|  |
| --- |
| **Jihad Report Sep 23, 2017 -Sep 29, 2017**  |
| Attacks | 36  |
| Killed | 167  |
| Injured | 145  |
| Suicide Blasts | 5  |
| Countries | 11 |

**Drone Wars Update**

U.S. forces in Africa this week staged what would have been an otherwise unremarkable attack against Islamic State extremists but for one key detail: The operation was the first to rely on authorities granted under the Trump administration that allow the military to conduct lethal strikes outside a designated war zone and without explicit White House approval in advance.

An airstrike carried out on Tuesday in Libya killed "several" fighters from the Islamic State group, also known as ISIS, according to a Thursday statement from U.S. Africa Command. It followed a similar drone attack last week that Trump personally approved, the first in Libya since the one President Barack Obama authorized in January the day before he stepped down from office.

**RELATED CONTENT**

[**Trump Gives CIA Authority to Conduct Drone Strikes: WSJ**](https://www.usnews.com/news/top-news/articles/2017-03-13/trump-gives-cia-authority-to-conduct-drone-strikes-wsj)

But the latest operation is unique in that it did not take place in an "area of active hostilities," a term the Obama administration used to clarify where the U.S. is and is not at war and, perhaps more importantly, where military commanders – not the president or his immediate team – would determine whether a drone strike or other deadly operation was appropriate.

The rules that governed Tuesday's strike show how much more power the military now has to determine where it can go after terrorist networks, and it follows [recent reports](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/military/trump-admin-wants-increase-cia-drone-strikes-n802311) that the administration seeks to increase the authority of the military and the CIA to conduct drone operations.

That the military can now carry out such operations raises new questions about the general limits of its power in Africa and elsewhere: What now stops the Defense Department from carrying out drone strikes wherever it wants?

Until earlier this year, a still-classified portion of Libya was determined to be an area of active hostilities, as is still the case in a part of Somalia outside the capital, Mogadishu. Multiple sources who spoke to U.S. News confirm that designation for Libya has expired.

Trump [announced in March](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-defense-somalia/trump-grants-u-s-military-more-authority-to-attack-militants-in-somalia-idUSKBN1712OD) that he would give the military more flexibility to swiftly target extremists, curbing micromanagement from the White House.

"These strikes were conducted under the Presidential Policy Guidance," Defense Department spokeswoman Army Maj. Audricia Harris says, referring to [a 2014 document](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/01/15/presidential-policy-directive-united-states-conventional-arms-transfer-p) the Obama White House released explaining the policies that would govern covert war. "That allows for the use of all available tools of national power to protect the American people from threats posed by groups such as ISIS, al-Qaida and their associated forces."

The terrorist network, along with others like al-Qaida, is exploiting the political chaos that continues to roil the northeast African nation, AFRICOM said. The strike took place roughly 100 miles south of the coastal city of Sirte, once considered the group's "[lifeboat](https://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-09-01/pentagon-nowhere-to-run-for-isis-in-libya)" for thousands of fighters, including some who fled there from its so-called caliphate in Iraq and Syria.

The city was liberated by a U.S.-backed coalition at the beginning of the year. Pentagon spokesman Army Col. Robert Manning declined to say earlier this week how many fighters from the Islamic State group remain in Libya, though their numbers are believed to be around 500.

The area of active hostilities in Libya expired at the end of last year following the conclusion of Operation Odyssey Lightning, the mission name for hunting the Islamic State group in and around Sirte, according to AFRICOM spokesman Patrick Barnes. The designation was temporarily extended to allow for the strike Obama ordered for Jan. 19, the day before Trump's inauguration, and has since expired again.

As for whether the command could carry out strikes wherever it chooses in Africa, an official speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss current operations says it limits its actions to pre-established agreements with partner countries. In this latest instance, AFRICOM coordinated with the de facto coalition governing Libya known as the Government of National Accord. It has similar arrangements with other partners in Africa, including with Somalia to hunt Islamic State group fighters and with others to combat piracy off the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea.

It's unclear, however, whether those arrangements are hard rules or simply guidelines. The White House retains the authority to carry out operations against terrorists outside war zones and without the host country's permission, as Obama demonstrated through the 2011 Navy SEAL raid into Pakistan that killed Osama Bin Laden.

Tuesday's strike is hardly the first time the U.S. has conducted covert operations against extremist fighters in Africa outside of declared combat zones. The U.S. reportedly began targeting extremists in Somalia as early as 2011, if not before.

