

**Testimony of J. Richard Cohen
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Before the
House Committees on Natural Resources and Homeland Security Forum
on Countering Extremism on America's Public Lands**

**Antigovernment Movement Represents Serious Threat of Domestic Terror
and Direct Threat to Lives of Federal Employees
June 15, 2016**

My name is Richard Cohen. I am an attorney and the president of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a civil rights organization founded in 1971. For more than three decades, we have been monitoring, issuing reports about, and training law enforcement officials on far-right extremist activity in the United States. I previously have testified before the House Committee on Homeland Security and have served on the Department of Homeland Security's Countering Violent Extremism Working Group. I am honored to appear before you today.

I'd like to make four important points.

First, the militants who took over the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon this year are part of a broader, resurgent extremist movement with a long history of violence and domestic terrorism. This movement represents a threat to the lives of law enforcement officers across the country, particularly the federal agents who manage and police federal lands in the Western states.

Second, the movement was emboldened by the standoff at Cliven Bundy's ranch in Nevada in April 2014, by the significant media and political support Bundy received, and by the government's lack of a swift and strong response.

Third, elements within the movement have made concerted efforts to recruit law enforcement officers and have succeeded in garnering the support of scores of county sheriffs who are sympathetic to an extremist ideology that rejects the legitimacy of the federal government. This development threatens the rule of law.

Fourth, to counteract the lawlessness from the antigovernment extremist movement, we must call it what it is—terrorism—and take measures to curb it. I've included specific recommendations at the end of my remarks.

**The Resurgent Antigovernment Movement has a Long History of Domestic Terrorism and
Represents a Threat to the Lives of Law Enforcement and Federal Officials**

The extremists who occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge earlier this year are part of a wider, far-right extremist movement reflecting decades-old anger over the ownership

and management of federal lands in the West and a virulent, conspiracy-driven, racist ideology that sees the federal government as the enemy.

This antigovernment movement emerged in its current form during the 1990s in response to federal gun control measures and the deadly standoffs at Ruby Ridge and Waco. It is composed of hundreds of armed militias and other organizations that typically subscribe to a hodgepodge of antigovernment, conspiratorial theories, including the belief that U.S. political and economic elites are part of international conspiracy to create a one-world government known as the “New World Order.” It includes so-called “sovereign citizens,” who believe they are immune to most federal and state laws and who have been deemed a terrorism threat by the FBI.¹ Many of the beliefs prevalent in the antigovernment movement are rooted in the racist, anti-Semitic ideology that animated the Posse Comitatus (Latin for “power of the county”) in the 1970s.

In the 1990s, this movement produced numerous acts and plots of domestic terrorism targeting federal officials and facilities. These include a failed attempt to blow up an IRS building in Reno, Nevada, with an ammonium nitrate bomb; an arson attack on an IRS building in Colorado Springs; a planned invasion of Fort Hood in Texas to slaughter foreign troops that extremists believed to be stationed there; a plot to blow up the FBI’s fingerprint records center in West Virginia; and many others.² The deadliest, of course, was the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, which killed 168 people and injured nearly 700.

By the late 1990s, the movement was in steep decline—due in part to an extensive law enforcement crackdown that began after Oklahoma City—and remained moribund through the years of the Bush administration.

In 2008, however, we detected a dramatic resurgence that coincided with the campaign and election of President Barack Obama.³ That year, we documented 149 antigovernment groups. By 2012, there were 1,360—an increase of more than 800 percent. After peaking in 2012, the number of these so-called “patriot” groups began to decline somewhat. But last year, they rose again—from 874 groups in 2014 to 998 in 2015.

Within this constellation of groups are hundreds of armed militias that conduct paramilitary training with the ostensible aim of defending their communities against what they believe is a “tyrannical” federal government. In 2008, we documented 42 militia groups. By 2011, they had reached a peak of 334. As with the broader movement, the number of militias began to decline slightly before starting to grow again last year, due in part to the movement’s perceived “victory” at the Bundy ranch in Nevada in 2014. In 2015, we documented 276 militias.

