

House Passes Durbin-Schneider Bill To Combat Domestic Terrorism

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WASHINGTON – On a unanimous vote, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H. R. 5602, the *Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act of 2020*, a bipartisan bill introduced by U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Representative Brad Schneider (D-IL-10). The bill would enhance the federal government’s efforts to prevent domestic terrorism by requiring federal law enforcement agencies to regularly assess this threat, focus their resources on the most significant domestic terrorism threats, and provide training and resources to assist state, local, and tribal law enforcement in addressing these threats.

“Violent white supremacists continue to pose the most significant domestic terrorism threat in our nation. For too long, we’ve turned a blind eye and haven’t seriously addressed this evil in our own backyard,” Durbin said. “The federal government must tackle this threat head on and ensure more Americans are not subjected to violence simply because of who they are or what they believe. I’m pleased the House took an important step forward by passing this bill, and I urge my Republican colleagues in the Senate to immediately take up this legislation and work with us to enact it into law.”

“Racially/ethnically motivated violent extremists were the primary source of ideologically motivated lethal incidents and violence in 2018 and 2019. From the Tree of Life synagogue to a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, we have all tragically seen the deadly

effect. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, the number of white nationalist groups rose by 55% since 2017. And last November, the FBI reported violent hate crimes reached a 16 year high in 2018. That number went up in 2019! Groups like the Boogaloos, Rise Above Movement and White Nationalist militias across the country are organizing. And so must we. We therefore need to equip our law enforcement officials, the FBI and Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, with the tools necessary to identify, monitor and prevent violent acts of domestic terrorism,” said Schneider.

Since May 2019, Durbin has led two [letters](#) to Attorney General Bill Barr and FBI Director Chris Wray, asking what the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the FBI are doing to combat the growing threat of white supremacist violence targeting religious minorities and communities of color. In January, Durbin again [pressed](#) DOJ and FBI to take the initiative in leading a coordinated nationwide effort by federal, state, and local law enforcement and intelligence agencies to disrupt and prevent these violent domestic terrorism and hate crime incidents before they take place.

On Thursday, September 17th, FBI Director Christopher Wray testified to Congress that “the top threat we face from domestic violent extremists stems from those we identify as racially/ethnically motivated violent extremists (RMVE)” and that most of these are white supremacists.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, in 2019, domestic extremists killed at least 42 people in the United States in 17 separate incidents. This number makes 2019 the sixth deadliest year on record for domestic extremist-related killings. Last year, a Trump Administration Department of Justice official wrote in a New York Times op-ed that “white supremacy and far-right extremism are among the greatest domestic-security threats facing the United States. Regrettably, over the past 25 years, law enforcement, at both the Federal and State levels, has been slow to respond.”

The *Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act of 2020* has been endorsed by the following organizations: Anti-Defamation League, Arab American Institute, Bend the Arc: Jewish Action, Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism, Human Rights Campaign, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, Muslim Advocates, NAACP, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., Sikh Coalition, Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund, and Unidos.