

# **SB864\_FAV\_Braniff\_START.pdf**

Uploaded by: Braniff, William

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony for the Record Regarding Senate Bill 864, an Act concerning Public Safety – Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism**

Senator Hettleman and Esteemed Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I support Senate Bill 864 and offer recommendations that I believe may improve upon an exceedingly worthwhile initiative. My support for the bill is not contingent upon these recommendations.

I have been involved in research, education and professional training efforts regarding responses to terrorism, including both criminal justice responses and community-led prevention, intervention and rehabilitation and reintegration efforts for approximately fifteen years. I currently direct the START Consortium based at the University of Maryland - College Park campus dedicated to these topics.

Domestic terrorists, and specifically those adhering to movements espousing elements of white power ideology, are the most active, lethal and numerous perpetrators of terrorism in the U.S. While acts of terrorism are relatively rare, with between 60-70 acts occurring in each of the last several years, these acts are intended to and often result in an oversized psychological and political impact on our society.

Furthermore, there is a significant imbalance in the relative success of violent plots when one compares domestic terrorism to international terrorism; according to START research over 60% of violent domestic terrorist plots successfully kill or injure someone, whereas less than 25% of violent international terrorist plots succeed. This discrepancy is the result of several factors, including fewer criminal justice tools available due to Constitutional protections, less political will, and lesser resources allocated to domestic terrorism.

If one considers hate crime, the importance of allocating resources to address domestic extremist ideologies becomes undeniable. Conservative estimates suggest that there are approximately 8000-9000 hate crimes per year in this country (compared to 60-70 terrorist attacks), and, according to START's dataset on hate crime perpetrators, nearly 90% of hate crime perpetrators are motivated by white power, misogynist and sexual-identity oriented ideologies – the same ideologies that motivate many acts of domestic terrorism.

Given that domestic extremism poses a significant threat of violence and harm, what is the role of the State in addressing this issue? It is possible to summon greater political will and to allocate greater law enforcement resources to the issue, while also investing in community empowerment programs and violence prevention efforts that uphold Constitutional protections. I believe States can play a critical role in empowering communities to identify what makes them resistant to hazards (including but not limited to violent extremism), resilient to hazards, and then to build upon those strengths to crowd out vulnerabilities.

In addition to community-centric approaches, the State can hold its public safety institutions accountable with respect to rational resource allocations based on an objective and holistic understanding of threats. Too often, data on hate crimes are considered separately from data on domestic and international terrorism – and as a result more resources are allocated to counter- and anti-terrorism than the much more common instances of hate crime.

States can also invest in rehabilitation and reintegration efforts of formerly incarcerated individuals. Criminal records are a significant risk factor for violent extremist outcomes among individuals who

adopt an extremist worldview. Said another way, the majority of violent extremist offenders have criminal records. Failing to invest in rehabilitation and reintegration is a significant missed opportunity in terms of violent extremist risk mitigation, as well as for decreasing rates of recidivism more generally.

Recommended Amendments:

- The National Governors Association (NGA) has created set of research-based resources developed over three years called the Governor's Roadmap to Preventing Targeted Violence. I recommend that this Bill encourage the Task Force to engage with NGA and the Roadmap. Significantly, NGA will be accepting applications from States to go through a facilitated process to help support the creation of violence prevention efforts.
- I applaud the multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder nature of the proposed task force, but strongly recommend the inclusion of representatives from the educational system, the social work community, the mental health community, and the inclusion of an academic expert with a background on these issues. Because terrorism is inherently a social, political and psychological phenomenon, addressing terrorism is not primarily a function of law enforcement or emergency responders, although they play an important role. A public-health approach to violence prevention requires a broader multi-disciplinary task force.
- Regarding the scope of the Bill, its title and the mandate expressed in line (f), I would recommend replacing "domestic terrorism" with "domestic violent extremism", allowing the task force to address the spectrum of ideologically-motivated violent extremism including hate crime.
- Regarding line (f)(6) of the proposed Bill, online extremism is a critical issue but too narrow of a focus to address the problem of domestic violent extremism comprehensively, and further, I would highlight that the First Amendment concerns are not unique to online communications. I would recommend leaving the mandate broad regarding identifying "optimal policies and practices for preventing and countering domestic violent extremism in the context of upholding civil rights and civil liberties."

