

**Prepared Statement by U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
Hearing on “Examining the ‘Metastasizing’ Domestic Terrorism Threat after the Buffalo Attack”
Tuesday, June 7, 2022
VIDEO**

This hearing is our third of the Congress discussing the threat of domestic terrorism. In March 2021, Director Wray testified before us that the threat of domestic terrorism is growing. Six months later, he testified to another committee that the FBI had 2,700 active domestic terrorism investigations, compared to its usual 1,000.

The bulk of those new cases are due to about 600 events. One is the Capitol riot on January 6. Another tragic event was the terrible attack by a young white racist, killing 10 in Buffalo. One of those killed in this act of domestic terrorism was Ruth Whitfield. Her son Garnell Whitfield, Jr., is here with us today. Thank you for coming.

Nearly 600 events were anti-police riots that erupted in dozens of cities in 2020.

FBI Executive Assistant Director Jill Sanborn testified before us in January that 800 domestic terrorism investigations were opened as a result of the 2020 riots. That was five months ago, each time we speak with the FBI, the number has usually risen by a few hundred.

However, due to lack of federal jurisdiction, this is only a small fraction of the 14,000 that were arrested just in the first few weeks. Tens of thousands appear to have participated in this mass violence.

I was truly surprised by this sheer number of Americans that have been willing to engage in violence in support of anti-police rhetoric. Two thousand police officers were injured, 25 people were killed, and there was \$2 billion in property damage, with arson as a preferred tactic.

For anyone who thinks violence from the political left ended in 2020: It didn't.

A May 2022 report by the Center of Strategic and International Studies found that 40 percent of all domestic terrorist attacks in 2021 were from the far left.

For anyone who thinks that the violence from the far left began in 2020: It didn't.

In 2016, two black racists killed eight police officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge in 11 days. According to a May 2021 report from the FBI, black racially-motivated violent extremism was the deadliest ideology in 2017.

Even though many in the press only focus on far right attacks, the most deadly ideology often changes year to year. In 2018 and 2019, that was white racially-motivated violent extremism. In 2020, antigovernment extremism was the most lethal ideology.

One constant of domestic terrorism is that the threat is always shifting, and violence comes from all sides of the political spectrum.

An Asian man drove a car into a peaceful protest in favor of fair treatment for African Americans. The Waukesha parade murderer and the New York subway shooter had delivered long racist tirades against white Americans before their crimes.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: We all have to condemn all political violence. We have the time and resources to combat violence committed under the banner of every deadly ideology. We do not have to choose. We must combat them all.

At the same time, we have to protect speech. A fanatical Bernie Sanders supporter tried to murder Republicans in the congressional baseball game practice in 2017. Agreeing with Bernie Sanders politically is protected by the First Amendment. Trying to kill others in support of that belief is not.

I don't think any Republicans tried to argue that being a Bernie Sanders supporter made a person a domestic terrorist just because one person who agreed with him was.

We have to avoid feckless name calling because we disagree over major issues. It is unfair, for example, to equate Republican concern over illegal immigration with racist extremism. And profoundly sad.

If we're going to come together to solve the problems of domestic terrorism, we have to do so with an eye to solving the problems that truly exist. Reorganizing offices at DOJ that have asked not to be reorganized doesn't do that. Foisting reporting and focus requirements on them that are intended to push them to combat one deadly ideology more than others won't help anyone.

We have to listen to what is truly needed.

Those operating in the terrorism space have asked for a slew of authorities to help them combat international terrorism. I introduced an amendment to the NDAA last year to give them these authorities. It did not pass as that time. I hope it will this year.

Finally, we have to come together to protect our law enforcement officers.

The CSIS report I mentioned found that law enforcement officers have increasingly become a target of domestic terrorists from all sides of the political spectrum. The report states that government, military and especially law enforcement were the primary targets of domestic terrorist attacks and plots in 2021, composing 43 percent of all attacks. Law enforcement officers were the target in 48 percent of violent far left events, 37 percent of violent far right events and all jihadist events in 2021.

I understand that, from time to time, while our police and our military are often the victims of extremist violence, they're accused of being the hotbeds of extremism.

In May of this year, we received an FBI report that stated “available FBI reporting did not reveal RMVE [racist extremist] infiltration into law enforcement.”

We’ve been briefed by the FBI that extremism is no more common in the military than the general population, and is not limited to white racism but includes black racism and Antifa ideology appearing within the ranks.

If we’re going to be serious about combating extremism, we need to be realistic that the threat is often from outside law enforcement and the military and directed against them, not the other way around.

In fact these baseless accusations of widespread extremism within law enforcement and the military probably only strengthen the likelihood that innocent officers and service members will unfairly become targets for violent attacks. In 2018, members of Antifa in Philadelphia assaulted two Marines, believing them to be white supremacists. They weren’t. They were Hispanic.

It’s important that those of us in a position to lead be clear that all violence will never be tolerated. I look forward to working to do that together.

