

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 14, 2019

The Honorable Christopher A. Wray  
Director  
Federal Bureau of Investigation  
935 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20535

Dear Director Wray:

In recent years, the United States has faced an increase in attacks from domestic violent extremists and terrorists, especially those “motivated by right-wing political ideologies.”<sup>1</sup> In the past, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has catalogued terrorist violence with its report, *Terrorism*, which provided insight on terrorist threats and trends.<sup>2</sup> However, since the report’s discontinuation in 2005, the federal government’s lack of information on the domestic terrorist threat has left a void for policymakers, forcing them to rely on a variety of unofficial data with varying collection metrics. Therefore, as the Chairmen of the House Committees on Homeland Security and the Judiciary, we write to inquire about why this publication was discontinued in 2005 and what the FBI’s future plans are to document this ongoing threat.

From the mid 1980s through the 2000s, the FBI’s production of *Terrorism* helped convey the wide-ranging threats facing the United States. Specifically, *Terrorism* and its earlier iterations were originally published to reflect the unclassified activities of domestic and foreign terrorists in the United States and the FBI’s response to them. The comprehensive report included a history of the FBI’s counterterrorism program, trends, investigations, relevant legislation, and program developments, among other things.<sup>3</sup> Although the report was not perfect, it provided an official overview on the subject matter unlike any we have today.

A media report released this past November further illustrates that the threat from right-wing extremism continues to rise in the United States.<sup>4</sup> An analysis showed that “the number of terrorist attacks by far-right perpetrators... more than quadruple[d] between 2016 and 2017.”<sup>5</sup> However, the lack of data collection by the federal government gives the impression that the federal government is not taking the issue of domestic

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<sup>1</sup> Wesley Lowery, Kimberly Kindy, Andrew Ba Tran, “In the United States, right-wing violence is on the rise,” *Washington Post*, (November 25, 2018), available at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/in-the-united-states-right-wing-violence-is-on-the-rise/2018/11/25/61f7f24a-deb4-11e8-85df-7a6b4d25cfbb\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.c0962908fad1](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/in-the-united-states-right-wing-violence-is-on-the-rise/2018/11/25/61f7f24a-deb4-11e8-85df-7a6b4d25cfbb_story.html?utm_term=.c0962908fad1).

<sup>2</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Terrorism 2002-2005,” [http://209.235.0.153/publications/terror/terrorism2002\\_2005.htm](http://209.235.0.153/publications/terror/terrorism2002_2005.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Terrorism 2002-2005,” [http://209.235.0.153/publications/terror/terrorism2002\\_2005.htm](http://209.235.0.153/publications/terror/terrorism2002_2005.htm).

<sup>4</sup> Seth G. Jones, “The Rise of Far-Right Extremism in the United States,” *CSIS*, (November 7, 2018), available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/rise-far-right-extremism-united-states>.

<sup>5</sup> Seth G. Jones, “The Rise of Far-Right Extremism in the United States,” *CSIS*, (November 7, 2018), available at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/rise-far-right-extremism-united-states>.


terrorism seriously.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, it has created a significant barrier for policy makers to effectively legislate on these issues. In recent years, policymakers have often relied on data from independent organizations with varying collection metrics and contradictory results. It is difficult to legislate without official data from the law enforcement body that prosecutes those who have engaged in acts of domestic terrorism. As the threat landscape continues to shift, and for greater transparency, the FBI must make this information available to the public, to include policymakers and relevant stakeholders, to craft policies to be in the best position to counter violent right-wing extremism.

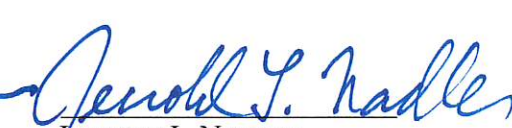
This threat became all too real when Americans were targeted in a series of separate attacks last October. On October 22, 2018, at least fourteen Members of Congress and political activists were mailed pipe bombs over a period of at least five days.<sup>7</sup> On October 24, 2018, two African Americans were murdered in Kentucky after the perpetrator failed to break into and cause harm at a historically Black church.<sup>8</sup> On October 27, 2018, eleven congregation members in a Pittsburgh synagogue were brutally killed in an anti-Semitic attack.<sup>9</sup>

The Trump Administration's *National Strategy for Counterterrorism* reinforces the threat posed by domestic terrorism, saying it is "on the rise, with an increasing number of fatalities and violent nonlethal acts committed by domestic terrorists."<sup>10</sup> Policymakers, law enforcement officials, independent researchers, and private sector partners need official data readily available in a report like *Terrorism* to better understand and address the evolving threats posed by domestic terrorists.

Accordingly, we request a briefing no later than March 8, 2019, to discuss why the FBI's *Terrorism* report was discontinued and whether the FBI will resume its publication. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

  
BENNIE G. THOMPSON  
Chairman  
Committee on Homeland Security

  
JERROLD L. NADLER  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary

<sup>6</sup> Ryan J. Reilly, "There's A Good Reason Feds Don't Call White Guys Terrorists, Says DOJ Domestic Terror Chief," *Huffington Post*, (January 11, 2018), available at: [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/white-terrorists-domestic-extremists\\_us\\_5a550158e4b003133ecceb74](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/white-terrorists-domestic-extremists_us_5a550158e4b003133ecceb74).

<sup>7</sup> Faith Karimi, "5 days, 14 potential bombs and lots of questions. Here's what we know," *CNN*, (October 27, 2018), available at: <https://www.cnn.com/2018/10/26/politics/pipe-bombs-suspicious-packages-what-we-know/index.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Karen Zraick, Matt Stevens, "Kroger Shooting Suspect Tried to Enter Black Church Before Killing 2 in Kentucky, Police Say," *The New York Times*, (October 25, 2018), available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/25/us/louisville-kroger-shooting.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Kellie B. Gormly, "Suspect in Pittsburgh synagogue shooting charged with 29 counts in deaths of 11 people," *The Washington Post*, (October 27, 2018), available at: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2018/10/27/pittsburgh-police-responding-active-shooting-squirrel-hill-area/?utm\\_term=.744f3921dd2c](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2018/10/27/pittsburgh-police-responding-active-shooting-squirrel-hill-area/?utm_term=.744f3921dd2c).

<sup>10</sup> President of the United States, "National Strategy for Counterterrorism of the United States of America," (October 2018), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NSCT.pdf>.