Sincerely,

William Braniff  
Director, START  
Professor of the Practice, UMD

# **SB 867 - Domestic Terrorism.pdf**

Uploaded by: Peterson, Matt

Position: FAV

## OFFICERS

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Jewish Federation of Howard County

Jewish Labor Committee

Jewish War Veterans

Jewish War Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary

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Jews For Judaism

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Simon E. Sobeloff Jewish Law Society

Suburban Orthodox Congregation

Temple Beth Shalom

Temple Isaiah

Zionist Organization of America

Baltimore District

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

### Senate Bill 864 – Public Safety – Taskforce on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism

#### Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 9, 2021

#### SUPPORT

**Background:** Senate Bill 864 (SB864) would establish the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism. The taskforce would study ways the state can prevent domestic terrorism, hate, and other forms of extremism. After studying this issue, the taskforce would then make policy recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly.

**Written Comments:** Earlier this month FBI Director Chris Wray testified before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee that domestic terrorism “has been metastasizing around the country for a long time now, and it’s not going away anytime soon.” Domestic terror is taking a new form, it is rapidly decentralizing and now organizing through new digital platforms capable of reaching, and radicalizing people like never before. This new and constantly changing landscape, combined with the swelling number of domestic terror organizations, makes this threat even more difficult for law enforcement to track. Now more than ever, we need to further understand what this growing threat means for Maryland, so that we can get ahead of it.

Whether it is a plot to kidnap and harm elected officials, overthrow the government or mass shootings targeting places of worship, domestic terrorism affects all of us regardless of background. We need to come together and address this issue as a state. SB864 will help us do that by forming a diverse taskforce to study domestic terrorism and hate. By taking a thorough look at the issue, we can ensure that the true perpetrators of this type of extremism are held responsible.

The Jewish community is among the communities most targeted by domestic terrorists. Our community is under constant threat, from the attack at the Tree of Life Synagogue, to Poway, Jersey City and Monsey. It is important for our community, and for our neighbors in other communities who are also targeted by extremism, that our state be doing everything possible to prevent domestic terrorism and combat hate.

For these reasons we ask for a favorable report on SB864.

*The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.*

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL

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Member of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Baltimore Jewish Council is an agency of The Associated

# **ADL Testimony SB864 domestic terrorism with PROTEC**

Uploaded by: Weisel, Meredith

Position: FAV



Maryland General Assembly  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
March 10, 2021

Testimony of Meredith R. Weisel  
ADL Washington D.C. Senior Associate Regional Director

ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) is pleased to submit this testimony in support of SB864, Public Safety – Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism, a bill that would establish a task force to consider optimal policies and practices for both preventing and countering domestic terrorism in the U.S.

Since 1913, the mission of ADL (the “Anti-Defamation League”) has been to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” For decades, one of the most important ways in which ADL has fought against bigotry and antisemitism has been by investigating extremist threats across the ideological spectrum, including white supremacists and other far-right violent extremists, producing research to inform the public of the scope of the threat, and working with law enforcement, educators, the tech industry and elected leaders to promote best practices that can effectively address and counter threats to communities.

As ADL has said time and time again, extremists must be taken at their word. Volatile rhetoric online bleeds into explicit calls to violence, and now people have acted on those calls in the sacred halls of our nation’s Capitol. This cycle did not begin on January 6. It is part of an escalating pattern that has been roiling for a long time and will require vigilance and commitment from all of us to interrupt.