As many as four areas of active hostilities currently remain in addition to Somalia: within the borders of Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, and undisclosed locations in Yemen.

**California Assemblyman Wants Gas Cars Gone by 2040**

San Francisco Assemblyman Phil Ting would like for you to know that he has every intention of introducing new legislation in 2018 that will (i) make it much more difficult for low-income Californians to buy affordable vehicles and (ii) increase greenhouse gas emissions.  Of course, Ting didn't word it in exactly that way but his proposal to ban combustion-engine vehicles will inevitably result in both of the unintended consequences above.

As the [Sacramento Bee](http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article176030626.html) points out this morning, Ting has promised to introduce his destructive legislation in January saying at some point you just need to "put a line in the sand."

France and the United Kingdom are doing it. So is India. And now one lawmaker would like California to follow their lead in phasing out gasoline- and diesel-powered vehicles.

**When the Legislature returns in January, Assemblyman Phil Ting plans to introduce a bill that would ban the sale of new cars fueled by internal-combustion engines after 2040.** The San Francisco Democrat said it’s essential to get California drivers into an electric fleet if the state is going to meet its greenhouse gas reduction targets, since the transportation sector accounts for more than a third of all emissions.

“The market is moving this way. The entire world is moving this way,” Ting said. **“At some point you need to set a goal and put a line in the sand.”**

**“California is used to being first. But we’re trying to catch up to this,”** Ting said.

Meanwhile, we suspect that Ting will ignore the fact that California's previous attempt to push electric cars on consumers has been a complete failure. The California Air Resources Board has made electric cars far more expensive than gas powered cars, and blocked all non-California producers of electric vehicles. They require a $50,000 payment to begin the process of approval. Even the EPA is not as strict as the CARB.

California already committed five years ago to putting 1.5 million “zero-emission vehicles,” such as electric cars and plug-in hybrids, on the road by 2025. By that time, the state wants these cleaner models to account for 15 percent of all new car sales.

**But progress has been modest so far, as consumers wait for prices to drop and battery ranges to improve, or opt for large trucks and SUVs that are not available among electric offerings.** Slightly more than 300,000 zero-emission vehicles have now been sold in California, and they accounted for just under 5 percent of new car sales in the state in the first half of the year.



On the upside, Ting's proposed ban on gas vehicles would come a full 10 years later than the timeline floated by Mary Nichols of the California Air Resources Board last week.  Per [Bloomberg](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-09-26/california-mulls-following-china-with-combustion-engine-car-ban):

Governor Jerry Brown has expressed an interest in barring the sale of vehicles powered by internal-combustion engines, Mary Nichols, chairman of the California Air Resources Board, said in an interview Friday at Bloomberg headquarters in New York. Brown, one of the most outspoken elected official in the U.S. about the need for policies to combat climate change, would be replicating similar moves by China, France and the U.K.

**“I’ve gotten messages from the governor asking, ‘Why haven’t we done something already?’”** Nichols said, referring to China’s planned phase-out of fossil-fuel vehicle sales. “The governor has certainly indicated an interest in why China can do this and not California.”

California has set a goal to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 80 percent from 1990 levels by 2050. Rising emissions from on-road transportation has undercut the state’s efforts to reduce pollution, a San Francisco-based non-profit said last month.

“To reach the ambitious levels of reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, we have to pretty much replace all combustion with some form of renewable energy by 2040 or 2050," Nichols said. “We’re looking at that as a method of moving this discussion forward.”

**"There are people who believe, including who work for me, that you could stop all sales of new internal-combustion cars by 2030. Some people say 2035, some people say 2040,”** she said. “It’s awfully hard to predict any of that with precision, but it doesn’t appear to be out of the question.”

Of course, the irony that seems to be lost on Phil Ting, Jerry Brown and Mary Nichols is that, according to [Morgan Stanley](http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-08-18/inconvenient-fact-morgan-stanley-says-electric-cars-create-more-co2-they-save), **electric cars generate more CO2 than they save**.  As a stark reminder to our left-leaning political elites who created companies like Tesla with massive subsidies, Morgan Stanley pointed out that while electric cars don't burn gasoline they do have to be charged using electricity generated by coal and other fossil fuels.

This is where Tesla, along with China’s Guoxuan High-Tech fall short.

