing extremists had been unusually aggressive at a number of events in 2017, compared to past years.

The white supremacists were outnumbered by counter-protesters, but the great bulk of the people opposing the white supremacists were peaceful protesters, many from local church or community groups. There were some antifa, as well as representatives of other

confrontational left-wing groups such as Redneck Revolt, but the ratio of forces was quite different than at other events, including the previous Klan event in Charlottesville.

The violence started on the evening of August 11, when the torch-carrying marchers arrived at the University of Virginia's Rotunda building, where they encountered and overpowered a small group of counter-protesters at the Jefferson monument, some using their torches as bats. The marchers dispersed after law enforcement finally stepped in. There are reports, particularly from leaders in the faith community, of antifa members providing protection from white supremacist violence when law enforcement was unavailable.

The next morning, Unite the Right rally-goers began to show up at Emancipation Park, in groups small and large, from a variety of locations and staging areas (rather than, as at the previous event, arriving at one staging area and being brought to the event area by law enforcement). As counter-protesters were doing the same, numerous encounters occurred between the white supremacists and counter-protesters, some of which turned violent. Most of the violence seemed to have been started by the white supremacists.

The most notorious occurred when James Alex Fields, Jr., of Maumee, Ohio, allegedly drove his vehicle into a crowd of counter-protesters, injuring large numbers of them and killing Heather Heyer. In another incident captured on video, several white supremacists and hate group members severely beat a Black counter-protestor, DeAndre Harris, in a parking garage. Harris was later arrested based only on the word of one of his assaulters, a hate group leader, that Harris actually attacked him.

The Significance of Charlottesville

First and foremost, Charlottesville was a tragedy, involving an assault on a community, the attempted intimidation of marginalized people across the country, and the murder of Heather Heyer. Adding to that is the tragic loss of Lieutenant H. Jay Cullen and Trooper-Pilot Berke M. M. Bates, two Virginia state troopers who died in a helicopter crash while on their way to monitor the event.

But the event also served – and needs still to serve – as an important wake-up call, alerting people to the problems that radical right-wing movements legitimately pose in the United States. During 2017, the country witnessed a variety of murders, shootings, hate crimes, and violent plots and acts by white supremacists, anti-government extremists, and other right-wing extremists.

The events in Charlottesville that weekend captured the attention of and shocked most Americans, many of whom had no idea that right-wing extremists had become so numerous or so bold. One of the most enduring moments related to Charlottesville was President Trump's statement that there were "very fine people on both sides" of the Unite the Right rally, a statement that further emboldened the extremists and added injury to those already under assault. Though violence stemming from right-wing extremism actually occurs frequently in the United States, such incidents are not always well-reported by the national media, and people often have little understanding of its scope. Thus, Charlottesville, and the concerning response to it from the White House, came as a wake-up call for many.

The events in Charlottesville also had an outsize impact on the Jewish community. For many younger Jews, hearing white supremacists chanting "Jews will not replace us" may

have been their first encounter with public anti-Semitism.¹⁶ For Jewish adults and seniors, watching Nazi salutes and hearing chants of “sieg heil” and “blood and soil” (the latter is a translation of the Nazi slogan “Blut und Boden”) evoked memories or family recollections of the most overwhelming trauma in modern Jewish history. The white supremacist groups that participated in the Charlottesville rally have a well-established record of anti-Semitism, and individual leaders of the movements present at the rally, including former Klansman David Duke, are prolific promoters of anti-Semitism in the U.S.

Anti-Semitic incidents spiked on the days of the Charlottesville march and rally and immediately following. Of the 306 incidents documented in our *Audit* that were reported in the third quarter of 2017, 221 took place on or after the August 11 rally.

While not ignoring other types of extremist threats to the peace and tranquility of the United States, Charlottesville requires us to ask what the country can do to better combat the threat of right-wing extremist violence, as well as how to demonstrate conclusively that such violence goes against what the American experiment stands for.¹⁷

Extremism Sparked by Radical Interpretations of Islam

One of the most striking elements of today’s domestic threat picture is the role that a growing number of American citizens and residents motivated by radical interpretations of Islam have played in criminal plots to attack Americans in the U.S. and abroad. Over the past 10 years, about 24 percent of victims killed by domestic terrorists were at the hands of domestic Islamic extremists. On October 31, 2017, eight people were killed and almost a dozen others injured when a 29-year-old Sayfullo Habibullaevic Saipov ran people over with a truck on a busy bicycle path near the World Trade Center in Manhattan. Authorities found a note near the truck claiming the attack was made in the name of the Islamic State (ISIS). ADL’s 2017 report, titled “A Changing Landscape of Threats,” outlined changing tactics of such extremists, including how more extremists are using non-traditional weapons (knives, cars) in their attacks and how plots are increasingly focused on public spaces rather than symbolic targets.¹⁸

Indeed, four of the five deadliest ideologically motivated attacks in the U.S. have been inspired by Islamic extremist ideology, including attacks in Fort Hood, TX, San Bernardino, CA, and Orlando, FL, the worst mass shooting in American history, in which Omar Mateen opened fire inside Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, killing 49 people. During the shooting, Mateen, an American citizen born in New York, declared his allegiance to ISIS. As demonstrated by this horrific shooting, it is clear that there are deliberate attempts by international terrorist groups that justify and sanction violence to appeal to and engage sympathizers in the U.S.

