



House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Homeland Security,  
FY 2022 Public Witness Testimony

**Support Robust Funding for Grants to Prevent Violent Extremism**

**Submitted by**

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On behalf of the Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP) and its nonpartisan network of 130+ organizations working in 181 countries, including the United States, I request robust funding to the **Department of Homeland Security’s grants program to prevent violent extremism at no less than \$50 million in FY 2022.**

Amidst the growing domestic violent extremist threat<sup>1</sup>, the United States must act urgently to implement a strategy that targets the causes of extremism from a whole of society approach that builds partnerships with organizations working in local communities across the country. The Alliance for Peacebuilding and its members that work overseas to prevent violent extremism have learned that prevention programs must address the social and political drivers that push and pull people toward radicalization.

The law enforcement and intelligence communities will undoubtedly play a key role in thwarting violent extremist attacks, but law enforcement in the U.S. has legal limits<sup>2</sup> on investigations of American citizens. Moreover, a recent study by the RAND Corporation found that punitive measures taken by law enforcement agencies can sometimes deepen ongoing

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<sup>1</sup> Visser, N. (2021, May 12). White Supremacists Are The Biggest Domestic Terrorism Threat, Top Biden Officials Say. *Huffpost*. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/white-supremacists-top-threat-merrick-garland\\_n\\_609c8424e4b014bd0ca77b6b](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/white-supremacists-top-threat-merrick-garland_n_609c8424e4b014bd0ca77b6b).

<sup>2</sup> Rotella, S. (2021, January 10). Domestic terrorism: A more urgent threat, but weaker laws. *The CT Mirror*. <https://ctmirror.org/2021/01/10/domestic-terrorism-a-more-urgent-threat-but-weaker-laws/>

radicalization processes and push potentially salvageable cases to more extreme behaviors and involvement.<sup>3</sup> Civil society organizations, however, can play a critical role in preventing individuals from moving further down the path of radicalization and violence.

We are encouraged by the steps that the Biden administration is taking to tackle the problem of domestic violent extremism. Ahead his testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee on May 12, 2021, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas announced<sup>4</sup> the renaming and rebranding of the Office of Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention to the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3). In the announcement DHS committed to ensuring that their “efforts are grounded in an approach to violence prevention that leverages behavioral threat assessment and management tools, and addresses early-risk factors that can lead to radicalization to violence.” Furthermore, they committed to embracing a “whole-of-society approach to combating domestic violent extremism and all other forms of targeted violence and terrorism by building trust, partnerships, and collaboration across every level of government, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and the diverse communities” across the United States.

The Alliance for Peacebuilding and our members welcome this news from DHS. However, President Biden’s first budget request to Congress provides flat funding to the grants program at just \$20-million. The provision of flat funding is woefully inadequate. Funding to the CP3’s grants program must be adjusted from its current level to at least \$50-million.

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<sup>3</sup> Brown, Ryan Andrew, Todd C. Helmus, Rajeev Ramchand, Alina I. Palimaru, Sarah Weiland, Ashley L. Rhoades, and Liisa Hiatt, *Violent Extremism in America: Interviews with Former Extremists and Their Families on Radicalization and Deradicalization*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-A1071-1, 2021. As of June 10, 2021: [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RRA1071-1.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1071-1.html).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2021 May 11). *DHS Creates New Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships and Additional Efforts to Comprehensively Combat Domestic Violent Extremism* [Press Release]. <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2021/05/11/dhs-creates-new-center-prevention-programs-and-partnerships-and-additional-efforts>

Additionally, overall funding to CP3 must ensure that it enhances its ability to place regional representatives around the country, conduct community awareness briefings to stakeholders, and build local, state, and civil society partnerships.

One of America's greatest strengths is its civil society and faith-rooted organizations. They are working locally to bridge the urban-rural divide, engage in interreligious dialogue, and apply a public health approach to disrupting violence, including changing social norms and identifying and treating the highest risk individuals. Organizations, like Parallel Networks, a member of AfP, include "former extremists" who are working on a project (*Ctrl+Alt+Del-Hate*) that addresses the drivers of extremism and violence and addresses the underlying systemic issues of injustice and division.

Domestic extremism in the United States is a growing problem. The threat will continue to metastasize unless the U.S. government commits more resources to prevention efforts that include a whole of society approach, including programs that provide off-ramps to vulnerable individuals to violent extremism. President Biden called for healing and unity in our deeply divided country. It is now time to turn those words into action by proposing a bold plan to prevent violent extremism; Congress should step up and provide at least \$50-million for the grants program to prevent violent extremism at the Department of Homeland Security.