

# SPLC REPORT

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## Vote Your Voice to infuse \$30 million in Deep South to mobilize voters

The SPLC is investing up to \$30 million from its endowment in nonpartisan, nonprofit voter outreach organizations in

The campaign seeks to empower communities by aiding them in their fight against voter suppression; support

president and chief executive officer. “While we have seen gains in voting rights and access in recent decades, since the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act in 2013, there has been a blatant effort to deny voting rights through state actions.”

### Overcoming legacy of racism

These tactics include purging voter rolls, blocking rights restoration efforts, eliminating polling places, scaling back early voting, instituting onerous voter ID laws and limiting access to voting by mail.

“In addition to facing the legacy of systemic racism, communities of color face disproportionate harm from the COVID-19 pandemic,” Huang said. “Vote Your Voice ensures more eligible voters of color in the Deep South will have a say in the direction of our country.”

The Vote Your Voice grantees will engage millions of voters across the South to exercise their basic right to vote and ensure

that they are able to elect candidates who represent their values.

“These grants will lift up organizations working at the ground level, and those maximizing mobile technology and social media in this time of social distancing, to overcome long-standing policies and practices that have stifled the voice and vote of Black and Brown communities,” said Clare S. Richie, public policy specialist at the Community Foundation.

Organizations with a deep knowledge of the communities they serve are well positioned to make a significant impact, explained Michael Lomax, president and chief executive officer of the United Negro College Fund.

“We are at a point in our history as a nation when the hard-won victories in the voter struggle for Black people are being compromised,” he said. “We have to fight for that.”

Go to [splcenter.org/vote-your-voice](http://splcenter.org/vote-your-voice) to learn more.



the Deep South to increase voter registration and participation among people of color over several election cycles.

The Vote Your Voice initiative – a partnership with the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta – will help support voter registration, education and mobilization efforts in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi.

Black- and Brown-led voter outreach organizations; prototype effective voter engagement strategies; and re-enfranchise returning citizens.

“This country has a long history of denying voting rights to its citizens, especially Black and Brown people, returning citizens and young people,” said Margaret Huang, SPLC

## The State of Women’s Suffrage

*100 years ago, the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote, but systemic sexism and disenfranchisement of Black women still block equitable access to the ballot*

By **Nancy Abudu**  
Deputy Legal Director

Like other disenfranchised people in the United States, women have employed many strategies over the years in their fight for the right to vote.

In the late 19th century, some women pushed for equal suffrage laws in individual states. Others turned to the courts. Still others made their voices heard through protests, silent vigils and hunger strikes.

They faced a swift backlash, much like other groups seeking their constitutional rights, such as the activists who emerged decades later in the civil rights movement who were thrown in jail or physically assaulted for the right to vote.

Nevertheless, they persisted. By 1916, the movement for women’s suffrage had failed to

garner support in every state, so it unified around a loftier goal: a constitutional amendment that would mandate ballot access for women across the country. That amendment, which was first introduced in Congress in 1878, wasn’t ratified until Aug. 18, 1920.

This year, as we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment – which officially gave women the right to vote – we must ensure that *all* women have equitable access to the ballot box.

Over the last century, while the political power of women has grown, seemingly gender-neutral ballot requirements have disparately impacted women’s voting rights.

Black women, in particular, have suffered disproportionately from voter suppression tactics that have made it harder

for them and other women of color to vote.

As director of the Voting Rights Practice Group at the Southern Poverty Law Center, I fight to ensure that everyone has the right to vote – regardless of race or gender.

### Systemic sexism, disenfranchisement

The centennial of the 19th Amendment’s passage is an opportunity to celebrate the courage and conviction of the countless women who have fought on the front lines for equal rights.

But after successfully expanding women’s suffrage to all states, the movement essentially split into two camps: those who wanted to forge ahead for creation of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and those who focused on registering and turning out the vote of as many women as possible.

While both endeavors were laudable, the split undermined the united front that was crucial for either strategy to succeed.

*Continued on Page 8*

## SPLC LAUNCHES SOUNDS LIKE HATE PODCAST

The SPLC launched its first original podcast – *Sounds Like Hate* – in August. The audio documentary series explores the dangerous realities of hate in modern America and the ways people have escaped the far-right extremist movement.

Season one, produced and hosted by award-winning journalists/producers/filmmakers Geraldine Moriba and Jamila Paksima, takes listeners into communities grappling with extremism. During each two-part chapter, they speak with people affected by hate, including a woman who became radicalized in the world of white nationalism.



“As journalists representing listeners, we are asking questions and following every lead even when they conclude at frustrating dead ends,” Moriba said. “*Sounds Like Hate* is not an interview show. It’s conversations and authentic recordings of unscripted dialogue that push and pull at stereotypes, fragilities and firmly held beliefs.”

*Sounds Like Hate* covers a diverse range of topics, from a heated battle to remove a controversial mascot and recognize Black Lives Matter at a Vermont high school to an SPLC-exclusive investigation into a white-power hate group.

“The unfortunate reality is that bigotry and racism are part of the social fabric and history of our country,” said SPLC President and Chief Executive Officer Margaret Huang. “It’s our hope that this series will encourage listeners to take action against hate in their own communities.”

*Sounds Like Hate* is available on all major podcast platforms, including Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, TuneIn and more. You can also listen at [soundslikehate.org](http://soundslikehate.org).

## IN THIS ISSUE

\*\*\*\*\*

Far right exploits demonstrations

PAGE 3

\*\*\*\*\*

Education advocates sue DeVos over funding

PAGE 4

\*\*\*\*\*



New film highlights threat to democracy

PAGE 5



## SPLC REPORT

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The Southern Poverty Law Center is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements, and advance the human rights of all people.