¹⁶ <https://www.adl.org/blog/anti-semitism-on-full-display-in-charlottesville>

¹⁷ The fact that Congress enacted a joint resolution addressing the violence, with specific policy recommendations and objectives, also distinguishes the impact of the violence in Charlottesville. <https://www.congress.gov/115/plaws/publ58/PLAW-115publ58.pdf>

¹⁸ https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/CR_5062_Domestic%20Islamic%20Extremism%20Report_vF1.pdf

A disturbing number of cases also demonstrate the degree to which hatred of Jews and Israel play a part in the radicalization process of homegrown extremists. However, efforts to explore these legitimate security concerns should not be overwhelmed by the kind of unfair stereotyping and prejudice that has too-frequently accompanied recent public debates.

Terrorist Exploitation of Social Media

As internet proficiency and the use of social media grow ever-more universal, so too do the efforts of terrorist groups to exploit new technology in order to make materials that justify and sanction violence more accessible and impactful. Terrorist groups are not only using various online and mobile platforms to spread their messages, but also to actively recruit adherents who live in the communities they seek to target.

While the fundamental ideological content of terrorist propaganda has remained consistent for two decades – replete with militant condemnations of perceived transgressions against Muslims worldwide, and appeals for violence and anti-Semitism – terrorist groups are now able to reach, recruit, and motivate extremists more quickly and effectively than ever before by adapting their messages to new technology.

In the past, plots were directed by foreign terrorist organizations or their affiliates, and recruitment and planning generally required some direct, face-to-face interaction with terrorist operatives. Indoctrination came directly from extremist peers, teachers, or clerics. Individuals would then advance through the radicalization process through constant interaction with likeminded sympathizers or, as the 2007 New York Police Department report on radicalization described, with a “spiritual sanctioner” who gave credence to those beliefs. Today, individuals can find analogous social networks, inspiration, and encouragement online, often packaged neatly together with bomb-making instructions. This enables adherents to self-radicalize without face-to-face contact with an established terrorist group or cell.

Individual extremists, or lone wolves, are also increasingly self-radicalizing online with no physical interactions with established terrorist groups or cells – a development that can make it more difficult for law enforcement to detect plots in their earliest stages. Terror groups are taking full advantage of this virtual audience, and regularly publish detailed instructions for lone-wolf terror attacks¹⁹ using knives, as well as cars, trains,²⁰ and other modes of transportation.

Approximately half of the 150 terrorist incidents described in a 2017 ADL report on 25 years of right-wing terrorism were perpetrated by lone wolf offenders.²¹ Today, thanks to the internet, it is easier than ever for someone to become steeped in extremist ideologies, even to the point of being willing to commit acts of great violence, without ever being involved in an organized extremist group. The overwhelming majority of American citizens and residents linked to terrorist activity motivated by Islamic extremism in the past several years

¹⁹ <https://www.adl.org/blog/isis-supporters-distribute-series-of-articles-encouraging-lone-wolf-attacks>

²⁰ <https://www.adl.org/blog/al-qaedas-latest-inspire-magazine-details-train-derail-operations>

²¹ <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/reports/dark-constant-rage-25-years-of-right-wing-terrorism-in-united-states>

– including at least 63 U.S. residents in 2015 – actively used the internet to access propaganda or otherwise facilitate their extremist activity.

Funding CVE – and the Need for a Holistic Approach

Because modern technology has provided new fuel for extremists, including using “cyberhate” to attack marginalized groups on social media and coordinate terror attacks more easily, ADL supports properly-crafted Countering Violent Extremism (“CVE”) programs. We believe an “all hands on deck” holistic approach is required to confront the sophisticated recruitment efforts employed by domestic extremist groups and by ISIS and other terror groups. Through the CVE program launched under President Obama, the Department of Homeland Security had administered federal grants to nongovernmental organizations and higher-education institutions to carry out programs that counter the potential for violence from domestic terrorists and homegrown violent extremists.