¹ “Sovereign Citizens: A Growing Domestic Threat to Law Enforcement,” FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, Counterterrorism Analysis Section, September 2011, at <https://leb.fbi.gov/2011/september/sovereign-citizens-a-growing-domestic-threat-to-law-enforcement>

² For a list of radical-right terrorist incidents since the Oklahoma City bombing, see *Terror from the Right*, Southern Poverty Law Center, at <https://www.splcenter.org/20100126/terror-right>

³ *The Second Wave: Return of the Militias*, Southern Poverty Law Center, July 31, 2009, at <https://www.splcenter.org/20090801/second-wave-return-militias>

Like the movement of the 1990s, the current wave has been accompanied by widespread violent attacks and numerous terrorism plots.

- Since 2008, antigovernment extremists have killed at least seven law enforcement officers, including two police officers murdered in 2010 during a traffic stop in West Memphis, Arkansas, and two sheriff deputies killed by sovereign citizens in Louisiana in 2012.
- In February 2015, DHS cited 24 antigovernment threats or plots (mostly against law enforcement targets) since 2010. They included the May 2014 murders of two Las Vegas police officers and a civilian by Bundy supporters and the November 2013 attack on Transportation Security Administration officers at Los Angeles International Airport.⁴
- Federal officials and facilities have been targeted repeatedly. In Georgia, four members of an unnamed militia were sentenced to prison in a 2011 plot to murder law enforcement officials, bomb federal buildings, and attack Atlanta and other cities with deadly ricin. In Alaska, four members of the Alaska Peacemakers Militia were imprisoned after amassing a cache of weapons—including a .50-caliber machine gun and a grenade launcher—in a plot to kill or kidnap state troopers and a federal judge.
- Law enforcement officials at every level are concerned about the threat. In a 2014 survey conducted by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 364 officers from 175 state, local and tribal agencies ranked the sovereign citizen movement as the top terrorist threat they face.⁵ And, in July 2014, DHS issued an intelligence assessment warning of a “spike within the past year in violence committed by militia extremists and lone offenders who hold violent anti-government beliefs.”⁶

Today, the federal stewardship of vast tracts of public lands in the Western states is one of the defining issues of the antigovernment movement. The involvement of militia extremists from across the country represents a dangerous escalation of long-simmering disputes over federal natural resource protections that previously gave rise to the so-called Sagebrush Rebellion of the 1970s and the “Wise Use” movement of the 1980s and 1990s.

The high potential for deadly violence against federal officials was vividly illustrated in April 2014, when the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) attempted to confiscate cattle belonging to Cliven Bundy. Bundy, who subscribes to Posse Comitatus and sovereign citizen

⁴ *Sovereign Citizen Extremist Ideology Will Drive Violence at Home, During Travel, and at Government Facilities*, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security, Feb. 5, 2015, at <https://fas.org/irp/eprint/sovereign.pdf>

⁵ *Understanding Law Enforcement Processes*, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, July 2014, at https://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_UnderstandingLawEnforcementIntelligenceProcesses_July2014.pdf

⁶ *Domestic Violent Extremists Pose Increased Threat to Government Officials and Law Enforcement*, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security, July 22, 2014, at <https://info.publicintelligence.net/DHS-DomesticViolentExtremists.pdf>

beliefs, has refused to pay federal grazing fees since 1990, has defied federal court orders, and owes more than \$1 million in fees and fines to the government.

On April 5, the BLM, accompanied by heavily armed federal agents, began rounding up cattle that Bundy was grazing on federally owned land. Two days later, after one of his sons was arrested in a confrontation with federal officials, Bundy wrote on his family's website, "They have my cattle and now they have one of my boys. Range War begins tomorrow."⁷ He then began to appear on a variety of far-right, conspiracy theory-oriented media outlets largely sympathetic to the antigovernment movement, including Glenn Beck's "The Blaze" and Alex Jones' "Infowars." During an interview with Bundy, extremist radio host Pete Santilli called for militias to come to the rancher's defense. By this time, the antigovernment movement was abuzz, and hundreds of militia members from as many as 27 states began joining protesters at Bundy's ranch.

Protesters began blocking government vehicles and impeding the roundup. As the confrontation neared a climax on April 12, militia snipers lined hilltops and overpasses with rifles trained on federal agents. Bundy stood before a heavily armed crowd, as camouflaged militiamen stood at attention. "We're about ready to take the country over with force," he said.⁸ Later that day, the government shut down the roundup and announced that the cattle that had been corralled would be freed.