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## A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT & CEO MARGARET HUANG

# Finding Hope and Optimism in 2020

The demonstrations over police brutality taking place across the country offer hope that our nation might finally, and meaningfully, address the anti-Black racism that is an all-too-familiar feature not only of law enforcement, but our institutions and society at large.

They also provide hope that we might finally begin to address the painful inequities in this country laid bare by the pandemic. However, President Trump's authoritarian response to the demonstrations – and deadly violence committed by others – threatens to dash this hope.

### A national reckoning

Trump's deployment of federal troops and agents in Portland, Oregon, and in Washington, D.C., has demonstrated a callous disregard for our Constitution. But it's not just Trump's words and actions that have set off alarm bells, as the shootings amid these demonstrations in Oregon and Wisconsin make clear.

As you'll read in this issue of the *SPLC Report*, even before these tragedies we found that the white nationalist movement has increasingly embraced violence as the only way to pursue its racist political goals. We identified white nationalists and

neo-Nazis attending demonstrations in Knoxville, Tennessee; Washington, D.C., and Dallas only days after police killed George Floyd in Minneapolis.

It is easy, and completely understandable, to fall into despair under the weight of the crises we are experiencing in 2020. But there is reason for hope and optimism: us, all of us.

Our nation has awakened to racial and social injustice in a way that we haven't experienced since the civil rights movement. At last, we have seen the first woman of color selected as the vice-presidential candidate of a major party ticket.

And symbols of the Confederacy, which have long served as painful reminders of the pervasive racism in our nation, are finally coming down. As of Sept 1, the SPLC documented 76 Confederate symbols that had been removed or relocated from public spaces since Floyd's death in late May. Since the 2015 white supremacist attack that took the lives of nine Black worshippers in Charleston, South Carolina,

135 symbols have been removed from public spaces.

As you'll see in this issue, the SPLC is turning hope into action.

Our "Vote Your Voice" initiative is investing up to \$30 million over several election cycles to help grassroots organizations register and mobilize voters of



Margaret Huang

color across the Deep South. We are holding officials accountable for protecting the health of people locked away in prisons and immigrant detention centers. And working with parents of schoolchildren and the NAACP,

we are suing the Trump administration to stop a program that would take funding away from public schools.

At the same time, our Teaching Tolerance program has launched online training sessions to help K-12 teachers, administrators and counselors meet the special challenges of teaching children during the pandemic. On that note, we also share a conversation with a member of our Teaching Tolerance Advisory Board, a select group of educators who help

us stay rooted in the real experiences of classroom educators by providing diverse perspectives and feedback on new resources.

### Determination and resolve

There are other poignant reminders in these pages of how each and every one of us can make a positive change in each other's lives, and in our communities – such as the inspirational story of four Black women and the movement they created to rename schools bearing the names of Confederate figures in Montgomery, Alabama. You can also learn about our new podcast, *Sounds Like Hate*. Among the episodes, you will hear a young woman personally recount her journey into the white nationalist movement and her eventual escape from it.

Yes, there are grave reasons to worry about what we may yet encounter beyond the horizon in 2020, but there are also reasons for hope – hope powered by deep determination and resolve. I promise that with your continued support and confidence, the SPLC will remain unwavering in our commitment to dismantling white supremacy across our nation, working for the day when justice and equity are a reality for all.

## MAILBOX

Thanks to the SPLC for all you do to seek justice for all. Voices are being raised in protest against racism and people are registering to vote for change. In addition, people are calling and writing their members of Congress asking for equity initiatives to be passed, like rent relief and eviction moratoriums. COVID-19 is shining a light on the need for these initiatives.

Let's continue to use our voices so our country becomes an equitable land of hope and opportunity for all in the process of battling this pandemic.

W.D.

Snohomish, Washington

While we must call upon law enforcement to change the way they carry out their mission, we must also find and create new meaningful mediums where people can come to terms with the racism, bigotry and ethnic discrimination.

Concurrently, we must go way beyond to create a renewed culture where people are accepted and respected as members of our communities, our shared humanity. We are not different but of one humanity expressed in many ways. I hope you can provide leadership to contribute to

those deeper, broader conversations and actions to bring a better tomorrow. It will not be easy. It will not happen quickly, but the path forward must be cleared for all generations to come. We need healing alongside of justice.

J.C.

Arvada, Colorado

Like so many, I am sad at the unfolding events in our country. But I want to thank you for the resource you have provided me. I have been able to identify tattoos on young white men and women in numerous cities during this conflict. And you have made me more knowledgeable about the whole white supremacist movement and the concept of accelerationists. Keep up the good work.

L.K.

Oakland, California

As a member of SPLC for many years, the term "Teaching Tolerance" has always bothered me as too low of a bar. I don't want you to teach people to just tolerate their neighbors but to desire to respect them and to create community with them.

The time has come while others are updating their

brands, statutes, flags and protest signs. Please finish coming into 2020 with an updated version of your quick statement of vision to go with your new personnel and organization. Thank you for all the work you do.

D.O.

Westerville, Ohio

I hope your new podcast is a smashing success, and I hope it finds its way into the ears and the hearts and minds of some of the white people who only think they're not prejudiced. Keep up the wonderful and important and necessary work that you do, spreading the word that needs to be spread.

When I was younger, I used to give donations to many worthy causes, but now that I'm retired on very limited income, I can only afford to have one left: the SPLC. The most important one. Thank you and bless you.

D.C.

Chandler, Arizona

I wanted to thank you for [the online caregiver] resource. It is true that so many young people become overzealous due to misguided or misleading information and become startlingly

polarized one way or the other. Especially in today's climate, it seems hard for young people to understand to swing into extremes is so very dangerous and destructive. Change can happen that benefits all, but it must be done from a place of peace, compassion and wisdom.

I'm grateful for the work you do.

W.M.

