



June 19, 2019

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman
House Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson,

On behalf of the National Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (Lawyers' Committee), I write to express our support for The Domestic Terrorism Documentation and Analysis of Threats in America (Domestic Terrorism DATA) Act.

Diverse communities across the country are targeted for hate crimes and acts of mass violence. As the Lawyers' Committee works to confront hate targeting communities, we are faced with challenges from the federal government, including the underreporting of hate crimes, and little publicly available data on crimes that meet the definition of domestic terrorism.

The Lawyers' Committee supports efforts to improve data collection around hate crimes and domestic terrorism investigations. During a time when communities have experienced an increase in white supremacist violence, and a time when the Federal Bureau of Investigation created the "Black Identity Extremist" designation, it is imperative that our policies are data driven, and that communities, advocates, and lawmakers have access to data on domestic terrorism investigations. The Domestic Terrorism DATA Act would assist in fostering transparency and would facilitate informed policy making.

As Kristen Clarke, President and Executive Director of the National Lawyers' Committee testified at a House Judiciary Committee Hearing on April 9th, we encourage the use of existing laws to investigate and prosecute acts of hate violence to the full extent of law, and to oppose efforts to create new legislation that risk the further criminalization of communities of color.

Chairman Thompson, your important efforts to improve data collection around white supremacist violence is a necessary step to address the crisis of violence targeting impacted communities. The Domestic Terrorism DATA Act does so in a manner that would improve data collection without risking the further criminalization of communities of color, many of whom have been targeted by counterterrorism policies in the past.

We applaud your leadership and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Nadia N. Aziz
Interim Co-Director and Policy Counsel
Stop Hate Project