The first step is for us to acknowledge the nature and magnitude of the problem. The second step is for federal and state governments to embrace the need for new approaches to prevent and counter domestic extremism and domestic terrorism. With respect to the severity of the problem itself, there is no question that hate and extremism are on the rise. Since the 2016 presidential election, white supremacy has experienced a resurgence, driven in large part by the rise of the alt right, the newest segment of the white supremacist movement. Youth-oriented and overwhelmingly male, the alt right has provided new energy to the movement, but has also been a destabilizing force, much as racist skinheads were to the movement in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Modern white supremacist ideology is centered on the belief that the white race is in danger of extinction, drowned by a rising tide of people who are not white, controlled and manipulated by Jews. White supremacists believe that almost any action is justified if it will help “save” the white race. Violence and crime represent the most serious problems emanating from the white supremacist movement. White supremacists have killed more people in recent years than any other type of domestic extremist (54% of all domestic extremist-related murders in the past 10

years). They are also a troubling source of domestic terror incidents (including 13 plots or attacks within the past five years).

Yet murders and terror plots represent only the tip of the iceberg of white supremacist violence, as there are many more incidents involving less severe crimes, including attempted murders, assaults, weapons and explosives violations, and more. In addition, white supremacists engage in non-ideological crime, including crimes of violence against women and drug-related crimes. From 2016 through 2019, white supremacists alone killed 116 people in the United States in terrorist acts, hate crimes, and other violent acts. Other right-wing extremists added 21 more deaths to the grisly toll. Lawmakers, law enforcement, and the public need to recognize the grave and dangerous threat posed by violent white supremacy and other forms of right-wing extremism. We cannot begin to defeat this deadly form of hatred if we fail to recognize it, let alone condemn it.

Unfortunately, we cannot legislate, tabulate, regulate, or arrest our way to a healthier and more accepting society. The fundamental cause of bias-motivated violence in the United States is the persistence of racism, anti-Muslim bigotry, anti-LGBTQ+ bias, antisemitism, and all forms of identity-based hate, and there are no quick, complete solutions to these problems. But this Legislature has a critical role to play in using its own power to establish norms, build consensus around our shared values, and convene experts to assess the best ways to prevent and counter domestic terrorism.

In the wake of the January 6, 2021 siege on the U.S. Capitol, people in the United States are understandably worried about extremism and political violence. They want to know how bad things are, and how bad they might get. The bottom line is that although we should not panic, there's also no excuse for ignoring an extremist threat that appears to have significant staying power. In other words, we all need to focus on the long game.

Just as the attack on our Capitol did not materialize out of nowhere, so too has the threat not dissipated in its aftermath. Those who perpetrated the attack will not readily abandon their principles, nor will those who supported this act of domestic terrorism from afar. We cannot expect there to be a change unless we change something about our approach. The trauma of January 6 must not be in vain. It is time, at long last, for action. It is time for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to combating domestic extremism. This legislation is an important contribution to that effort.

The findings of any Task Force will be informed by its composition. We are heartened to see that the Task Force will include representatives of civil rights organizations. However, the Task Force has multiple representatives of law enforcement and no representation from public defenders or the public defense bar. This is a necessary perspective in ensuring that the final recommendations of the Task Force will be just and equitable. Similarly, the final recommendations (Section 1(f)) should include a section on civil rights considerations.



ADL supports this bill and the Task Force that it creates to prevent and counter domestic terrorism. This Task Force is charged with no small challenge. We look forward to sharing our knowledge and expertise with them, including our **PROTECT** plan — a comprehensive, seven-part plan to mitigate the threat posed by domestic extremism and domestic terrorism while protecting civil rights and civil liberties. Together, these seven steps can have an immediate and deeply significant impact in preventing and countering domestic terrorism – more so than any one action, policy, or law – and can do so while protecting vulnerable people and communities against the risk of government overreach. In short, the plan advocates that state and federal governments:

- P** Prioritize Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism
- R** Resource According to the Threat
- O** Oppose Extremists in Government Service
- T** Take Public Health and Other Domestic Terrorism Prevention Measures
- E** End the Complicity of Social Media in Facilitating Extremism
- C** Create an Independent Clearinghouse for Online Extremist Content
- T** Target Foreign White Supremacist Terrorist Groups for Sanctions

**For all these reasons, we accordingly urge the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to give SB864 a favorable report.**

# PROTECT Plan to Fight Domestic Terrorism



On January 6, Americans watched as an insurrection fueled by violent conspiracy theories and white supremacy gripped the nation and attacked our democracy. This was a predictable act of political violence fueled by years of increasing extremism; the forces that led to the attack on our Capitol continue to pose a threat to American security and democracy.