New York, New York

I am a preschool teacher who received your Teaching Tolerance materials (Rhinos and Raspberries) years ago. We use them to this day. I just wanted to pass along to you that they work. They teach empathy and concern for others and are very important to us. Thank you for making the Teaching Tolerance materials available to us!

L.G.

Meridian, Idaho

I realize, when I see your emails on the same day our president has spewed such hate and conspiracy theories on Twitter, you offer hope that we can survive this dark period in our country.

J.G.

East Aurora, New York



# Confederate symbols have no place in public spaces

In a blatant act of defiance against desegregation, which threatened the hold of Jim Crow on the South, Gov. George Wallace ordered that the Confederate Naval Jack flag be raised over the Alabama Capitol on April 25, 1963, the day then-Attorney General Robert Kennedy arrived to meet with him inside the building. It didn't come down until Jan. 4, 1993, when Alvin Holmes, a Black state legislator, and the

supremacist — who embraced the Confederate flag — murdered nine Black members of the historic Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2015.

In the wake of that tragedy, the SPLC released a first-of-its-kind report, *Whose Heritage?*, that identified Confederate monuments, flags and other symbols located in public spaces across the country. Since then,

total of 76 Confederate symbols have been removed, relocated or renamed since Floyd's death, according to data as of Sept. 1.

In June, the SPLC sent letters to the defense secretary and the heads of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and National Guard urging them to remove Confederate flags and other symbols from all their installations in the U.S. and abroad. In July 2020, the Pentagon issued a new policy that rejects displays of "divisive symbols," noting that the U.S. flag is the principal flag of the U.S. military and all others "must accord with ... good order and discipline, treating all our people with dignity and respect."

## The Klan's sacred stone

The SPLC has also called for the removal of the carving on Stone Mountain, the world's largest monument to white supremacy, which continues to stand as the centerpiece of a Georgia state park that draws more than 4 million visitors a year. Some 15 miles northeast of Atlanta, the massive carving depicts Confederate leaders on horseback, hats over their hearts, in a tableau that celebrates the values of the Confederacy — white supremacy and the enslavement of Black people.

The history of this monument is intimately tied to the

*Continued on Page 8*



The SPLC has called for the removal of the carving on Georgia's Stone Mountain, the world's largest monument to white supremacy and the centerpiece of a state park.

SPLC won a court battle to at last force its removal.

Since then, the SPLC has advocated for the removal of Confederate symbols in public spaces nationwide, including government buildings and schools. These efforts took on new urgency after a white

135 such symbols have been removed or relocated, including 111 monuments, according to data as of Sept. 1.

Following the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police in May, advocates of the Black Lives Matter movement have embraced the same cause. A

## Community activists lead movement to rename schools honoring the Confederacy

The four women — Marché Johnson, Khadidah Stone, Kayla Vinson and Amerika Blair — had spent almost two months preparing for the Montgomery, Alabama, school board meeting, and when the day finally arrived, they were ready.

They had one purpose that evening: Convince the school board to remove the names of Confederate leaders from three schools.

### 'We cannot move forward'

For decades, multiple efforts had been made to rename the schools, to no avail. But in the July meeting, Blair and Vinson eloquently explained why they believed the names celebrated white supremacy.

Robert E. Lee High School is named after a Confederate general. Jefferson Davis High School is named after the Confederacy's president. Sidney Lanier High School bears the name of a Confederate Army private.

"We cannot move forward without confronting the infrastructures that were built as a statement of white supremacy,"

Blair, 28, told the school board. "We cannot move forward by memorializing a history of Black inferiority. ... MPS (Montgomery Public Schools), I'm calling on you to stand against the legacy of white supremacy ... and to change the name of Lee high."

The school was named only months after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that all schools should be desegregated. But in defiance, Lee opened as an all-white school in 1955. Today,

the student population is predominantly Black.

After about three hours of debate, the women got what they wanted: The board voted to rename the schools. But the decision wasn't unanimous or without controversy. Board member Dr. Lesa Keith voted against each measure.

Keith — who had taught psychology to Blair at Lee High

*Continued on Page 8*



Kayla Vinson (above) along with Marché Johnson, Khadidah Stone and Amerika Blair met through professional circles before working together on the campaign to remove Confederate names from three high schools in Montgomery, Alabama.

## HATEWATCH ANALYSIS

## FAR RIGHT EXPLOITS RACIAL JUSTICE DEMONSTRATIONS

By Hannah Gais

Protests in response to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Sean Reed, Yassin Mohamed, Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks and so many others have spread across the U.S. in recent months.

Emboldened by President Donald Trump's spread of misinformation, encouragement of violence against protesters and ongoing vicious police crackdowns, far-right extremists are using the demonstrations to direct attention to themselves.

And in so doing, they further an agenda in support of systemic white supremacy and hegemony.

"Too many citizens prefer to cling to brutal and unjust systems than to give up political power, the perceived benefits of white supremacy and an exploitative economic system," observed Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*, in *The New York Times*.

As in decades past, these efforts have encouraged far-right groups and white extremists to take part in the moment.

### Militias threaten violence

Hatewatch identified white nationalists and neo-Nazis attending demonstrations in Dallas, Knoxville, Tennessee; and Washington, D.C., beginning on May 29 — three days after police killed Floyd in Minneapolis. Since the demonstrations began, members of the Nationalist Social Club (aka NSC-131) have taken to an encrypted social media network to post numerous photos of their members engaged in distributing flyers and banners related to demonstrations in Massachusetts and Tennessee. Reports of militia groups in Minnesota began on May 30.

According to social media posts, militia groups figured prominently in a number of demonstrations in Texas, Virginia, Georgia and Pennsylvania. Some, such as those in Lynchburg, Virginia, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, patrolled the protest areas. In Dallas, the Oath Keepers turned out to "protect" local businesses. Elsewhere in the state, so-called "boogaloo boys" — a loose group of antigovernment activists united by their calls for civil war — teamed up with a group known as the Texas Freedom Force in an effort to act as "peacekeepers" near the

Alamo Cenotaph Monument in San Antonio.

