

Press Release



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The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights Board Chair on Just-Announced House Judiciary Hearing on Southern Poverty Law Center: “House Majority Aids Weaponization of DOJ Against Civil Rights Organizations”

WASHINGTON — *Fatima Goss Graves, board chair of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, released the following statement in response to the House Judiciary Committee's announcement of a May 20 hearing on the Southern Poverty Law Center:*

"Congressional Republicans are aiding and abetting the Department of Justice's campaign of retribution against civil rights organizations and anyone who dares disagree with them. It began with law firms, universities, and even elected officials, and now extends to civil rights organizations, whose mission is to protect the public, uphold the Constitution, and make sure all Americans are able to enjoy the freedoms that make our country great.

“The House Judiciary Committee's decision to hold a hearing on the Southern Poverty Law Center will be a spectacle designed to further harm an organization that has spent 50 years tracking hate groups, infiltrating extremist networks, and dismantling violent white supremacist organizations.

“It is hard to believe the Trump administration thinks it can win this case, but both the administration and the House Judiciary Committee know the existence of the claim and a criminal indictment can destroy reputations and drain resources, frightening potential supporters and distracting from the vital mission.

“When all is said and done, it will not be the SPLC whose reputation is hurt, but the members of Congress who choose to do nothing while the DOJ was weaponized against perceived political opponents.

“The civil rights community will be watching on May 20. We urge every member of the Judiciary Committee to demand the transparency and accountability the American people are owed. This is a playbook for silencing dissent that any administration can use, and it must be stopped before it becomes the norm.”

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights is a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 240 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States. The Leadership Conference works toward an America as good as its ideals. For more information on The Leadership Conference and its member organizations, visit www.civilrights.org.

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