To address this challenge, ADL is announcing the PROTECT plan to mitigate the threat of domestic terrorism while protecting civil liberties. It is a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, including actions for federal, state and local officials, as well as the tech industry. Together, these seven actions should significantly help prevent and counter domestic terrorism – more so than any one policy or law – and should do so while protecting vulnerable people and communities against the risk of government overreach.

- **Prioritize Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism**
- **Resource According to the Threat**
- **Oppose Extremists in Government Service**
- **Take Domestic Terrorism Prevention Measures**
- **End the Complicity of Social Media in Facilitating Extremism**
- **Create an Independent Clearinghouse for Online Extremist Content**
- **Target Foreign White Supremacist Terrorist Groups**

## THE PROTECT PLAN

### **Prioritize Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism**

A whole-of-government strategy must be accompanied by a whole-of-society approach. This requires interagency coordination, as well as coordination among federal, state and local stakeholders, civil society and the private sector. The Biden-Harris Administration should ensure civil society input by kicking off the strategy process with a Preventing Domestic Terrorism Summit with civil society, and then creating a comprehensive interagency strategy that calls out domestic terrorism and prioritizes preventing and countering it.

State governments should determine a point person – ideally at least one full office with federal support – to specialize in domestic terrorist threats and oversee work across state government offices, law enforcement, and with partners in government and civil society to address domestic terrorism.

### **Resource According to the Threat**

Congress should insist on immediate passage of the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act (DTPA) to enhance the government's efforts to prevent domestic terrorism by formally authorizing offices to address it and requiring law enforcement agencies to regularly report on domestic terrorist threats. Congress and the Administration must ensure that those offices have and deploy resources proportionate to the threats.

State legislatures should consider a state equivalent of the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act, and states should work toward transparently sharing an annual report on the state of domestic terrorism and apportioning state resources according to the lethality of those threats.





### **Oppose Extremists in Government Service**

Federal and state officials must take steps to ensure that individuals associated with violent extremist movements or engaged in violent extremist activity are deemed unsuitable for government employment in positions responsible for public safety or well-being – including law enforcement and military – and are not given security clearances, to the extent permitted by law. Federal and state officials should conduct a review and take appropriate steps against any current such employees.

Leadership must identify any elected officials who have endorsed, given credence to, or intentionally promoted QAnon or other dangerous conspiracy theories, and decline to assign them to positions of authority.

### **Take Domestic Terrorism Prevention Measures**

Congress and state legislatures must fund civil society and academic programs to address violent extremist radicalization and recruitment. These initiatives, which might include education, counseling, and off-ramping, require careful oversight and safeguards that ensure they do not stigmatize communities and are responsive to such concerns.

### **End the Complicity of Social Media in Facilitating Extremism**

Congress must investigate any complicity between social media companies and extremists, and make social media platforms more transparent and accountable for dangerous disinformation and misinformation, as well as hate content. A menu of options should include the careful reform, not elimination, of Section 230, the law that currently affords social media platforms unprecedented immunity from legal accountability. It also should include measures to independently and transparently verify the amount, nature and impact of extremism online, as well as the effectiveness of current efforts.

States should ensure that law enforcement understands the nature of online extremism and how to process digital evidence, and provide better recourse for victims of doxing, swatting and other forms of online harassment.

### **Create an Independent Clearinghouse for Online Extremist Content**

Congress should work with the Biden-Harris Administration to create a publicly funded, independent nonprofit center, modeled in part on the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), to help streamline national security tips and resources while preserving civil liberties.

