DATE: October 15, 2019
TO: Concerned Parties
FROM: Hilary O. Shelton, Director, NAACP Washington Bureau

NAACP-SUPPORTED ANTI-DOMESTIC TERRORISM LEGISLATION PASSES THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BY UNANIMOUS VOTE; MUST NOW GET THROUGH THE U.S. SENATE

THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM DATA ACT (H.R. 3106) WOULD ENHANCE THE UNDERSTANDING OF THREATS POSED BY VIOLENT HATE GROUPS AND RIGHT-WING EXTREMISTS AND WOULD GREATLY IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY

THE ISSUE:
The NAACP-supported Domestic and International Terrorism DATA Act, H.R. 3106, passed the U.S. House of Representatives by a unanimous vote on September 26, 2019. The legislation has now been sent to the U.S. Senate, which must pass the bill before it can go the President for his signature to become law.

Today, the federal government’s anti-terrorism efforts focus primarily on international terrorism threats. Yet most non-governmental privately-generated information points to an increase of home-grown domestic terrorism as a larger threat to American’s safety. Furthermore, most of the information gathered by the U.S. government is classified as “secret” (in other words, not available to the public or most policy-makers). And it is collected by separate arms of the U.S. Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and the FBI. There is a need for centralized, reliable, publically accessible information on terrorism and its roots to inform the American people as well as federal, state, and local law enforcement of effective counter-terrorism policymaking.

Real threats to the American people are often misunderstood or lost in political bickering, and our reaction to them is too often driven by limited information. As too many in our community know, the real threat to our happiness and well-being comes from domestic threats such as hate groups and violent right-wing extremists, among others; and those threats appear to be growing in strength and number.

Congressman Bennie Thompson (MS), the Chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security, drafted H.R. 3106, the Domestic and International Terrorism DATA Act, to address these problems. H.R. 3106 requires an annual, unclassified joint report produced by the FBI and US Department of Homeland Security and the US Department of Justice that provides, among other things, an assessment of domestic threats. H.R. 3106 will help to advance Congressional and public understanding of trends in terrorism, thereby enabling a better response.
THE ACTION WE NEED YOU TO TAKE:
Contact both your Senators and URGE THEM TO SUPPORT H.R 3106, THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM DATA ACT. To contact your Senators, you may:

✓ Make a Phone Call:
  Call both your Senators in Washington by dialing the Capitol Switchboard and asking to be transferred to their offices. The switchboard phone number is (202) 224-3121 (see message section, below).

✓ Write a Letter
  To write a letter to your Senator, send it to:
  The Honorable (name of Senator)
  United States Senate
  Washington, D.C. 20510

✓ Send a Fax
  If you would like to send a fax, call Senators’ offices (through the Capitol switchboard) and ask for their fax numbers (you can use either the attached sample letter or the message box, below).

✓ Send an E-Mail
  To send an e-mail to your Senators, go to www.senate.gov and click on “Contact” on the left hand side. You can look up your Senators by name or state; go to their web sites to send an e-mail.

REMEMBER TO CONTACT BOTH YOUR SENATORS!!!
(date)

The Honorable ___________________________
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: MY STRONG SUPPORT FOR H.R. 3106, THE “DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THREATS IN AMERICA (DATA) ACT”

Dear Senator ______________________________;

As your constituent, I would like to urge you, in the strongest terms possible, to support H.R. 3106, the Domestic and International Terrorism Documentation and Analysis of Threats in America (the “Domestic and International Terrorism DATA”) Act. Upon enactment, H.R. 3106 would foster crucial transparency and facilitate informed policymaking on domestic terrorism. H.R. 3106 passed the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously on September 26, 2019 and is now pending in the Senate.

Today, federal efforts to address terrorism are largely outside of public view. Furthermore, genuine threats to the American people are misunderstood, or driven by limited information. Yet we live in a nation rife with a sordid history of racist domestic terrorism, which is sadly growing in the number of groups as well as high-profile activities. The growth of these groups currently presents a more dangerous threat to our nation and her people than terrorism that has international origins. There is a need for centralized, reliable, publically accessible information on domestic terrorism to inform effective counter-terrorism policymaking. By requiring an annual, unclassified joint report produced by the FBI and US Department of Homeland Security and the US Department of Justice that provides, among other things, an assessment of domestic threats, H.R. 3106 will help to advance Congressional and public understanding of trends in terrorism.

It is through this informed understanding of the extent to which these genuine threats to our well-being as a nation that we will be able to effectively address this challenge. H.R. 3106 will not only help us measure this threat, but also manage the programmatic solutions.

Thank you for considering my concerns. I urge you to support H.R. 3106, the “Domestic and International Terrorism DATA” Act and to do all you can to see that it is brought before the US Senate and signed into law before one more life is needlessly lost.

Sincerely,

(sign and print your name and remember to include your address)

Remember to contact BOTH your US Senators