**“Whilst the electric vehicles and lithium batteries manufactured by these two companies do indeed help to reduce direct CO2 emissions from vehicles, electricity is needed to power them,”** Morgan Stanley wrote. “And with their primary markets still largely weighted towards fossil-fuel power (72% in the U.S. and 75% in China) the CO2 emissions from this electricity generation are still material.”

In other words, **“the carbon emissions generated by the electricity required for electric vehicles are greater than those saved by cutting out direct vehicle emissions.”**

Morgan Stanley calculated that an investment of $1 million in Canadian Solar results in nearly 15,300 metric tons of carbon dioxide being saved every year. For Tesla, such an investment adds nearly one-third of a metric ton of CO2.

Meanwhile, despite Brown's desire for "Hope & Change," even the U.S. Energy Information Administration says that "renewables" will represent less than 20% of electricity generation in the U.S. by 2040.



Oh well, when Ting succeeds it making it impossible for low-income California families to afford cheap transportation to work, we're sure he'll be all too happy to introduce additional legislation deeming electric cars to be a "right" of all U.S. citizens and mandating that "millionaire, billionaire, private jet owners" pay more in taxes to subsidize that "constitutionally protected right."

**The Elite Waiting for a Crisis**

We can add a third certainty to the two standard ones (death and taxes): ***The rules will suddenly change when a financial crisis strikes.***

**Why is this a certainty?** The answer is complex, as it draws on human nature, politics and the structure of societies/economies ruled by centralized states (governments).

**The Core Imperative of the State: Expand Control**

As I explain in my book, [*Resistance, Revolution, Liberation*](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B007Q3LPN0/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B007Q3LPN0&linkCode=as2&tag=charleshughsm-20&linkId=91801266f1f78d658508bedbe21b7bca), **the core (i.e. ontological) imperative of every central state is to expand its reach and control.  This isn’t just the result of individuals within the state seeking more power; *every centralized state views whatever is outside its control as a threat*.**  The way to reduce or neutralize a threat is to take control of the mechanisms that generated it.

Once the state has gained control of these mechanisms, it is loath to relinquish them; to relinquish control is to invite chaos.

There is of course an intensely self-serving dynamic to extending state control: those being paid to enforce this state control have an immense vested interest in the state retaining (or even extending) this control, as their livelihoods now depend on the state doing so.

**The higher-ups in the state also have a vested interest in retaining these new controls, as more control means more wealth and power accrue to those at the top of the centralized power pyramid: this extension of state control means private enterprise must now lobby the state for favors, and it gives the higher-ups more perquisites and favors to dispense—for a price, of course.**

This vested interest arises throughout the power pyramid, from the bottom functionary with newfound power over common citizens to the managers of the departmental bureaucracy tasked with enforcing the new control to the apex of state authority.

This hierarchy of state power creates another threat to the central state; the corralling of state power by fiefdoms within the state itself.  In other words, fiefdoms can become semi-autonomous agencies that are only nominally under the control of central authority.  The answer is of course additional layers of oversight, compliance, investigation and enforcement within the state itself.

**The State Serves Elites First and Foremost**

Though modern states always claim to serve the common citizenry, in reality the state serves the wealth/power elites who need state complicity to maintain their wealth/power.  These power elites function as the modern-day equivalent of *aristocracy*: everyone is equal, but some or more equal than others, to use Orwell’s timeless phrase.

This reality leads to a non-formalized two-tier system: one for commoners and one for the power elite/New Aristocracy.  A formalized two-tier system would incite political disorder, so the system is nominally “everyone is equal under the law” but in practice there are two tiers.

Tax collection is a good example. The corporate/financier power elite have access to complex tax avoidance schemes that are unavailable to commoners, who have few tax reduction tools.  The judicial system is another: power elites can play the system via high-cost attorneys while commoners are left to plea-bargain a reduced sentence, even when they are innocent.

**When crises arise, the state first protects its own authority and control. Its second priority is securing the wealth and power of the elite.**

**The Self-Serving Savior State**

Human nature being what it is, there are two motivations for state authorities to expand their reach and control.  Some of those with state authority feel it is their prerogative (or even their responsibility) to expand state control to protect the commoners who are likely to suffer should a crisis erupt. This do-good impulse may be genuine in some, but by and large it is not compassion that dominates decision-making but the dynamic of a central state having so much power in the first place: *you have the power, so do something to save us from the consequences of crisis*.

In other words, once power is concentrated in the hands of a few, those few are responsible for handling crises that would have otherwise fallen on a decentralized system with many levels of response.