State governments should work with federal partners to create a centralized nationwide clearinghouse, and then create complementary efforts at the state level.

### **Target Foreign White Supremacist Terrorist Groups**

The National Security Council should urgently hold a Deputies Committee meeting to review terrorist designations to ensure that any foreign extremist groups, particularly white supremacist groups, that have reached the threshold for the designation should be so designated.

The Biden-Harris Administration must ensure consistent analysis of the global nature of the white supremacist terrorist threat, such as by empowering the National Counterterrorism Center to analyze the threat to the fullest extent permitted by law.

State law enforcement should report suspicious white supremacist behavior to the FBI's Terrorist Screening Center to determine whether a suspect is on the terrorist watch list. If and when a white supremacist terrorist group is designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, states should enhance their capabilities to address the threat and coordinate with federal entities.

# **MCPA-MSA\_SB 864-Counter-Terroism-Task-Force-Suppor**

Uploaded by: Mansfield, Andrea

Position: FWA



# Maryland Chiefs of Police Association Maryland Sheriffs' Association



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr. Chairman and  
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Chief David Morris, Co-Chair, MCPA, Joint Legislative Committee  
Sheriff Darren Popkin, Co-Chair, MSA, Joint Legislative Committee  
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

**DATE:** March 10, 2021

**RE:** **SB 864 Public Safety – Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic  
Terrorism**

**POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) **SUPPORT SB 864 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill establishes the Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism to study and make recommendations regarding optimal policies and practices for preventing and countering domestic terrorism.

MCPA and MSA support the concepts in this bill. However, they would like to request an amendment to expand the membership to include a member of the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association and a member of the Maryland Sheriffs' Association. As introduced, the membership includes one member of the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association or the Maryland Sheriffs' Association. The Chief leads the law enforcement agency in several larger counties and the municipalities within those jurisdictions. But, the elected Sheriff leads the law enforcement agencies in most smaller counties. Due to the differences among these larger and smaller jurisdictions, the Chief and Sheriff bring different perspectives to the table. Having both larger and smaller law enforcement agencies represented would ensure all aspects are adequately discussed.

For these reasons, MCPA and MSA **SUPPORT SB 864 WITH AMENDMENTS**.

**SB 0864.pdf**

Uploaded by: Reichert-Price, Sarah

Position: FWA

Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
And Members of The Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Maryland Senate  
Annapolis, MD

RE: SB 0864- Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism- AMEND

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

HB 1227 focuses on and singles out white supremacy as being the only actions which currently threaten Homeland Security, thereby turning a blind eye to the radical and heinous crimes of Antifa and BLM.

Continuing to ignore the devastation caused by members of BLM and Antifa and continued failure to prosecute the performers of these heinous crimes of burning down cities and businesses, looting businesses, and killing innocent citizens is creating more bitterness and divide amongst American citizens including citizens of the state of Maryland.

The death of George Floyd was a sad incidence, but one, in my opinion, that did not result from the action of white supremacy. Yet, the fire of accusation was fueled by such pretense and is intensified by ignoring others' actions of the same, or in my opinion, worse intensity.

There should be an equal set of standards for the judgement of, and punishment for, such crimes, regardless of the performers. Race should not be a factor thereof.

In regards to the statement of the Preamble (lines 7-10, p.2), these issues must be addressed from both sides- reverse discrimination is becoming a more prominent issue. Not every Caucasian is a racist, yet, are portrayed as such. Special treatment and privileges for minorities are increasing in the name of racism. Not every negative occurrence between individuals of varying skin color is a racist act.

In regards to the statement of the Preamble (lines 18-21, p 2), misinformation and disinformation is not that which is broadcast on through alternate, conservative media outlets. Simply because it does not align with what is being presented by MSM does not mean it is misinformation. MSM and alternate news outlets should be reporting the same, true news, whatever that may be in order to avoid any and all misinformation, thereby alleviating the existence of bitterness, hate speech and dissent amongst our citizens.

