

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 15, 2015

Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. President and Secretary Johnson:

We write to urge the Department of Homeland Security to issue an updated assessment on the threat posed by domestic right-wing extremist groups and to reopen the Extremism and Radicalization Branch of the Homeland Environment Threat Analysis Division at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Dylann Roof's attempt to "start a race war" by murdering nine people at the historic Black Church Emanuel AME in Charleston is a painful reminder that violent white supremacist groups represent a continued threat to Americans.

According to a study from the United States Military Academy's Combating Terrorism Center, right-wing extremist groups launched an average of 337 attacks per year, killing 254 people from 2001 to 2011.¹ State and local law enforcement agencies often cite anti-government extremism as a top concern. In a study conducted by Police Executive Research Forum, 74 percent of the 382 law enforcement agencies polled cited anti-government extremism as a top three terrorist threat.² The Southern Poverty Law Center has long documented the dramatic rise in right-wing hate groups, noting the number of white supremacist hate groups has increased by 30 percent since 2000.³ Reports indicate that in February, DHS released a report to law enforcement agencies noting the threat that sovereign citizen extremists (SCEs) pose to communities and law enforcement in particular.

¹ Perliger, A. January 15, 2013: *Challengers from the Sidelines: Understanding America's Violent Far-Right*. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point.

² Kurzman, C., & Schanzer, D. June 15, 2015: *The Growing Right-Wing Terror Threat*.

³ [Southern Poverty Law Center](#). Retrieved June 22, 2015.

Despite these statistics and warnings, the United States allocates significant resources towards combatting Islamic violent extremism while failing to devote adequate resources to right-wing extremism. The problem goes beyond a skewed allocation of resources. When efforts are made to address right-wing extremism, they are often met with significant political backlash.

For example, in 2009 when the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a Department wide report on right-wing extremism there was so much political pushback that DHS repudiated the study and disbanded the Extremism and Radicalization Branch of the Homeland Environment Threat Analysis Division, the unit responsible for the report. This lack of political will comes at a heavy price of repeated attacks on churches, temples and community centers for African American Christians, Sikh Americans and Jewish Americans.

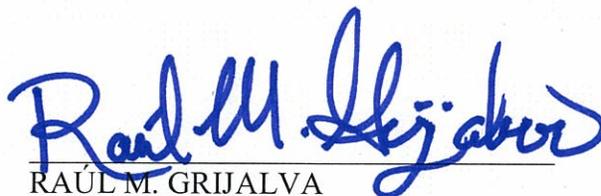
Our government needs to do more to address the threat of right-wing extremism. Countering violent extremism requires a comprehensive strategy that begins with a commitment to address hate crime in all its forms.

We believe reopening the Extremism and Radicalization Branch at DHS and updating the 2009 report is necessary to address this growing domestic terrorist threat.

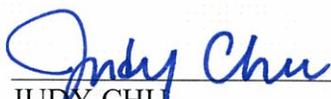
Sincerely,



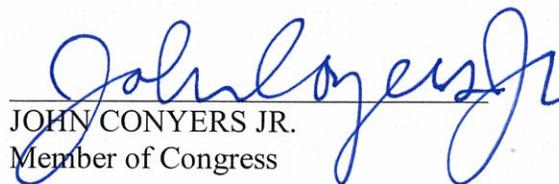
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JOHN CONYERS JR.
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MARK DeSAULNIER
Member of Congress



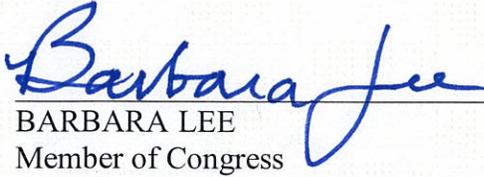
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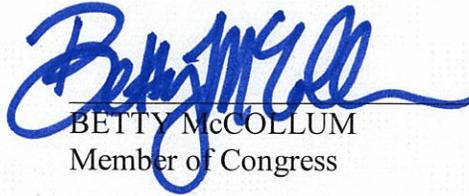
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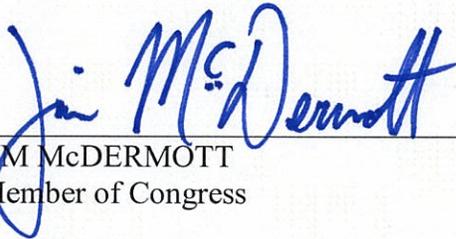
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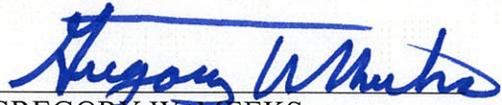
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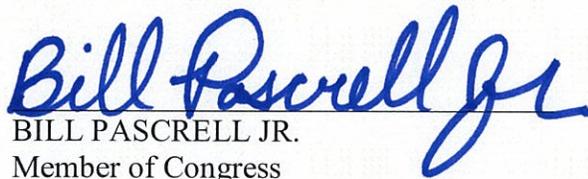
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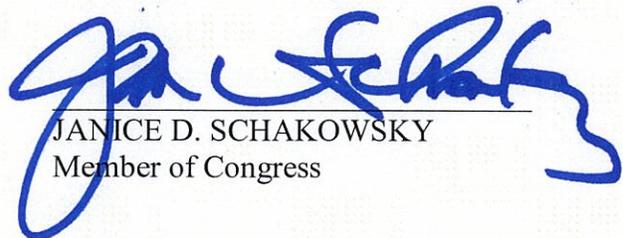
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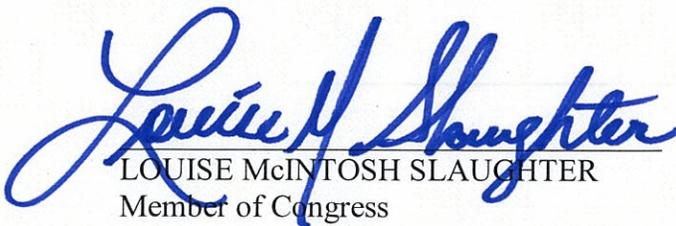
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