In Athens, Georgia, a local antifascist group posted several photos of "boogaloo boys" dressed in Hawaiian shirts and carrying assault rifles attempting to join the demonstrations.

### Extremists respond

The militarized response to ongoing racial justice demonstrations has animated white extremists of all stripes, regardless of whether they belong to hate groups or antigovernment extremist groups. They have, as a result, sought to protect their power through a variety of means.

On June 1, for instance, numerous reporters and activists documented a large mob of white men armed with sticks and other weapons engaging in violence in the Philadelphia neighborhood of Fishtown. WHYY station producer Jon Ehrens, who later described being beaten by one of the men, reported on Twitter that he heard anti-Black racial slurs among those in the crowd.

Anonymous threats arose in the wake of the demonstrations, too. According to images provided to Hatewatch from a social media page used by residents of a suburban neighborhood in the Twin Cities area, several households reported receiving notes promising "payback" or threatening to torch their homes because of Black Lives Matter signs on their lawns.

### 'Tacit permission to fire'

Trump, who wrote on Twitter on May 29 that "when the looting starts, the shooting starts," has simply encouraged these racist acts to proliferate. Not long after the president's tweet, one white nationalist channel proclaimed that the president "just gave Americans tacit permission to fire on n\*\*\*\*\*s looting."

The use of violent military force against protesters feeds into a paradigm that has caused these racist acts to proliferate. Though a June 1 report from the Department of Homeland Security asserted that much of the violence in the streets stemmed from "opportunists," the president's rhetoric — combined with countless examples of police brutality throughout the nation — has created space where far-right extremists feel safe to operate with impunity.



ISTOCK/FG TRADE



The Department of Education has ordered school districts to use an unlawful process to inflate the amount of federal COVID-19 aid they must share with private schools. In a lawsuit filed in July, the SPLC and co-counsel challenged the illegal rule.

## Education advocates sue over DeVos scheme to deprive public schools of COVID-19 aid

As states and municipalities face budget shortfalls because of lost tax revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic, public schools are sure to face painful cost-cutting measures.

At the same time, educators are being asked to do more with less, such as ensuring children continue to learn during school closures, have access to technology and receive nutrition and social and emotional support – all with insufficient guidance and funding from the federal government.

That's why Congress passed legislation including desperately needed support for public schools, which educate the vast majority of students. Yet, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos is using the crisis to further a political agenda that favors private schools, robbing their public counterparts of COVID-19 aid.

The Department of Education (ED) has ordered school districts to use an unlawful process to inflate the amount of federal

COVID-19 aid they must share with private schools. The rule drastically diminishes resources available to public schoolchildren, including historically underserved student populations.

### Illegal, harmful scheme

In a lawsuit filed in July by the SPLC and co-counsel, plaintiffs, including the NAACP and public school parents and districts across the country, fought back against DeVos' illegal and harmful scheme, which applies to the emergency relief funds that Congress allocated to states and public school districts under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Under ED's new rule, school districts must divert more funding for "equitable services" to private school students than the CARES Act allows or else face onerous restrictions on the use of those funds. Both options

*Continued on Page 6*

# SPLC takes action to prevent prison deaths amid coronavirus crisis

As the pandemic has spread to every corner of the United States, making the nation a world leader in the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths, incarcerated people have needlessly died in the Deep South, despite warnings from the outset by the SPLC, public health experts, attorneys and others.

What's more, even after reported deaths, federal agencies and Southern states in which the SPLC works have ignored or been slow to respond to calls to publicly reveal mitigation plans should a coronavirus outbreak occur in their facilities. In the absence of this leadership, the SPLC is working to protect people held in both prisons and immigrant detention centers throughout the South.

### Alabama

The first person to die in Alabama's prisons after testing positive for COVID-19 was among the more than 1,100 incarcerated people identified weeks earlier by the SPLC as having an elevated risk for extreme cases of the illness because of their age.

The SPLC began publishing this data as it called on the state to release as many people as possible to head off an outbreak.

After the SPLC's initial report, the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles (BPP) restarted hearings in May after suspending hearings due to the pandemic. After resumption, the SPLC found that the BPP continued to block prisoners' release, denying hundreds of paroles even to those who would soon be freed under mandatory release anyway.

Also, the SPLC reported in June that white people were more than twice as likely to be granted parole as their Black counterparts.

Even before the pandemic, the Alabama Department of Corrections was warned by the federal government about its failure to protect the health and

## Southern states have ignored or been slow to publicly reveal mitigation plans for a coronavirus outbreak.

safety of its incarcerated population. The government urged state elected officials to take action to prevent more violence and death.

### Florida

In Florida, the SPLC was forced to file suit in May for access to public records about the state's policies to handle COVID-19 in prisons. Over two months, the Florida Department of Corrections (FDC) provided one document in response to requests for 26 categories of information. When the state produced documents after litigation was filed, it refused to produce policies about hygiene, visitation, or communication with loved ones, asserting they are security-sensitive.

"The public has a right to know how FDC is handling COVID-19 in the prisons, which incarcerate nearly 96,000 people, including a substantial

number who are elderly or medically vulnerable and thus at heightened risk from the virus," said Shalini Goel Agarwal, SPLC senior supervising attorney.

### Louisiana

In response to the COVID-19 threat in Louisiana's prisons and jails, the state implemented a dangerous plan to send COVID-19 patients to "Camp J" in the Louisiana State Penitentiary (commonly called Angola), which was closed in 2018 due to poor conditions. The SPLC and the Promise of Justice Initiative filed a lawsuit to block the plan.

