

JCRB|AJC Urges Elected Officials to Condemn Extremism and Violence

The Jewish Community Relations Bureau|AJC is deeply concerned at an environment of increasing extremism in the United States as well as statements made by local and national elected officials that seem to empower extremists and promote violence. JCRB|AJC is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to combat antisemitism and pursue justice.

Johnson County Commissioner Mike Brown's [post on social media warning](#) of a coming war and advising readers to arm themselves is disturbing. This kind of rhetoric encourages extremists, escalates the threat of violence, and further entrenches a growing divide in American society that pits neighbor against neighbor.

We welcome and appreciate President Trump's condemnation of white supremacists and white nationalists on Thursday evening. His statements made on Tuesday evening had seemed to equivocate on this topic, energizing The Proud Boys who [celebrated his statement](#) as [marching orders](#) to [commit violence and election interference](#). We remain troubled by a lack of acknowledgment of the severity of growing white nationalist and white supremacist activity in this country.

We must all be clear: The Proud Boys are an extremist nationalist group based on misogynistic, Islamophobic, transphobic, and anti-immigration ideology. Many of their members, including their founder, have expressed white supremacist and antisemitic ideologies and engage with white supremacist groups, [according to the ADL](#). Their ideology and activities pose a tangible danger to Jews, all minorities, and American civil society as a whole.

The Proud Boys – which do have a presence in Kansas City --- are not the only group of concern. Groups such as the American Identity Movement ([which has a chapter at K-State](#)), the Boogaloo Boys, as well as other classically branded neo-Nazi groups are feeling emboldened and empowered by the prospect of violence leading up to the November elections. Locally, a man recently tore up the Israeli sister city flag at the Country Club Plaza. When confronted, he can be [shown in a video repeatedly giving the Nazi salute](#) and shouting "[National Justice Party.](#)"

While not directly linked to violence, we are also concerned that the [QAnon movement](#) – based on an inherently antisemitic conspiracy theory which essentially recycles the age-old blood libel – has successfully infiltrated mainstream politics in 2020.

The Jewish community knows that antisemitism is much older than partisan politics, and remains vigilant about combatting this hatred on the far-left, far-right, and from religious extremists. As a nonpartisan organization committed to the principles of nonviolence, we condemn violence of any kind, including from those operating in the name of the far-left [Antifa movement](#).

We must also look clearly at the statistics. [According to the ADL](#), in 2019, domestic extremists killed at least 42 people in the United States in 17 separate incidents, making 2019 the sixth deadliest year on record for domestic extremist-related killings since 1970. “As is typically the case,” says the ADL report, “The extremist-related murders of 2019 were overwhelmingly (90%) linked to right-wing extremists. All but one of the incidents had ties to right-wing extremism.”

As Brian Levin, Director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University, [stated this morning](#): “There is no equivalency [with regards to Antifa] as far as the depth, the reach, and the lethality of the violence,” when compared with far-right extremist groups.

We can simultaneously condemn violence from all sides while acknowledging the statistical reality: far-right extremism is on the rise in the United States and poses a particularly frequent and deadly threat to the Jewish community, our allies, and our entire society. All people of goodwill, regardless of political affiliation, should be united in the desire to see this extremism abate.

JCRB|AJC urges all of our elected officials and our allies to acknowledge this growing threat and to forcefully and publicly condemn white nationalist and white supremacist ideologies, as well as QAnon conspiracy theorists. Effective elected leaders should seek to unite their constituents, not to further divide them. They must do everything in their power to deter and prevent violence from all sides.

We look to create an American society that is not uniform in political belief, race, or religion – but that is united together in a commitment to mutual respect, civil discourse, democratic values, and above all, nonviolence. We demand nothing less than this from our leaders at all levels.

For further information on extremism in America, we encourage you to watch AJC’s Advocacy Anywhere program: [Proud Boys and Antifa: The State of Extremism in America Today](#) with Brian Levin, Director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at CSU.