Then there is the Machiavellian impulse to use crisis as the cover for a power-grab, a dynamic encapsulated in the phrase, *never let a good crisis go to waste*. This dynamic doesn’t have to be passive; power elites don’t have to wait for a crisis, they can engineer one by exploiting their control of state and private-sector mechanisms.  This process of engineering a crisis can be policy-driven (as described in Naomi Klein’s book *The Shock Doctrine*) or propaganda-driven (the sinking of the battleship *Maine*, Nazi Germany’s *Lebensraum,* etc.).

**Though many call an expansive state *The Nanny State*, I prefer the term *The Savior State*, as the state claims its expanding powers under the guise of saving us from a variety of threats—including those that arise from the socio-economic system the state oversees. In other words, *The Savior State’s guiding ideology is to* *save us from ourselves*.**

If we might harm ourselves with addictive drugs, the state’s solution is to imprison everyone caught with addictive drugs—except of course those addictive drugs that enrich the Power Elites (nicotine, alcohol, synthetic opioids, etc.).

If the state deems it risky for children under the age of ten to play outside unattended, the state’s solution is to treat the parents/guardians as criminals.

Each extension of control creates new layers of vested interests—more functionaries who gain *not from solving problems but insuring they fester into the future as a form of guaranteed employment*, and more opportunities to dispense favors in the informal two-tier system of powerless commoners and influential elites.

**The Crisis Toolbox: Political Expediency**

**History teaches us that authorities view crises as first and foremost a threat to state authority, secondarily as a threat to elites’ wealth and power, and then lastly as a threat to the socio-economic system they rule.**

Given these crisis management priorities, their first response is to extend their authority by whatever means are necessary.  Once these new powers are in hand, the state deploys them to limit the threat posed to the power elites and the structure that supports state and elite wealth/power.

In a centralized power structure, this crisis management manifests as *change the rules without warning* *to increase the reach and power of the state*.  The justification is something along the lines of *these emergency powers are needed to protect the nation*—powers that all too often become permanent, as powers once taken are rarely relinquished for all the reasons outlined above.

While the rule changes are presented as both necessary and well-planned, in actuality the process is one of *political expediency*:  a hurried rush to do whatever limits the risks to the power elites’ wealth and power before opposition can be organized, and to cloak the power-grab in the usual Savior State garb: *we are acting to save the system that benefits you*.

But this expediency comes back to haunt both the state and the power elites, as expedient power grabs designed to protect the state and elites do not actually address the dynamics that spawned the crisis in the first place. Rather, they exacerbate the problem by introducing self-serving fixes that paper over the problem as a quick-and-dirty way of protecting the power and wealth of the state and private-sector elites.

**These fixes end up crippling the mechanisms that are needed to actually solve the systemic sources of the crisis.**

**The Continuing Financial Crisis**

**Financial crises are inevitable, and the state (which includes the central bank) seeks to limit the crisis *by taking control of the market*.**

Examples include: closing the stock market, declaring a bank holiday, issuing a new currency, fixing wages and prices, and banning short selling.

In the current financial crisis that started in 2008 (and that has yet to end), central banks and states have largely avoided these outright takeovers of the market in favor of a more subtle strategy of controlling the markets while maintaining the appearance of “free markets.”

**Monty Makes his Last Deal**

Monty Hall, who co-created and hosted the game show "Let's Make A Deal," died as a result of heart failure Saturday in his home in Beverly Hills, Calif. He was 96.

"Let's Make a Deal" premiered in 1963 and has continued its successful run largely uninterrupted up to present day.

Hall hosted various game shows and other programs in his early career until he developed "Let's Make a Deal" with creative partner Stefan Hatos. The show became legendary for its audience members dressing up in outlandish costumes in order to attract Hall's attention in the hopes of being given the opportunity to win big. Hall and Hatos produced several other game shows under their production company through the '70s and '80s. Hall continued to host "Let's Make a Deal" for almost all of its 5,000 episodes, as it traversed from NBC, to ABC, and finally nighttime syndication. The show was revived by CBS in 2009 with host Wayne Brady, and continues to air.

The show became so popular in pop culture that it spawned "the Monty Hall Problem," a thought experiment in probability that involves three doors, two goats, and a prize.

Hall received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1973, and, as a Canadian native, was named to the Order of Canada in 1988.

He is survived by three children, including actresss Joanna Gleason, who confirmed his death.