Hundreds of people in prisons and jails have tested positive. In one Louisiana facility, 192 out of 195 incarcerated people tested positive. As of early August, at least 17 people in Louisiana Department of Public Safety & Corrections custody, and five agency staff members, have died.

### Immigrant detention facilities

In April, a federal judge ordered immigration authorities to begin considering for release all detained immigrants at higher risk of COVID-19 complications, after a lawsuit by the SPLC and allies. The judge admonished Immigration and Customs Enforcement for risking lives.

"The Court concludes Defendants have likely exhibited callous indifference to the safety and well-being of the [detained immigrants]," the judge ruled. "The evidence suggests system-wide inaction that goes beyond a mere 'difference of medical opinion or negligence.'"

# In pursuit of equity for all

By Lecia Brooks  
SPLC Chief of Staff

Next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

What began as a small law firm with three employees in a storefront in Montgomery, Alabama, has grown into one of the nation's leading civil rights organizations with more than 350 employees spread across multiple offices in five Southern states and the District of Columbia.

As we approach this milestone with a leadership team that includes new President and CEO Margaret Huang, we believe it is a critically important time for us to ensure the SPLC continues to meet the 21st century challenges and needs of the communities we serve. That's why in late 2019, we began to map out the SPLC's mission and direction for the decades ahead. We expect to complete the process just in time for our 50th anniversary.

### Promising awakening

As demonstrations throughout the country have shown, our nation is at a watershed moment. There is a promising awakening to deep and longstanding racial injustices. As an organization, we must rise to the occasion and work shoulder-to-shoulder with impacted communities to create a truly racially just and more equitable tomorrow.

We have worked diligently on this task, and as the process continues, I am excited to share key elements of our vision for the future.

Of course, the SPLC will be an organization focused on dismantling systemic white supremacy in our society. Our work, however, will go far beyond simply combatting hate. We will ensure that an antiracist lens is present within everything we do. We also recognize that in the 21st century



MICHELLE LELAND

it is not enough to fight for a future of "equal opportunity." We must ensure the tools and support are there to provide equitable outcomes. In other words, the SPLC will dedicate itself to working collaboratively with the communities we serve to pursue equity for all.

What's more, we recognize these issues converge in communities along the lines of race, gender, immigration status, sexual identity and economic status, among others. This intersectionality must be recognized in our work to ensure the greatest impact. The pandemic, for example, has had a disproportionate and devastating effect on Black and Brown communities,

low-income earners and immigrants, laying bare the persistent suffering and discrimination so many have long known. We've responded by providing emergency food security grants to foodbanks across our five states, and demanding protection for people held in jails and immigrant detention centers. We're also working to ensure safe voting opportunities in all communities amid the pandemic.

### Demonstrated commitment

And, of course, it is during this pandemic that millions of people across the country have taken to the streets to demand justice for the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Sean Reed, Yassin Mohamed, Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks and so many others by police and vigilantes.

As a result, we've redoubled our efforts to combat racial injustice with the Intelligence Project, Teaching Tolerance and our legal practice groups. We are deeply committed to a nation of hope, equity and true justice for all. It's an essential goal that was set almost half a century ago in that small Montgomery storefront. And it's a purpose that's shared today by the more than 350 incredibly talented and dedicated people who work for the SPLC across the Southeast and in our nation's capital.

Together, we will ensure the march toward justice continues in 2020 and beyond.



# SPLC investigation finds renewed focus on terrorism in white power movement

By Cassie Miller

In December 2018, a man named Rinaldo Nazzaro purchased 30 acres of remote land in Republic, Washington, a city of roughly 1,000 people near the Canadian border. The property was meant to serve as a training ground for a white power group he founded earlier that year called The Base.

This was a small but committed network of white supremacist extremists who were prepping for a race war. Only in the midst of violent chaos, they believed, could they gain sovereignty over the white homeland they hoped to construct. The goal was “system collapse,” and they were willing to commit acts of terrorism to advance their cause.

From its genesis, the network grew and distributed propaganda, and then began to hold training camps.

But this past January, the group took a possibly insurmountable hit when seven members were arrested.

Three people in Maryland face gun-related charges after building a cache of weapons and ammunition. The day after they were taken into custody, three others were arrested in Georgia for conspiring to murder a couple involved in anti-fascist activism, and another was charged with vandalizing a synagogue in Racine, Wisconsin.

The arrests may have signaled the end of The Base. But the group is not alone.

It is part of a growing wing of the white supremacist movement that refers to itself as “accelerationist.”

## Pinned hopes on politicians

What defines accelerationists is their belief that violence is the only way to pursue their political goals. To put it most simply, they embrace terrorism.

Violence, of course, has always been at the core of the white power movement. It is irrational to suggest that any of the movement’s goals – racial separation or the creation of a white ethno-state – could ever occur without violence on a massive scale.

But, in recent years, many in the movement invested their energy in political activities and pinned their hopes on politicians who they saw as fellow travelers.

Accelerationists see that as a waste of time. Given the scope of continued demographic change,

## Decentralized social media has resulted in an emboldened white power movement that openly encourages violence.

they view the notion of building an enduring and consciously pro-white political coalition improbable.

Nazzaro, The Base’s founder, explained in a December 2017 podcast why he had chosen to devote himself to “system collapse” rather than politics: “As time goes on, our numbers continue to dwindle, the pressure keeps getting ramped up on whites’ cause

that’s not gonna end. ... Like, look, there’s no turning back the clock. Our numbers are just not gonna increase from here.”

## Online spaces foster terrorists

For this terroristic part of the movement to gather any momentum, members needed spaces to congregate and reinforce each other’s belief that violence is the only solution. In the years since Donald Trump was elected, the accelerationist movement has grown online – where advocacy of violent extremism is more difficult to control.

Social media has become more decentralized, and accelerationists are less fearful of being kicked off their internet platforms for advocating violence and spreading false propaganda. The result is an emboldened and solidified segment of the white power movement that celebrates mass killers and openly encourages white men to commit acts of violence.

Megan Squire, a professor of computer science at Elon University in North Carolina, has argued that legislators continue to pursue reactive policies rather than work to anticipate how extremists will use new platforms to propagandize and recruit in the future.

Use of mainstream platforms like Facebook is part of the problem, while the other is the emergence of an alt-tech infrastructure – including social media platforms, payment processors, video streaming services and more – where extremists can do and say whatever they want without fear of being “deplatformed,” or removed from internet forums.

“There will be a move towards the decentralized web, which is this peer-to-peer internet replacement,” Squire said. “It will be very hard to appeal to any centralized authority to do things like remove manifests to files or ... [take] a disruptive person off of a social media site.”

To learn more about The Base and other extremist groups, go to [splcenter.org/hatewatch](https://splcenter.org/hatewatch).

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SUNNY PAULK (SOURCE IMAGES FROM GETTY)



The SPLC has joined a voting rights campaign as part of “All In: The Fight for Democracy,” a voter suppression documentary. Liz Garbus and Lisa Cortés directed the film featuring Stacey Abrams, a Georgia politician and voting rights activist.

## ‘All In’: SPLC supports voter suppression documentary

The SPLC has joined other advocacy groups to promote a get-out-the vote effort as part of a new documentary, “All In: The Fight for Democracy,” which examines the history, and reveals the current depths, of voter suppression in the United States.

Directed by award-winning filmmakers Liz Garbus and Lisa Cortés, the film prominently features Stacey Abrams, the former minority leader of the Georgia House of Representatives and 2018 gubernatorial candidate, who has since become one of the nation’s foremost voting rights activists.

Abrams adds her voice, and considerable expertise, to an insider’s look into

little-known legal and structural barriers employed to block equitable access to the ballot box. Interweaving lived experience with current activism and historical insights, the movie exposes a clear and present danger to our democracy.

In conjunction with the film’s release, organizers have launched a nonpartisan campaign with the hashtag #ALLINFORVOTING supported by the online action hub, [allinforvoting.com](https://allinforvoting.com). The project seeks to educate and register first-time voters, mobilize communities to vote and train citizens to know their rights and report voter suppression.

*Continued on Page 6*

## Inclusive education in uncertain times

*Editor’s note: This conversation – set against the backdrop of an unrelenting pandemic and nationwide demonstrations for racial justice – features Kishanna Harley, a veteran educator at the Capital City Public Charter School in Washington, D.C., and 2019-21 Teaching Tolerance Advisory Board member.*

### What is your biggest concern as the new school year begins, and how will you overcome it?

My biggest concern as the new school year begins is ensuring that we’re centering and serving students and their needs. We are all continuing this journey into the unknown, and I know that students are getting lost in the shuffle because historically their voices haven’t mattered.

I have chosen to return to the classroom and work with students in a more direct fashion as an English teacher. I was an English teacher for 10 years prior to becoming a school librarian, and in a full circle moment, I will return to this role after serving as a school librarian for 4.5 years.

### How will your approach to inclusive teaching differ now?

My approach to inclusive teaching has always been to center students’ needs. Will it look different? Yes, but the passion and drive to do so will not.

We utilize an advisory model where I teach. All students are part of a smaller school

community within our larger school community. This allows us to have intimate conversations regarding social and emotional needs as part of our curriculum. We also have programs in place to help students and families during this challenging time via our family engagement office, including the expertise of two phenomenal therapists and social workers.

More than anything it’s important to remain understanding and flexible. It’s also important to engage students and families in a way that reminds them that we are here to support them as much as possible. It is also easier to disengage during this time, so ensuring that curriculum and learning is centered around

relevant and applicable material should always be a priority. It is possible to build a strong community virtually. It is also possible to nurture one another during this time, which in turn helps to strengthen community ties and connectivity.

### What resources or additional advice would you offer to teachers in the coming months?

I referenced ensuring curriculum and learning is centered around relevant and applicable material. Educational systems are steeped in white dominant culture and, by default, curriculum as well. Stop centering whiteness and start honoring

*Continued on Page 8*



Teaching Tolerance Advisory Board Member Kishanna Harley will return to classroom instruction this fall amid a pandemic. Her advice to fellow educators is simple: Listen to the needs of students and center instruction around relevant materials.



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# DeVos undermines districts

*From Page 4*

violate the clear language and intent of the CARES Act – which Congress passed to make unrestricted emergency funds available to serve public school students nationwide – and will undermine district efforts to adequately serve students who need services and support due to the pandemic.

**New rule forces illegal options**  
The CARES Act directs public school districts to calculate the amount they must set aside for private schools based on the number of low-income students enrolled in private schools. The rule DeVos issued, however, forces districts to comply with one of two illegal options. They must

either: 1) allocate CARES Act funds for private schools based on *all* students enrolled in private school, including students from more affluent families who make up the majority of private school students, or 2) allocate these funds based on the number of low-income students at private schools but face severe restrictions on how the rest of the CARES Act funds can be used, including a prohibition on their use to serve any students who do not attend Title I schools (schools receiving financial assistance for educating particularly high numbers of students from low-income families).

The rule was introduced in April as nonbinding guidance from DeVos, and it received widespread criticism from education

leaders and lawmakers who said it violated the CARES Act. Several state attorneys general have sued.

**Host of education advocates**  
The plaintiffs in the lawsuit include the NAACP, public school parents across the country, Broward County Public Schools in Florida, DeKalb County School District in Georgia, Denver County School District, Pasadena Unified School District and Stamford Public Schools. They are represented by the SPLC, the Education Law Center and law firm Munger, Tolles & Olson. The organizations collaborate on Public Funds Public Schools, a national campaign to ensure public funds are used exclusively to maintain, support and strengthen the nation’s public schools.

