



One Hundred Fourteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

June 23, 2015

The Honorable Michael McCaul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McCaul:

I am writing to request that the Committee hold hearings on the threat of domestic terrorism. According to the Committee on Homeland Security's Oversight plan for the 114th Congress, the Committee will "examine existing and emerging terror threats from domestic terrorists."¹ In a survey conducted by the Triangle Center on Terrorism, in partnership with the Police Executive Research Forum, 74 percent of state and local law enforcement agencies reported domestic terrorism as one of the top three terrorist threats in their jurisdictions.²

As you know, the Department of Justice has opened a domestic terrorism investigation into events surrounding the deadly June 17, 2015 attack on congregants of the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. On June 20, a racist manifesto allegedly written by the alleged gunman surfaced online. In this manifesto, he admitted to gathering information from the Council of Conservative Citizens, a well-known extremist group that has roots within the White Citizens Council.

To date, the Committee has had three oversight hearings on how overseas-based terrorist organizations spread extremist propaganda to radicalize and recruit. However, we have not, as a Committee, examined how the same channels are being exploited by groups intending to carry out domestic terrorism. At our most recent hearing on terrorist use of social media, you stated that "we are facing an enemy whose messages and calls to

¹Oversight Plan of the Committee on Homeland Security. 114th Congress (2015).

²Kurzman, Charles and David Schanzer. "The Growing Right Wing Terror Threat". *The New York Times*. June 16, 2015.

violence are posted and promoted in real time”.³ Just as this observation is true when it comes to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and Al Qaeda, it is true when it comes to domestic terrorist groups and the lone wolves that are inspired by them. The carnage of June 17 did not occur in some far-off land. It occurred on American soil and was perpetrated by an American whom we have no reason to believe was influenced by a foreign terrorist organization.

As the Committee on Homeland Security, we have an interest in protecting our citizens from foreign and domestic terrorist threats. I strongly believe that we have a moral responsibility as well as a responsibility under our bipartisan Oversight Plan to ask the tough questions. We would benefit from hearing what the Federal government is doing to identify, mitigate, and respond to such threats and the degree to which Federal efforts to counter violent extremism are focused on domestic terrorist threats. Therefore, I respectfully request that you hold a hearing where the Committee can receive testimony from the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice on the subject of domestic terrorism. At this hearing, it would be beneficial to receive testimony from the Department of Homeland Security’s Countering Violent Extremism Coordinator on the Department’s Countering Violent Extremism strategy and the elements it includes to prevent domestic terrorism.

Thank you for your timely attention to this matter. If you have any further questions, please contact Hope Goins, Chief Counsel for Oversight, at 6-2616.

Sincerely,



BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Ranking Member

³ “Terrorism Gone Viral: The Attack in Garland, Texas and Beyond”. Wednesday, June 3, 2015.