

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0901

July 23, 2018

Jill C. Tyson
Acting Assistant Director of Congressional Affairs
Federal Bureau of Investigation
U.S. Department of Justice
935 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Ms. Tyson,

I am writing to request information about the relationship between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Southern Poverty Law Center. In email correspondence, the FBI has admitted to working with the SPLC. This is surprising and worrisome, as the SPLC is known to use its platform in order to denigrate and disparage certain groups by labeling them "hate groups." Undoubtedly, in some cases, this designation is well-deserved: the Ku Klux Klan and Aryan Nation are indeed "hate groups." Other groups, however, appear to be deemed 'hateful' by the SPLC due to their political and social beliefs, rather than by any actual threat they pose. Consider that the Family Research Council, a Christian group whose contribution to public discourse certainly must be accommodated in the marketplace of ideas, is included on SPLC's list of hate groups. "Antifa," however — with its legions of masked, violent thugs — is not.

SPLC "hate" designations have caused many groups to receive violent threats, and, in some cases, actual violence. In 2012, Floyd Corkins shot an employee at the Family Research Council, with the goal of harming or killing many more. In his confession to the FBI, he said that he had targeted FRC specifically because it had been listed as an anti-gay group on SPLC's "hate map."

FRC is far from being the SPLC's only erroneous "hate group" listing; the SPLC's designations are frequently incorrect. Last month, the SPLC was forced to issue an apology and pay a \$3.3 million settlement to the Quilliam Foundation, which combats Islamic extremism, for incorrectly including it on a list of "anti-Muslim extremists." (This same dubious list also included Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a well-known critic of radical Islam and the gruesome practice of female genital mutilation). The SPLC's conflation of mainstream political advocacy groups with legitimate hate groups and domestic terror groups is absurd, frequently indiscriminate, and dangerous. Accordingly, I ask:

- Do you actively work with the SPLC in determining groups to investigate?
- How much weight does the FBI give the SPLC's designation of a group as a "hate group" in its choice to investigate a group or association?
- Does the FBI receive briefings, training, or any other material support from the SPLC? If so, please elaborate.
- What information, if any, does the FBI provide to the SPLC?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress