

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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May 8, 2019

The Honorable Kevin K. McAleenan
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
245 Murray Lane, SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan:

Federal resources to detect and prevent domestic terrorism must be allocated based on accurate information about the threats Americans face. We write to request information to better understand how the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities to address and prevent domestic terrorism as threats to the homeland continue to evolve.

DHS is responsible for preventing and responding to terrorism, including the growing threat of domestic terrorism in all its forms. Recent reporting, however, describes departures and reassignments of critical DHS personnel, a breakdown in coordination of intelligence, and DHS's rescission of awards for grant money to study ways to help white supremacists—significant perpetrators of domestic terrorism¹—de-radicalize.² Additionally, a 2018 report by the Brennan Center for Justice concluded that, because the Department of Justice has failed to accurately track data on domestic terrorism and hate crimes over the past several years, there may be potentially inaccurate reporting by the Departments of Justice and DHS on terrorism-related convictions.³

¹ An unclassified 2017 Joint Intelligence Bulletin prepared by the FBI and DHS determined that white supremacist extremists were responsible for more homicides and attacks over the past sixteen years “than any other domestic extremist movement” and warned “the white supremacist extremist (WSE) movement likely will continue to pose a threat of lethal violence over the next year.” U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations and Department of Homeland Security Joint Intelligence Bulletin, *White Supremacist Extremism Poses Persistent Threat of Lethal Violence* (May 10, 2017), available at <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3924852-White-Supremacist-Extremism-JIB.html>.

² Janet Reitman, *U.S. Law Enforcement Failed to See the Threat of White Nationalism. Now They Don't Know How to Stop It*, *The New York Times Magazine* (Nov. 3, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/03/magazine/FBI-charlottesville-white-nationalism-far-right.html>; Ron Nixon and Eileen Sullivan, *Revocation of Grants to Help Fight Hate Under New Scrutiny After Charlottesville*, *The New York Times* (Aug. 15, 2017), <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/15/us/politics/right-wing-extremism-charlottesville.html>.

³ Michael German and Sara Robinson, Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law, *Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism* (Oct. 31, 2018), https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/publications/2018_10_DomesticTerrorism_V2%20%281%29.pdf; Executive Order 13789: Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States, Initial Section 11 Report (Jan. 2018), available

One DHS component, the Office of Terrorism Prevention Partnerships (OTPP), is supposed to provide resources and coordination to counter violent extremism and domestic terrorism.⁴ Under a recent reorganization, however, OTPP's budget and staffing levels went from approximately \$21 million and over 40 employees and contractors in 2016 down to less than \$3 million and 8 employees by 2018.⁵ Another DHS component, the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), also reportedly "disbanded a group of intelligence analysts who focused on domestic terrorism."⁶ I&A acknowledged the reorganization and decrease in staffing, but denied that it has "cut [its] commitment to defeating all forms of radical ideology," and stated that it had "significantly increased tactical intelligence reporting on domestic terrorists and homegrown violent extremists since 2016," and sought to, among other goals, "avoid duplication of work by other partners, to include FBI."⁷

To better understand how DHS is carrying out its responsibility to protect Americans from all forms of domestic terrorism, we respectfully request that you provide the following documents and information as soon as possible but no later than May 22, 2019:

1. According to DHS, the number of people killed and injured in the United States by domestic terrorist attacks for each year from 2009 until present, broken out by group or type of perpetrator. Please include an index of all actors/groups/perpetrators that DHS uses to categorize this data.
2. A description of the authorities and responsibilities relied upon by DHS to carry out its mission to prevent domestic terrorism.
3. A list of all DHS components, staff (by title and area of responsibility), and resources dedicated to domestic terrorism, broken out by group or type of perpetrator, from 2009 through the present.
4. All documents related to DHS reorganization of personnel, offices, and resources, related to domestic terrorism, from 2009 through the present. Please include all documents related to the organization of and the decision to reorganize/dissolve the Countering Violent Extremism Task Force.

[athttps://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Executive%20Order%2013780%20Section%2011%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Executive%20Order%2013780%20Section%2011%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf).

⁴ On April 19, 2019, DHS announced the establishment of the Office for Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (OTVTP). It is unclear if this is a new initiative, a renaming of an office utilizing the same resources, or something entirely different. DHS has not yet responded to request for clarification.

⁵ Peter Beinart, *Trump Shut Programs to Counter Violent Extremism*, The Atlantic (Oct. 29, 2018), <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/10/trump-shut-countering-violent-extremism-program/574237/>; Spencer Ackerman, Betsy Woodruff, Erin Banco, *Fewer than 1 in 5 FBI Terror Cases Target White Supremacists, Stats Show*, Daily Beast (Mar. 15, 2019), <https://www.thedailybeast.com/new-zealand-shooting-less-than-1-in-5-fbi-terror-cases-target-white-supremacists-stats-show>.

⁶ Betsy Woodruff, *Homeland Security Disbands Domestic Terror Intelligence Unit*, Daily Beast (Apr. 2, 2019), <https://www.thedailybeast.com/homeland-security-disbands-domestic-terror-intelligence-unit?ref=scroll>.

⁷ *Id.*

5. All documents related to DHS's use of social media and technology companies, directly or indirectly, to aid in accomplishing its domestic terrorism mission.
6. A summary—by date of publication, subject matter, identity of the threat actor, and classification—of all DHS intelligence reporting related to domestic terrorism from 2009 to the present.
7. All information sharing or interagency agreements with the FBI, the Department of Justice, and state and local law enforcement officials involving domestic terrorism.

Please see attachment A to this letter for a description of the information covered by this request.

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized by Rule XXV of the Standing Rules of the Senate to investigate “the efficiency, economy, and effectiveness of all agencies and departments of the Government.”⁸ Additionally, Senate Resolution 70 (116th Congress) authorizes the Committee to investigate “the efficiency and economy of operations of all branches of the Government.”⁹

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. If you have any questions about this request, please have your staff contact (202) 224-4751 for Chairman Johnson's staff and (202)-224-2627 for Ranking Member Peters' staff. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Johnson
Chairman



Gary C. Peters
Ranking Member

⁸ S. Rule XXV(k)(2) (B); *see also* S. Res. 445, 108th Cong (2004).

⁹ S. Res. 70, 116th Cong. §12(e)(1)(A) (2019) (enacted).