Our investigation documented that militia members planned the confrontation with military-style tactics and a high degree of coordination. Ryan Payne, a member of a militia known as the West Mountain Rangers, later told an SPLC investigator that he had placed gunmen in strategic positions. "Not only did they take up the very best position to overwatch everything, they also had the high ground, they were fortified with concrete and pavement barriers," Payne said. "They had great lines of fire and then, when I sent in that other team, for counter sniper positions, [the BLM agents] were completely locked down. They had no choice but to retreat."⁹

About two months later, in June, Jerad and Amanda Miller walked into a Las Vegas pizza parlor and murdered two police officers in cold blood. Later, television footage surfaced showing that the Millers had been at the Bundy ranch during the militia buildup. Bundy supporters say the Millers had been asked to leave. But it should come as no surprise that they were attracted to the talk of violent rebellion against the government. On the bodies of the dead policemen, they left the most recognizable emblem of the militia movement—the Gadsden "Don't Tread on Me" flag—along with a note saying the revolution had begun and a swastika. They went on to murder another man before being killed in a shootout with police.

⁷ Alan Farnham, "Nevada Rancher Threatens 'Range War' Against Feds," ABC News, April 7, 2014, at <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/nevada-rancher-threatens-range-war-feds/story?id=23225314>

⁸ Don Hernandez and Joseph Langdon, "Federal Rangers Face Off Against Armed Protesters in Nevada 'Range War,'" *The Guardian*, April 13, 2014, at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/13/nevada-bundy-cattle-ranch-armed-protesters>

⁹ Ryan Lenz and Mark Potok, *War in the West: The Bundy Ranch Standoff and the American Radical Right*, Southern Poverty Law Center, July 9, 2014, at <https://www.splcenter.org/20140709/war-west-bundy-ranch-standoff-and-american-radical-right>

Antigovernment Extremists Were Emboldened by Perceived Victory and Political Support

Antigovernment extremists were clearly invigorated by the events at the Bundy ranch. During the standoff, Bundy and his allies received significant support from mainstream media and political figures. When federal officials wisely stood down, rather than risk bloodshed when confronted by armed militiamen at the ranch, the antigovernment movement hailed the event as a great victory. When federal officials failed to promptly arrest or indict anyone for pointing weapons at federal law enforcement officials at the ranch, the movement was further emboldened. The most notorious result was the 2016 takeover by armed militiamen of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon.

During the confrontation, Fox News' Sean Hannity repeatedly trumpeted Bundy as a hero. U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas put the blame on President Obama and a government "using the jackboot of authoritarianism to come against the citizens."¹⁰ U.S. Sen. Dean Heller of Nevada called the Bundy family "patriots."¹¹ Texas Gov. Rick Perry said he had "a problem with the federal government putting citizens in the position of having to feel like they have to use force to deal with their own government."¹² In Utah, San Juan County Commissioner Phil Lyman announced plans to lead a protest against a ban on the use of motorized vehicles in Recapture Canyon, a Native American archaeological site on federal land. "If things don't change, it's not long before shots will be fired," Lyman told the SPLC.¹³

Hours after federal officials gave up on their attempt to enforce the law and withdrew, a well-known militia leader from Alabama, Mike Vanderboegh, wrote on his blog about the movement's success in forcing federal officials to back down at the Bundy ranch. "It is impossible to overstate the importance of the victory won in the desert today. ... The feds were routed—routed. There is no other word that applies. Courage is contagious, defiance is contagious, victory is contagious. Yet the war is not over."¹⁴ For nearly two years after the standoff, Cliven Bundy and his sons traveled the country to tout their success in defying the government at gunpoint.

Not surprisingly, tense confrontations between federal officials and antigovernment activists erupted across the West. In May 2014, for example, armed militias and their allies protested a BLM survey of more than 90,000 acres along the Red River in Texas. That same month, armed militia members, including Ryan Bundy, illegally drove all-terrain vehicles

¹⁰ Miranda Blue, "Ted Cruz: Bundy Ranch Standoff 'Tragic Culmination' of Obama's 'Jackboot of Authoritarianism,'" Right Wing Watch, April 23, 2014, at <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/ted-cruz-bundy-ranch-standoff-tragic-culmination-obamas-jackboot-authoritarianism>

¹¹ "A List of Cliven Bundy's Supporters, Now That We Know He's a Pro-Slavery Racist," The Wire, April 24, 2014, at <http://www.thewire.com/politics/2014/04/a-list-of-cliven-bundys-supporters-now-that-we-know-hes-a-pro-slavery-racist/361154/>