In May 2017, the League expressed concerns about press reports that the administration was proposing to cut funding for its CVE programs entirely.²² And in June, ADL expressed concerns as DHS announced their 2017 two-year CVE funding grantees.²³ Funding for Life After Hate, a successful and in-demand program to de-radicalize neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and others, was not renewed. *Politico* reported that, since Election Day, Life After Hate has seen a twenty-fold increase in requests for help “from people looking to disengage or bystanders/family members looking for help from someone they know.”²⁴ At a time when right-wing extremist groups are experiencing rising membership and expanding influence, we believe DHS must invest in community-based organizations that work to counter these groups.

In addition, the 2017 list of CVE grantees²⁵ indicates a shift in funding focus away from community-based civil society organizations and toward law enforcement agencies. Police play a critical role, but we cannot enforce our way out of this problem. Community-based organizations must help lead this work. These groups are much more likely to have credibility and trust needed to reach the targets of extremists, which include many disaffected or vulnerable youth. The League called on DHS to clarify its funding criteria and demonstrate that it is committed to funding the full range of programs – domestic and international – designed to counter all forms of violent extremism.²⁶

Importantly, ADL has also strongly advised the administration against focusing its CVE program solely on extremism motivated by radical interpretation of Islam. We responded to press reports²⁷ that the administration wanted to change the name of the government initiative from “Countering Violent Extremism” to “Countering Islamic Extremism” or “Countering Radical Islamic Extremism” by stating that such a change would be damaging

²² <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-concerned-over-reports-of-trump-administration-proposing-to-cut-entire>

²³ <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-welcomes-homeland-security-grants-to-counter-terrorist-recruitment-and>

²⁴ <http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/playbook/2017/06/23/what-mcconnell-is-thinking-winners-losers-in-gop-health-care-bill-obama-speaks-dawsey-download-wapo-trump-talks-russia-every-morning-pelosis-future-220996>

²⁵ <https://www.dhs.gov/cvegrants>

²⁶ <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-welcomes-homeland-security-grants-to-counter-terrorist-recruitment-and>

²⁷ <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-extremists-program-exclusiv-idUSKBN15G5VO>

to the American Muslim community and dangerously narrow.²⁸ Singling out Muslims and the American Muslim community for special scrutiny or suspicion is discriminatory, offensive, ineffective, and counterproductive. In fact, one essential focus of our nation's CVE programs should be to build trust within Muslim communities to reduce radicalism, not to further foster mistrust.

This is especially true since the 2016 elections, because over the past few months, ADL and others have documented an objectionable, intensified level of anti-Muslim bigotry in a variety of public forums. For example, according to a recent Pew Research Center publication on Muslim Americans' place in society,²⁹ nearly half of Muslims (48%) say they have experienced at least one form of discrimination over the past year. Of those whose appearance is identifiably Muslim, nearly two-thirds (64%) say they have experienced at least one of the specific types of discrimination asked about in the survey. Three-quarters (75%) of Muslim respondents say there is "a lot" of discrimination against Muslims in the U.S., with Muslim women more likely than Muslim men to hold this view (83% versus 68%). These findings reinforce an ADL survey on anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim discrimination published this past year.³⁰ Our survey revealed that 89 percent of Muslim Americans are concerned about violence directed at them and Islamic institutions in the U.S., and 64 percent said that they do not believe the government is doing enough to ensure their safety. While most Muslims don't feel the need to hide their faith, 66 percent said they feel less safe in America since President Trump was elected.

Limiting CVE programs to only focus on Islamic extremism would not only isolate the Muslim American community, but would also exacerbate the problem of how little prevention-based programming right-wing extremists are receiving.³¹ At a time when our research indicates that right-wing extremists are more visible and emboldened,³² the government should focus on all types of extremism, whether it comes from terrorists motivated by extreme interpretations of Islam or white supremacists.

Relationship with the Tech Industry

Over the past decade, the League has worked closely with the internet industry and they have been very responsive to information regarding terrorist and extremist exploitation of their platforms. Our relationship has led to increased successes in mitigating the exploitation of platforms by groups such as ISIS. In addition, working with industry officials, the League developed the ADL Cyber-Safety Action Guide,³³ a user-friendly online platform where consumers can learn how and where to report bigoted, bullying, or hateful speech to the major internet providers and social media platforms.