Please consider amending HB1227 to include these changes/additions

Sincerely,

Sarah Reichert-Price

# **Testimony - SB 864 - TF - Domestic Terrorism - UNF**

Uploaded by: Ennis, Ella

Position: UNF



The Honorable William Smith, Chairman  
And members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee  
Senate of Maryland  
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: SB 864 – Task Force on Preventing & Countering Domestic Terrorism – OPPOSED

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee,

SB 864 – is divisive, one-sided, repeats hyper-partisan rhetoric and encourages racial mis-trust and mis-trust of the fairness of our government.

Over the last 50 years the United States has made great progress toward the goal of judging people by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin as stated by Martin Luther King, Jr. As a country and as a people we are not perfect – but we have made great progress. Reverse discrimination will not make us perfect as a nation or a State. The events and cynical actions of the media, social media and political movements during the last year to distort, mis-state and withhold factual information have caused great harm to the social fabric and harmony of our country.

SB 864- calls out “violent white supremacy is the most persistent and lethal threat in the Homeland” but does not call out the violent protests and riots and burning of parts of major cities for more than 6 months in 2020. People died—black and white—during those riots. Businesses were lost – businesses owned by black and white, native-born and immigrant alike. A Federal Courthouse was attacked nightly for more than 30 days with attempts to burn it down with people inside. Where is the condemnation of these actions? Where is the arrests of those setting those fires? Where is the condemnation of these actions and concern for terrorism by leftist groups?

The riot at the U.S. Capitol was outrageous. I condemn that violence. Everyone condemns it. But the riot by a few hundred mis-guided, angry people should not condemn the thousands of people who came to the Nation’s capital to peacefully make their voices heard. No more than the many people who peacefully protested for protection of black lives should be judged as being aligned with the radical Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation that espouses disruption of the nuclear family structure of the United States or the Antifa movement to destroy American democracy.

Republican members of Congress have been attacked for questioning the election results for the Electoral College on January 6<sup>th</sup> – some Democrats and media even advocating that they should be impeached and removed from Congress. Yet, Democrats, including Speaker Pelosi, have raised the same questions and issues in three of the five previous presidential elections. We need some fairness and objectivity in judging actions by the same metrics.

SB 864 does nothing to heal or improve the civility of our society. It will not make us safer. We need to de-escalate the anger and hatred promoted in the last several years. Please give an Unfavorable Report to SB 864.

Sincerely,  
Ella Ennis  
P.O. Box 437, Port Republic, MD 20676  
E-mail: eee437@comcast.net

# **TPM testimony on 2021 SB0864 Public Safety - Task**

Uploaded by: Grimes, Seth

Position: UNF



## **SBo864 -- Oppose**

### Public Safety - Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism

Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

#### **Takoma Park Mobilization opposes SBo864, Public Safety - Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism.**

Takoma Park Mobilization is a grassroots advocacy organization with a network of over 2,500 Marylanders. We work to enact local, state, and national policies and laws that ensure equal justice for all, with special attention to the treatment of people of color, immigrants, and other vulnerable individuals in our communities.

**Our own Maryland experience suggests that if SBo864 is enacted, the effort may be mistargeted.** I quote a 2008 article (<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2008-dec-07-na-cop-spy7-story.html>): *“Maryland officials now concede that, based on information gathered by “Lucy” and others, state police wrongly listed at least 53 Americans as terrorists in a criminal intelligence database -- and shared some information about them with half a dozen state and federal agencies, including the National Security Agency.”* Those surveilled included then-Maryland Senator Jamie Raskin, guilty only of meeting with constituents whom the Maryland State Police deemed suspect.

**And SBo864 is alarming, with optics that recognize the chilling implications for Maryland immigrants and people of color.** The bill devotes five Whereas clauses to insisting that it seeks “to promote inclusiveness, celebrate diversity, work to ensure equitable opportunities... and reject hate and bias.” Why did sponsors include this protestation? Because they understand that efforts of this sort most often target marginalized and dissenting neighbors rather than white supremacists. For instance, I’d bet you anti-immigrant elements would seek to add MS-13 to the Task Force agenda.

