

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 15, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

We are writing to urge you to create a U.S. Department of Justice interagency task force to combat hate-based incidents and violence. As you know, there has been an alarming rise in hate violence and threats against religious and racial minorities and immigrants across the United States. Most recently, Americans witnessed the horrific hate-based rally and domestic terror attack in Charlottesville, Virginia where white supremacist hatred led to one fatality and injured many others. President Trump's reluctance to quickly and directly condemn the hate, bigotry, and racism of the white supremacists and members of the Ku Klux Klan that gathered at Charlottesville was deeply alarming to us and to millions of Americans.

In April, a letter was sent to President Donald Trump calling for the creation of a Presidential Task Force on preventing and combating hate violence. Disturbingly, President Trump has yet to respond to this letter as of this date. We understand that on April 5, 2017, you announced the creation of a subcommittee, part of the Department of Justice's Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety that will "develop a plan to appropriately address hate crimes." While this is a positive development, we are writing to strongly urge you to create a full task force to combat hate based incidents and violence. To underscore the urgency of this issue, the Federal Bureau of Investigation released its most current data in November 2016 and found that hate crime incidents had increased from 5,479 in 2014 to 5,850 in 2015, an increase of seven percent.

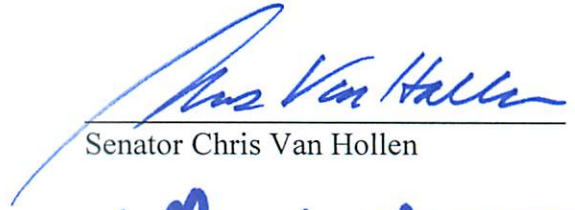
In addition to a U.S. Department of Justice interagency task force to combat hate based incidents and violence, we also urge you to devote departmental resources to support states and local communities in addressing the root causes of hate through education, community development, and cross-cultural exchanges. In recent weeks, the Administration has in fact taken steps to decrease funding for efforts to stop white extremism, as evidenced by the Department of Homeland Security pulling funding for Life After Hate, a group dedicated to de-radicalizing neo-Nazis and stopping white extremism. With activity involving white extremist and hate groups on the rise in our country, now is not the time to shift our resources away from funding efforts to combat these hateful organizations that threaten to undermine our democracy.

In light of the horrific attack and hatred demonstrated this weekend in Charlottesville, we urge you to act quickly to address the alarming rise of hate in our country. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



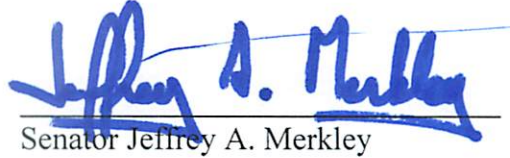
Senator Maria Cantwell



Senator Chris Van Hollen



Senator Amy Klobuchar



Senator Jeffrey A. Merkley



Senator Kirsten Gillibrand



Senator Edward J. Markey



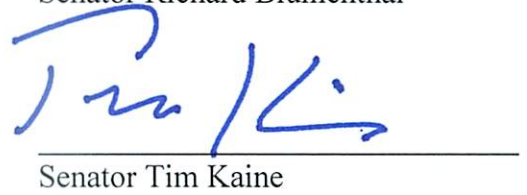
Senator Mazie Hirono



Senator Richard Blumenthal



Senator Tammy Duckworth



Senator Tim Kaine



Senator Robert P. Casey Jr.



Senator Mark R. Warner