# New film highlights threats to democracy, voting rights

*From Page 5*

“The project started when I met Stacey Abrams in the summer of 2019. She came to New York ... to explore making a film about voting rights and its tortured and tumultuous history,” explains Garbus. “It was a bit of kismet, because I had wanted to make a film about the franchise after the 2016 election but didn’t have the ‘hook.’ Stacey’s gubernatorial race of 2018 was that hook ... the small story that could tell the big one.”

**Grants support grassroots organizations in 10 states**  
The campaign also includes Black Voters Matter, People for the American Way, All Voting

is Local and the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, among other advocacy groups and cultural and interfaith leaders.

In addition, a local grant program is supporting grassroots organizations working to educate and mobilize voters in 10 states: Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin.

“All In: The Fight for Democracy” is co-produced by Garbus, Cortés, Abrams and Oscar-winning producer Dan Cogan.

The film’s theatrical release – following state and local safety protocols in theaters and drive-ins nationwide – was slated for Sept. 9, and it can be streamed on Amazon Prime now.



# ‘Not for ourselves alone’

David Wang held a tremendous sense of justice for all of humanity during his 87 years in this world.

“He was eloquent, a true gentleman, with emphasis on the ‘gentle,’” recalls SPLC co-founder Joe Levin.

Wang served on the board of directors for the Southern Poverty Law Center for many years, aligning his passion for human rights with his desire to help those around him.

“During his tenure on the board, David engaged deeply in its work and never hesitated to express his opinion, no matter the subject. Because of his diligence, he was listened to by all of us who were honored to serve with him,” Levin said. “David was one of the nicest, most supportive, and most genuine human beings I’ve ever known. What he added to the SPLC before, during and after his service on the board is truly beyond description. His memory will remain with me for the rest of my life.”

### Gifted as well as committed

Wang passed away on Feb. 28 at his Naples, Florida, residence. He is survived by his wife, Cecile. A native of Beijing, China, he came to the United States with his family after World War II. He was gifted as well as committed, receiving his undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering at George Washington University at the age of 15, and his graduate degree in that field from Georgia Tech at just 16. Wang worked as

a director for companies including Union Carbide, Yankee Cos., Weirton Steel, UGI, AmeriGas, Joy Technologies and BE&K.

### Renaissance view of the world

“Even after he left the board in the early 2000s, David still thought strategically about the Center’s future,” Levin said. “He came up with the idea of the SPLC engaging in issues related to the abuse of immigrant workers in the Southeast. In short, he’s the reason our Immigrant Justice Project was established. It likely would not have happened without David’s vision.”

The SPLC’s Immigrant Justice Project continues to combat injustice by litigating issues like family separation, the rights of asylum seekers, local policing and immigration, and guest worker rights.

“He was that rare individual who combined brilliance, compassion, empathy and humor, and used those gifts to promote racial, economic and social justice,” said SPLC Board Member Marsha Levick. “The stars shine a little less bright with his passing.”

Laura Germino, a co-founder of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, met Wang in 2003, when he offered advice for the group.

“He had this sort of truly renaissance view of the world, and he also was someone who saw what we were doing when a lot of people had not yet recognized us,” she said.

May we all take to heart the simple motto that Wang lived each and every day: “*Non nobis solum*”—“not for ourselves alone.”



David Wang

PENNY WEAVER

# Scroll of Remembrance

The Southern Poverty Law Center pays tribute to the memory of deceased supporters who included the SPLC in their wills or other planned gifts. The SPLC gratefully acknowledges their bequests, received from June 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020.

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a legally binding will or create a document to share with your attorney. This service is free whether you choose to include a gift to the SPLC or not.

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# Confronting history to move forward: Advocates work to rename schools

From Page 3

School – said: “History is not here for us to like it or dislike it. It is here for us to learn from it. And I heard you and most of you are offended by it. ... But it’s a good thing to be offended. Because that means that we will never repeat it. ... It’s not your history, it’s all of our history.”

Blair, a 2009 Lee graduate, quickly stood up, demanding to know why Keith hadn’t taught her the truth about Lee when she was in Keith’s classroom.

Then, Keith shouted, “All lives matter!”

In response, several people in the audience yelled, “Black lives matter” and left the meeting.

“While we claim to be a democracy with equal justice for all, we haven’t been,” Vinson, 31, told the SPLC. “Facing our history means facing the fact that we haven’t treated everyone with equity.”

## A movement is born

Earlier, school board member Jannah Bailey began the meeting with a prayer evoking the words of former First Lady Michelle Obama, which fittingly described the women’s movement: “[H]istory has shown us that courage can be contagious, and hope can take on a life of its own.”

The effort to rename the schools began in June after four people removed a statue of Lee from Lee high amid national demonstrations following the

murders of Black people by police and calls for the removal of Confederate symbols.

The women were in communication with Southerners on New Ground (SONG), an advocacy group of which they are all affiliated, and Montgomery Bail Out as the organizations helped secure the release of the people charged with the statue’s removal.

Blair, Johnson, Vinson and Stone – who had all met one another over the last couple

‘We’re not making the movement about us, it’s about the community.’

of years through shared professional circles – then joined forces to build their campaign.

The women galvanized wide support with Lee high alumni and local members of SONG. Through thoughtful leadership and grassroots organizing, they also got the backing of current students. Within a week, the campaign was in full swing thanks to social media, word of mouth and outreach to key community leaders.

The school board – comprised of four Black women and three white women – voted on each

name change separately. Keith, who is white, voted against each one. Board President Clare Weil, who is also white, voted against changing the name of Lanier, her alma mater.