The League has also convened a Working Group on Cyberhate to develop recommendations for the most effective responses to manifestations of hate and bigotry

²⁸ <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-limiting-scope-of-counteracting-violent-extremism-programs-places-nation-at>

²⁹ <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/findings-from-pew-research-centers-2017-survey-of-us-muslims/>

³⁰ <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/in-first-new-adl-poll-finds-majority-of-americans-concerned-about-violence>

³¹ <http://time.com/4671901/donald-trump-extremism-terrorism-muslims/>

³² <https://www.adl.org/news/press-releases/adl-report-exposes-right-wing-terrorism-threat-in-the-us>

³³ <http://www.adl.org/press-center/press-releases/discrimination-racism-bigoity/new-adl-platform-helps-consumers-take-action-against-internet-hate-speech.html#.Vi58MX6rTct>

online.³⁴ The Working Group includes representatives of the internet industry, civil society, the legal community, and academia. The Working Group input and guidance has been invaluable and is reflected in a set of Best Practices³⁵ that provides useful and important guideposts for all those willing to join in the effort to address the challenge of cyberhate.

In October 2017, ADL joined with Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Twitter and other leading technology companies to establish a Cyberhate Problem-Solving Lab to counter the growing amount of hate speech online. Engaging engineers and focused on technical solutions, the companies and ADL collaborate to exchange ideas, investigate areas of common risk and opportunity, and seek to devise new approaches to identify and address cyberhate. The initiative is managed by ADL's Center for Technology and Society in Silicon Valley, which leads cyberhate issues and advocacy for the League.

Policy Recommendations

Proactive Industry Action

We encourage technology companies and online platforms to take proactive measures to identify and remove targeted harassment, hateful speech meant to intimidate or demean marginalized groups, and posts from hate or terrorist groups aimed at recruitment. Tech companies should use innovative and varied approaches to addressing the problems of cyberhate; they should not rely solely on automated methods, such as filters with no human moderation.

Protection of Civil Liberties

Tech companies should work closely with community groups and civil rights organizations to ensure that their work preventing terrorism and combatting extremism upholds privacy and civil liberties. Online platforms must not engage in or enable racial or religious profiling. Such practices not only undermine basic concepts of equality and fairness, but are also highly ineffective and wrongheaded.^[1] Programs addressing extremism and terrorism should be directly responsive to data and research about online activity and terrorist movements in the United States.

Content Moderation and Transparency

In order to increase public confidence and justify faith in self-regulation, tech companies must be more transparent in how they are addressing cyberhate. This should begin with allowing counterspeech and other features designed to mitigate online extremism to undergo rigorous evaluation by outside researchers and academics. These evaluators should have full access to data sets in order to validate the efficacy of the platforms' work. While it is clear that tech companies must devote resources to prevent and mitigate abuse or misuse of their platforms, they can only do effectively with valid research to guide the allocation of resources. Finally, transparency should also include a fair and clear process for appealing any content that a user believes was incorrectly blocked or removed. Even a small percentage of error would silence an unacceptable number of voices.

³⁴ For a comprehensive review of the League's work addressing the scourge of online anti-Semitism since pre-Internet days -- when dial-up bulletin boards were a prominent communications tool -- see *Report of the Anti-Defamation League on Confronting Cyberhate to the 5th Global Forum for Combating Anti-Semitism*, May, 2015, http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/combating-hate/ICCA-report-2015-With-hyperlinks-May-8-2015_final.pdf

³⁵ <http://www.adl.org/combating-hate/cyber-safety/best-practices/#.Vi58F36rTcs>

Information Sharing

Safety would be increased through better information sharing across companies and industries. There should be more publicly-available information about the cross-industry counter-terrorism database for information sharing. This would increase public confidence in social media platforms' responsiveness to some of our greatest threats.

Public Education

Increased efforts should be made to provide information to the public and users of online platforms about cyberhate. Content moderation for counter-terrorism and extremism can be used to educate the public about the potential impact of online behavior. We must also engage young, active online users by teaching and encouraging them to think critically when online. Teaching critical thinking skills to young people is one of the most effective ways to combat hate and bigotry that they may come across online. Simple educational strategies can be used at home and school to educate young people to use critical thinking to assess the accuracy of information and to learn how to respond when they encounter individuals or Web sites that promote hatred and bigotry.

Conclusion

For over a decade, the Anti-Defamation League has partnered with technology and social media companies. As these companies and online platforms have grown at extraordinary rates, so too have the challenges facing them and their responsibilities to their online communities and to society at large. Especially now, we are seeing these companies take bold action toward safety and security, and to combatting extremism and terrorism on their platforms. And we know that it is crucial to the ethos of the tech community to take these measures while respecting the privacy and civil liberties of their users.

As the Committee and Congress continue to examine the nature of the current threat to our nation, both online and offline, the Anti-Defamation League hopes to play an ongoing, helpful, and constructive role by offering our expertise in documenting terror threats from across the ideological spectrum, while urging members of Congress and other public officials to make every effort to explore this serious issue and its connection to social media without creating an atmosphere of blame and suspicion.

Sincerely,



Jonathan A. Greenblatt
CEO