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ryan Lenz and Mark Potok, *War in the West: The Bundy Ranch Standoff and the American Radical Right*, Southern Poverty Law Center, July 9, 2014, at <https://www.splcenter.org/20140709/war-west-bundy-ranch-standoff-and-american-radical-right>

¹⁴ See Sipsey Street Irregulars blog at <http://sipseystreetirregulars.blogspot.com/2014/04/courage-is-contagious-defiance-is.html>

through Recapture Canyon, a protected Native American archeological site in Utah. In June 2014, two men pointed a handgun at a BLM worker in a marked federal vehicle while holding up a sign that said, “You need to die.” In April 2015, armed militia members led by the Oath Keepers group showed up to prevent the BLM closure of the Sugar Pine Mine in Southwest Oregon. Four months later, the Oath Keepers converged on the White Hope Mine on public land in Montana in an attempt to block U.S. Forest Service enforcement actions.¹⁵

Threats and assaults against national forest and rangeland employees rose sharply during this period, according to Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), a group formed in 1996 to represent the interests of public employees. Incidents involving BLM personnel increased from 15 in 2014 to 28 in 2015; those involving U.S. Forest Service employees jumped from 97 to 155, after several years of declines.¹⁶

On January 2 of this year, Cliven Bundy’s sons Ammon and Ryan led a group of armed militia extremists who seized the headquarters building of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon. What began as a peaceful march in the nearby town of Burns in support of two ranchers who were facing prison for arson on federal lands became a lawless protest against the ownership and management of public lands in the West. The group demanded, among other things, that the federal government cede ownership of the 1.4 million-acre Malheur National Forest to local authorities. Joining the Bundys were several militants, including Ryan Payne, who had helped plan the standoff at the Bundy ranch nearly two years earlier.

Ammon and Ryan Bundy and three other occupation leaders were eventually arrested on January 26 as they drove to a public meeting to discuss their plans. Riding with them was Robert “LaVoy” Finicum. After Finicum tried to drive through a roadblock in a pickup truck, he was shot and killed by police as he reached for a pocket containing a handgun.

Cliven Bundy was finally arrested in Portland, Oregon, on Feb. 10—on charges related to the events at his ranch in 2014 that could have been brought earlier—as he traveled to the Malheur refuge, apparently to join the standoff there. The standoff finally ended the next day when the last four occupiers surrendered.

Since then, Finicum’s death has become a rallying cry for the movement. Seven hundred people attended his funeral in Utah, and by the end of April there had been more than 80 events

¹⁵ Matt Lee-Ashley, *Congress Should Confront the Rise of Violent Extremism on America’s Public Lands*, Center for American Progress, March 24, 2016, at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/report/2016/03/24/133730/congress-should-confront-the-rise-of-violent-extremism-on-americas-public-lands/>

See also: David Neiwert, “In Wake of Bundy Standoff, Utah BLM Wrangler Threatened By Armed Men in Pickup,” Hatewatch blog, Southern Poverty Law Center, May 8, 2014, at <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2014/05/08/wake-bundy-standoff-utah-blm-wrangler-threatened-armed-men-pickup>

¹⁶ “Attacks Against Federal Range and Forest Workers on Rise,” Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, May 31, 2016, at <http://www.peer.org/news/news-releases/attacks-against-federal-range-and-forest-workers-on-rise.html>

in his honor across the country.¹⁷ Days after the shooting, an article on the Oath Keepers website said, “We vow to continue on with LaVoy’s legacy; his sacrifice will not be in vain.”¹⁸

Radical Movement Has Support Among Scores, Possibly Hundreds, of Sheriffs and Other Law Enforcement Officers

During its current wave, the antigovernment extremist movement has made a concerted effort to recruit current and former law enforcement officers to its cause, with a measure of success—an irony given that extremists within this movement openly promote defiance of the law and have killed and wounded numerous officers. The primary groups involved in this outreach are the Oath Keepers and the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association.

