

October 6, 2017

Hon. Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Hon. Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Sirs:

We write to express grave concern about [Public Law 115-58](#), the result of the recent, hasty enactment of a joint resolution by the Senate and House *without any public debate*. We are concerned that this statute will inexorably lead to unconstitutional suppression of freedom of expression aimed at silencing those smeared by political opponents as, for example, “haters,” “racists” or “bigots.”

Many of us have been slandered in this fashion, falsely characterized as “white supremacists” or some other, similarly disparaging epithet simply because we support, for example, traditional marriage, civil liberties rather than Sharia, secure borders and the enforcement of our immigration laws and/or effective counterterrorism policies.

Worse yet, this is no longer a matter of hurtful and groundless name-calling. Increasingly, it is evident that such behavior is just the leading edge of an aggressive campaign to ruin the financial condition and prevent the widespread dissemination of the work of individuals and groups being targeted for what amounts to unrestricted political warfare.

This insidious, anti-freedom agenda will be advanced by the language of PL115-58, which “urges the President and his administration to speak out against hate groups that espouse racism, extremism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and White supremacy and use all resources available to the President and the President’s Cabinet to address the growing prevalence of those hate groups in the United States.” It goes on to call upon the Attorney General, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the heads of other Federal agencies to engage in such activities as investigating “thoroughly all acts of violence, intimidation, and domestic terrorism by White supremacists, White nationalists, neo-Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan, and associated groups” and to improve “the reporting of hate crimes and to emphasize the importance of the collection, and the reporting to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, of hate crime data by State and local agencies.”

Several terms used in this statute are undefined: “hate group,” “white supremacist,” “extremist,” “anti-immigrant,” and “xenophobia.” These open-ended mandates to use the government to

suppress groups associated with undefined sentiments like “hate group,” “extremism” and “xenophobia” invite abuses of power by the state. They also legitimate and enable the aspiration of self-appointed arbiters of “hate,” such as the discredited Southern Poverty Law Center and others on the radical left and their Islamist allies, to enlist Federal, state and local agencies in stifling their political opponents’ otherwise-protected free speech.

Given the absence of virtually any debate about such a problematic piece of legislation, we are alarmed at the prospect that other bills designed to further advance this agenda and now awaiting consideration may similarly be foisted upon the American people to their grave detriment. These include:

- “The National Opposition to Hate, Assault, and Threats to Equality Act of 2017” (the “No HATE Act” [S.662](#) and [H.R. 1566](#)), which would greatly expand governmental efforts to collect “hate crimes” data and create private rights of action for “crimes motivated by actual *or perceived* race, color, religion, or national origin” (emphasis added).
- “A resolution condemning hate crime and any other form of racism, religious or ethnic bias, discrimination, incitement to violence, or animus targeting a minority in the United States” ([S.Res. 118](#), which passed the Senate in April) and that cites discredited data about hate crimes to justify intensified federal action to “detect and deter hate crimes to protect minority communities.”
- “The Disarm Hate Act” ([H.Con.Res. 77](#)) which urges the President “to prohibit the hiring of individuals...who have supported or encouraged support for White supremacists” and “to use all available resources of the office of the President and the Cabinet to address the growing prevalence of such hate groups domestically.”

These pending legislative initiatives, like PL115-58, share a false narrative, namely that the United States is overwhelmed with large numbers of “white supremacists” and individuals and groups allegedly associated with them who pose a threat to the rights of minorities and other Americans. This narrative is unsupported by the facts. More importantly, this narrative is based on the same undefined terms now codified in PL115-58, terms that are used to defame and incapacitate people and organizations like the signatories of this letter simply because they effectively oppose the agenda of those who have made a cottage industry of “hate” and employ it as an instrument of political warfare.

We call on you to clarify your commitments to freedom of expression, reaffirm your sworn oaths to defend the Constitution which guarantees that fundamental liberty and reject further legislative efforts that weaken First Amendment protections for all Americans.

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