“I’m excited and look forward for more changes to come through Montgomery,” said Stone, a 2014 Lee graduate. “We’re not making the movement about us; it’s about the community.”

While all four women celebrate the victory, they know it’s only the first step in a movement to remove Confederate symbols across the city. They hope their courage will inspire others.

## A new beginning

Exactly how the schools will be renamed is an open question. Three years ago, the state’s predominantly white Legislature passed the Alabama Memorial Preservation Act of 2017 – a law requiring a city to be fined \$25,000 should a historical monument be moved or modified if it’s been in place over 40 years.

As of press time in late August, it remains unclear whether the board will have to pay such fines. Nevertheless, they are seeking input on how to best select new names for the schools.

“We need a new beginning,” said Johnson, a 2003 Lee graduate. “That’s a big part of this movement – to face the legacy of white supremacy. It has to be confronted in order to move forward.”

# Confederate symbols perpetuate white supremacy

From Page 3

Ku Klux Klan and its violent response to desegregation efforts in the 20th century. In 1915, the location of what is now known as Stone Mountain Park is where 15 Klansmen set up an altar, opened a Bible and burned a 16-foot cross during a ceremony that marked a renaissance for the KKK.

What’s more, Klan money helped fund the Stone Mountain monument, and the first of

The Georgia Legislature’s embrace of the monument only deepens the hurtful impact. “If Joe Blow wants to put a statue of Robert E. Lee in his front yard or on his farm, I think that’s great,” Richard Rose, Atlanta NAACP president, told the SPLC in 2018. “I mean, this is America; he ought to be able to do that. But the state of Georgia should not be doing that, the state of Alabama, the state of Virginia. Cities and counties should not



AP IMAGES/RAINIER EHRHARDT

At least seven states have passed laws in recent years to limit or prevent local governments from taking down monuments – even as the national cry for the removal of Confederate symbols in public spaces continues to grow louder.

its three head sculptors was a Klansman, as was the owner of the mountain when the project was first undertaken. Work did not begin on the carving until 1923, long after the Civil War ended, and required three attempts and almost 50 years to complete. The final effort was launched in 1964 as a backlash to *Brown v. Board of Education* and the civil rights movement.

Even as support for the removal of the monument grows, a large hurdle remains as Georgia law currently protects it. As part of a 2001 compromise that retired a state flag that prominently featured the Confederate battle flag, lawmakers adopted a statute that singles out the carving for preservation.

be promoting white supremacy and racism.”

As for how the massive carving might be removed, it may be as simple as allowing nature to take its course.

“We should allow growth to also overtake the sculpture’s many clefts and crinkles as they naturally collect organic material and allow moss and lichen to obscure its details,” Atlanta-based urban designer Ryan Gravel wrote in *The Guardian* with historian Scott Morris. “We should blast it with soil to encourage such growth and consider this new camouflage as a deliberate creative act, transforming the sculpture into a memorial to the end of the war – not to the traitors who led it.”

# The State of Women’s Suffrage

From Page 1

Although a significant number of states have ratified the ERA, almost none in the Deep South have done so. Even to this day, women face voter ID laws that penalize them when they do not legally change their names upon marriage or divorce. What’s more, restrictions on early and no-excuse absentee voting create additional hurdles for women juggling work and family obligations that still overwhelmingly fall upon them.

Another obstacle is the growing impact of felon disenfranchisement laws over the last several years. Added to this is the imposition of legal financial obligations as a prerequisite to voting. In other words, they must pay court costs, fees and other obligations before voting.

## Disparate impact on Black women

This onerous financial burden on women who have been incarcerated is effectively a poll tax that disparately impacts Black women.

Formerly incarcerated Black women have an unemployment rate of 43.6%, putting them at an economic disadvantage against formerly incarcerated Black men (35.2%), formerly incarcerated white women (23.2%), and formerly incarcerated white men (18.4%), according to a report from the Prison Policy Initiative, a nonprofit that conducts research on the harm of mass incarceration.

Even before they are incarcerated, women who go to prison earn less than men who go to prison, and less than nonincarcerated women of the same age and race.

In November 2018, Florida voters overwhelmingly approved Amendment 4 to restore the vote to 1.4 million of their fellow residents with previous felony convictions. It was the largest single expansion of voting rights since the Voting Rights Act.

But that victory was quickly undermined when Florida lawmakers enacted a new law, Florida SB 7066, that prevented hundreds of thousands of

newly enfranchised people from voting because of legal financial obligations that they cannot afford to pay.

An SPLC federal lawsuit seeks to strike down Florida SB 7066 because it violates the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees equal protection under the law and freedom from poll taxes and excessive fines. A tremendous victory was secured in district court that allowed people to vote even though they lack the funds to pay off their legal financial obligations.

But Florida officials have appealed that decision, putting the voting rights of thousands of people in limbo as the November elections draw closer.

The litigation also states that the new law violates the constitutional prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment.

For women, the fight to vote is not just about casting a ballot. Our vote represents a real opportunity to influence the policies that affect – and in some ways hinder – the ultimate attainment of political, social and economic parity with men.

# Inclusive education during health pandemic

From Page 5

and centering BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) intellect. It is detrimental and crippling for students to never see themselves included in the curriculum and for white teachers and students to perpetuate ignorance around their lack of knowledge of BIPOC intellectual creation and property.

As a library team (Chip Chase, director of library services; myself, high school librarian; and Carlos Duque, lower school librarian),

we created a Black Lives Matter 2020 Learning Guide, which can be found online at <https://ccpcs.libguides.com/blm>.

It is so important for educators to interrogate themselves and their practice – constantly. Continual reflection is needed and required to be an effective human being and educator. As far as family resources, we have had fundraisers or donated gift cards to help family members in need of supplies and/or food, and the school has provided meal pickup continuously since March.