The Oath Keepers, founded in 2009 by Yale law graduate and former paratrooper Stewart Rhodes, is a militaristic organization that claims to have more than 30,000 law enforcement officers, soldiers and military veterans as members. The group and its founder trade in the same conspiracy theories about a “New World Order” that animate the movement in general. Its members pledge to disobey a list of 10 orders—a compendium of imaginary threats, such as forcing Americans into concentration camps, confiscating their guns and cooperating with foreign troops on U.S. soil. In recent years, the Oath Keepers have formed what the group calls “community preparedness teams” to train citizens in military tactics to help them survive when the federal government collapses.¹⁹

Several members of the Oath Keepers have been convicted of violent criminal activity. Matthew Fairfield of the suburban Cleveland area, described by prosecutors as the president of a local Oath Keepers chapter, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for storing a napalm bomb and obstructing justice. Daniel Knight Hayden of Oklahoma was sentenced to eight months in prison in 2010 after posting Twitter messages threatening to unleash a violent attack on Oklahoma state government officials on April 15, tax day. Darren Wesley Huff of Georgia was convicted on weapons charges after trying to execute a bizarre plan to take over a Tennessee courthouse and arrest county officials who refused to indict President Obama for using a fraudulent birth certificate.²⁰

In recent years, members of the Oath Keepers also have displayed weapons in an intimidating fashion. In 2011, hundreds of heavily armed Oath Keepers and militia supporters descended on Quartzsite, Arizona, after a local blogger was arrested. Three years later, as civil disturbances erupted in Ferguson, Missouri, after the fatal shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown, members equipped with tactical fighting gear began to patrol neighborhoods in the city.

¹⁷ “In the Aftermath of LaVoy Finicum’s Death, Growing Number of Rallies Push Martyrdom Narrative,” Hatewatch blog, Southern Poverty Law Center, at <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2016/05/03/aftermath-lavoy-finicums-death-growing-number-rallies-push-martyrdom-narrative>

¹⁸ “Rest in Peace LaVoy,” Oath Keepers website, at <https://www.oathkeepers.org/rest-in-peace-lavoy/>

¹⁹ For more on Stewart Rhodes and the Oath Keepers, see Southern Poverty Law Center profile at <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/elmer-stewart-rhodes-0>

²⁰ See *Terror from the Right*, Southern Poverty Law Center, at <https://www.splcenter.org/20100126/terror-right>

The second group seeking to recruit law enforcement is the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA), founded by Richard Mack, a former sheriff in Graham County, Arizona. Mack became a hero to the militia movement in the 1990s when he challenged the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act and won a partial U.S. Supreme Court victory that weakened the gun-control law.²¹

The CSPOA promotes the idea that sheriffs have a duty to resist federal agents who attempt to enforce federal laws, including gun control laws, that the sheriffs believe are unconstitutional. The group calls itself the “last line of defense standing between the overreaching government and your Constitutionally guaranteed rights.” Mack has written on the CSPOA website that the group “will be the army to set our nation free.” He once said he prayed for the day when a sheriff would be the “first one to fire the next shot around the world and arrest a couple of IRS agents.”²²

Mack, also a board member of the Oath Keepers, claims the support of more than 400 of the nation’s 3,000-plus sheriffs and a total of 5,000 members, including police chiefs, peace officers and other citizens. While it is unknown how many sheriffs fully support Mack’s radicalism, it is likely that scores, perhaps hundreds, adhere to the dangerous ideology he and the CSPOA promote. More than 100 sheriffs attended the group’s inaugural conference in Las Vegas in 2012.

At the heart of the CSPOA’s ideology, as with the broader movement, is the idea of “county supremacy.” The notion was born and gained traction in the 1970s and 1980s when it was pushed by the explicitly racist, anti-Semitic Posse Comitatus, which exploited the Midwestern farm crisis to promote an extreme antigovernment ideology. The Posse’s founding tract, the so-called Posse Blue Book written by white supremacist Henry Lamont Beach, asserted that the county was “the highest authority of government in our Republic.” Rejecting the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution, adherents of this ideology claim that the county sheriff is the highest legitimate law enforcement officer.

Earlier this week, we released a report based on interviews with about 50 of the 485 sheriffs who, according to the CSPOA, “have vowed to uphold and defend the Constitution against Obama’s unconstitutional gun measures.” They included Sheriff Oddie Shoupe of White County, Tennessee, who said that any attempt to seize guns in his jurisdiction would result in “war.” Another Tennessee sheriff, Esco Jarnagin of Hamblen County, said that federal attempts to enforce new gun controls in his county would be met with “a showdown, because I believe the citizens of this county have the right to protect themselves. If you come in here trying to take up the guns, it’s not going to be a nice day for somebody.” In Utah, Beaver County Sheriff Cameron Noel said he believed he could keep federal officials out of his county or at least demand that

