



Durbin, Schneider Introduce Legislation to Combat White Supremacist Terrorist Threat

March 27 2019 3:05 PM

WASHINGTON—Following the massacre at Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, U.S. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Representative Brad Schneider (D-IL-10) today introduced bicameral legislation to address the growing threat of white supremacists and other violent right-wing extremists. The *Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act* would enhance the federal government's efforts to prevent domestic terrorism by requiring federal law enforcement agencies to regularly assess this threat and provide training and resources to assist state, local, and tribal law enforcement in addressing it.

According to a May 2017 intelligence bulletin by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), white supremacist extremism poses a persistent threat of lethal violence, and white supremacists were responsible for 49 homicides in 26 attacks from 2000 to 2016—more than any other domestic extremist movement.

“Violent white supremacists and other far-right extremists are the most significant domestic terrorism threat facing the United States today,” said Durbin. **“For too long, we have failed to take action to combat the deadly threat in our own backyard. While federal law enforcement agencies recognize that white supremacist extremism is on the rise, our legislation would require them to take the concrete steps needed to address it.”**

“It’s time we update our laws to reflect the growing threat of domestic terror. In the last decade, white supremacists and other violent far-right extremists have been responsible for more deaths than any other category,” said Schneider. **“I am proud to partner with Senator Durbin on legislation strengthening coordination on monitoring these groups and preventing acts of violence. From a Sikh Temple in**

Wisconsin to a church in South Carolina to a synagogue in Pennsylvania, we have too many tragic examples of the dangers of domestic terrorism, and the recent tragedy in New Zealand shows the vile ideology of hate is growing beyond our borders as well. This legislation is a necessary first step to help our law enforcement contain the threat.”

The bill authorizes Justice Department (DOJ), DHS, and FBI offices that are responsible for monitoring, analyzing, investigating, and prosecuting domestic terrorism. The bill also requires these offices to issue joint annual reports to the House and Senate Judiciary, Homeland Security, and Intelligence Committees that assess the domestic terrorism threat posed by white supremacists; analyze domestic terrorism incidents that occurred in the previous year; and provide transparency through a public quantitative analysis of domestic terrorism-related assessments, investigations, incidents, arrests, indictments, prosecutions, convictions, and weapons recoveries.

The DHS, DOJ, and FBI offices would be required to focus their limited resources on the most significant domestic terrorism threats, as determined by the number of domestic terrorism-related incidents outlined in the joint report.

The legislation also codifies the Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee (DTEC), an interagency task force which was originally created by the Department of Justice in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing.

Additionally, the bill requires DOJ, DHS, and the FBI to provide training and resources to assist State, local, and tribal law enforcement in understanding, detecting, deterring, and investigating acts of domestic terrorism. The legislation also requires the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Forces and State, local, and regional fusion centers, which coordinate with DHS, to (1) share intelligence to address domestic terrorism activities; (2) conduct annual, intelligence-based assessments of domestic terrorism activities in their jurisdictions; and (3) formulate and execute a plan to combat domestic terrorism activities in their jurisdictions. Finally, the legislation would establish an interagency task force to combat white supremacist and neo-Nazi infiltration of the uniformed services.

The *Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act* has been endorsed by leading civil rights organizations, including Muslim Advocates, Anti-Defamation League, and the Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism.

The bill is cosponsored by U.S. Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Chris Coons (D-NJ), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Ed Markey (D-MA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), and Brian Schatz (D-HI).

In 2012, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights, Durbin held a hearing on the threat of violent right-wing extremism after a white supremacist murdered six worshippers at a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Officials from DOJ, DHS, and FBI testified about the serious threat posed by violent domestic extremists.