**Just days ago, Senate President Bill Ferguson called a peaceful protest by policing reform advocates an act of ‘intimidation.’** Carlean Ponder stated on behalf of the Silver Spring Justice Coalition and the Montgomery County Defund Policing & Invest in Communities Coalition, *“With his choice of words, Sen. Ferguson has aligned himself with those who seek to vilify protests on behalf of Black lives... Sen. Ferguson’s attack on free speech on the Maryland Senate Floor is significant because of the nation’s history of using law enforcement to arrest, beat, and even kill civil rights protestors.”*

Further, **SBo864 is unneeded, premised on issues encountered elsewhere** -- in Michigan, where heavily-armed white-supremacist militias run rampant, and at the U.S. Capitol -- without providing evidence of a need here in Maryland. It is redundant, adding nothing to the current toolkit for countering domestic terrorism.

Finally, **the Task Force mandate directed by SBo864 is problematic.** What “practices for... countering domestic terrorism” could there be other than more police and more- militarized police? The direction to provide “oversight measures” is incredibly non-specific. Oversight by whom and of what? And I have a hard time getting my head around the State of Maryland's finding "ways to

counter and prosecute online extremism," given how borderless the online world is and how difficult it is to regulate what happens on online platforms.

**SBo864 is redundant, unneeded, liable to mistargeting, and chilling and the Task Force directive is problematic. Takoma Park Mobilization urges the Judicial Proceedings Committee to reject SBo864.**

*Submitted for Takoma Park Mobilization by Seth Grimes, seth.grimes@gmail.com, 301-873-8225  
March 8, 2021*

**2021 SB 0864 Public Safety - Task Force on Preven**

Uploaded by: UDRY, SUE

Position: UNF



## **SB 0864 -- Oppose**

### **Public Safety - Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism**

#### **Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee**

Chair Smith and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

#### **The Silver Spring Justice Coalition opposes SB 0864, Public Safety - Task Force on Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism.**

The Silver Spring Justice Coalition (SSJC) envisions a county where harm by police is eliminated, while community and individuals are empowered. SSJC aims to reduce the presence of police in our communities; eliminate violence and harm by police; establish transparency and accountability; and redirect public funds toward community needs.

SB 0864 will cause harm to the communities it purports to protect, chill First Amendment rights, and take the state in the wrong direction.

In creating this task force, the legislature raises the specter of terrorists in our midst. While neither terrorism nor extremism is defined in the bill, we have seen throughout our history and today, these terms being used by law enforcement most frequently against Muslims and racial justice activists. We have no doubt that the recommendations made by this task force will create additional police powers, including surveillance, which will be deployed against communities that are already harassed by police, and social justice advocates.

SB 0864 provides a slippery slope for lawmakers and law enforcement to devise new ways to criminalize peaceful protest. Senator Ferguson illustrated how this will happen a few days ago on the floor of the Senate. He purposefully conflated two events: receiving a threatening letter, and a peaceful protest organized by SSJC. He labeled our car caravan an act of 'intimidation.' Carlean Ponder, on behalf of SSJC and the Montgomery County Defund Policing & Invest in Communities Coalition, explained why this raises serious concerns:

*"With his choice of words, Sen. Ferguson has aligned himself with those who seek to vilify protests on behalf of Black lives... Sen. Ferguson's attack on free speech on the Maryland Senate Floor is significant because of the nation's history of using law enforcement to arrest, beat, and even kill civil rights protestors."*

Finally, if "The General Assembly is committed to ending the spread of hate, bigotry, and harassment based on race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, or any other protected characteristic as defined by law," as described in the "whereas" section of the bill, it should adopt the strongest police reform measures possible to protect Marylanders most often harassed and harmed by police violence.

**The Silver Spring Justice Coalition urges the Judicial Proceedings Committee to reject SB 0864.**

*Submitted for the Silver Spring Justice Coalition by Sue Udry, sue@rightsanddissent.org  
March 8, 2021*