²¹ Ryan Lenz, “Former Arizona Sheriff Richard Mack Seeks ‘Army’ of Sheriffs to Resist Federal Authority,” *Intelligence Report*, Southern Poverty Law Center, Nov. 11, 2012, at <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2012/former-arizona-sheriff-richard-mack-seeks-%E2%80%98army%E2%80%99-sheriffs-resist-federal-authority>

²² *Ibid.*

they seek his permission. “Those other entities [BLM, FBI, DEA, Forest Service], they answer to me.”²³

The radicalism promoted by the CSPOA has serious ramifications, not only because of the threat of violent confrontations between federal and local officials but also for public safety, because it frays the important trust among law enforcement agencies and can undermine cooperation. The Malheur National Wildlife Refuge standoff offers a case in point.

Sheriff Glenn Palmer of Grant County, Oregon, in 2012 was the first to be named “Sheriff of the Year” by the CSPOA. On January 26, 2016, Palmer was waiting in the town of John Day, Oregon, where he planned to meet with leaders of the Malheur occupation at a public gathering. He had already met with them twice, referred to them as “patriots,” and endorsed their demands. Unlike the sheriffs of four other adjacent counties, he had not sent deputies to help law enforcement during the occupation. He also had boasted about refusing to enforce laws he believed were unconstitutional.

Because of his sympathy for the occupiers, other law enforcement agencies did not inform Palmer that they were setting up a roadblock to arrest the leaders as they drove to John Day for the meeting. Palmer later described the roadblock as an “ambush,” a statement that drew a censure from the Oregon State Sheriffs’ Association. In the following days, nine complaints, including one from the John Day police chief, were lodged against Palmer with the state Department of Public Safety Standards and Training. State investigators have opened a criminal investigation.

Federal Government Must Respond Vigorously to All Forms of Terrorism

The actions of antigovernment extremists at the Bundy ranch and the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge were not isolated incidents but rather new chapters in a long history of violence and terrorism by a far-right movement that vilifies the federal government and has no respect for the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law. Rather than address their grievances through the democratic process, these extremists use violence and intimidation. To address this threat, we make the following recommendations:

First, we should call antigovernment violence and intimidation what it is—terrorism. If radical Muslim extremists were to point guns at federal officials, as did the militiamen at the Bundy ranch, we would not hesitate to use the terrorism label. Those who seek change at the point of a gun should be condemned, not lionized by public officials and the media.

Second, criminal activity emanating from the antigovernment movement should be swiftly prosecuted. The nearly two-year delay before charges were brought after the confrontation at the Bundy ranch encouraged further extremist activity, including the Malheur occupation.

²³ Mark Potok and Ryan Lenz, “Line in the Sand,” *Intelligence Report*, Southern Poverty Law Center, June 13, 2016, at <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2016/line-sand>

Third, the federal government should devote sufficient resources to monitor and address the continuing threat of non-Islamic, homegrown terrorism. After 9/11, this threat was largely ignored for more than a decade.²⁴

Fourth, federal law enforcement officials should be trained on the ideology, motivations and tactics of a movement that frequently targets them.

Fifth, Congress should reject the proposed Local Enforcement for Local Lands Act of 2016, a bill that would strip the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service of the authority to enforce federal law on federal land and transfer that authority to the states. The bill is fueled by antipathy toward the federal government and would set a dangerous precedent.

Lastly, we urge Congress to hold hearings on the growing threat to public lands and the lives of federal law enforcement officials from antigovernment extremists who oppose federal land-use policies. Nothing less than the rule of law is at stake.

Thank you.

²⁴ Between 9/11 and mid-2014, the Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee created by the Justice Department after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing did not meet a single time, and in 2009, the DHS unit responsible for assessing the threat of non-Islamic terrorism was gutted in response to conservative criticism of a report the unit issued that turned out to be quite prescient.

See R. Jeffrey Smith, "Homeland Security Department Curtails Home-Grown Terror Analysis," *The Washington Post*, June 7, 2011. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/homeland-security-department-curtailed-home-grown-terror-analysis/2011/06/02/AGQEEaDLH_story.html

Also see "Inside the DHS: Former Top Analyst Says Agency Bowed to Political Pressure," *Intelligence Report*, Southern Poverty Law Center, June 17, 2011; <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2011/inside-dhs-former-top-analyst-says-agency-bowed-political-pressure>