**Lunar**

No telescope? No problem! Now you can explore all the nooks and crannies of the moon in the palm of your hand using a 3D-printed moon model and augmented-reality (AR) app.

Created by the San Francisco-based company AstroReality, the new moon model — called "Lunar" — is covered in craters, mares, [dead volcanoes](https://www.space.com/33953-moon-volcanic-past-nasa-video.html) and other features of the moon that you can inspect virtually using the accompanying AR app.

AstroReality's designers used real data from NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter to create the textured models. Precisely printed with a resolution of 0.006 millimeters per pixel, the Lunar models are scientifically accurate. And with a hand-painted finish, they're also beautiful to look at. [[Latest Moon Photos from NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter](https://www.space.com/12030-moon-photos-nasa-lunar-reconnaissance-orbiter.html)]





AstroReality's free augmented-reality app is available in the App Store and on Google Play.

*Credit: AstroReality*

The real fun comes in when you install AstroReality's AR app, which allows you to investigate features across the lunar surface. Identifying craters and mares is only the beginning; you can also scope out landing sites for NASA's [Apollo missions](https://www.space.com/26572-how-it-worked-the-apollo-spacecraft-infographic.html). Click on one of these landing sites and you'll see photos, videos and other mission information pop up.



With a pair of binoculars or a small telescope, many spectacular features can be spotted on the moon. [See how to observe the moon in this SPACE.com infographic](https://www.space.com/17702-how-observe-moon-skywatching-infographic.html).

*Credit: Karl Tate, SPACE.com*

You can even see China's [Yutu moon rover](https://www.space.com/23855-how-china-change3-moon-rover-works-infographic.html), which landed on the moon in December 2013 as part of China's Chang'e 3 mission. It spent 31 months roving around the lunar surface before it died.

For now, the product is still in its "prototype stage" as AstroReality's developers continue to make improvements and add new features to the app. For the Lunar Pro model, the company is developing a series of "moon tasks" in which users can simulate things Apollo astronauts did on the moon virtually using the AR app, AstroReality's lead producer Joanne Dai told Space.com.

AstroReality's moon model comes in three sizes, and you can [buy them here through IndieGogo](https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/lunar-a-detailed-3d-printed-moon-model-and-ar-app#/). Getting your hands on one of these moon models will take some patience, though – they won't ship until January 2018.

The largest model, the Lunar Pro, is about the size of a grapefruit and is on sale for $200. The "regular" size has a diameter of about 3 inches (8 centimeters) and costs $89, while the "mini" version measures a little over an inch across (3 cm) and costs $49. Prices have been marked down by up to 28 percent, so if you're interested in buying one of these, now would be a great time to do that.

Although the moon models are made of a sturdy polyresin material, Dai recommends adult supervision for children younger than 14 to avoid accidental damage to the model. Still, it is "a great tool for youngsters to learn about the moon," Dai said.

If you're a fan of space exploration and augmented reality, AstroReality has plans to roll out similar 3D-printed models of planets in the solar system, starting with Mars, Dai said.

AstroReality's IndieGogo campaign has managed to raise nearly $200,000, or more than five times their fundraising goal. Even though the campaign has ended, you can still order the items via IndeGogo indefinitely. And once the [AstroReality website](http://www.astroreality.com/) is finished later this year, they'll be for sale there as well.

**Water on Mars**

Scientists taking a new look at older data from NASA's longest-operating Mars orbiter have discovered evidence of significant hydration near the Martian equator -- a mysterious signature in a region of the Red Planet where planetary scientists figure ice shouldn't exist.

Jack Wilson, a post-doctoral researcher at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, Maryland, led a team that reprocessed data collected from 2002 to 2009 by the neutron spectrometer instrument on NASA's [Mars Odyssey](https://mars.nasa.gov/odyssey/) spacecraft. In bringing the lower-resolution compositional data into sharper focus, the scientists spotted unexpectedly high amounts of hydrogen -- which at high latitudes is a sign of buried water ice -- around sections of the Martian equator.

An accessible supply of water ice near the equator would be of interest in planning astronaut exploration of Mars. The amount of delivered mass needed for human exploration could be greatly reduced by using Martian natural resources for a water supply and as raw material for producing hydrogen fuel.

By applying image-reconstruction techniques often used to reduce blurring and remove "noise" from medical or spacecraft imaging data, Wilson's team improved the spatial resolution of the data from around 320 miles to 180 miles (520 kilometers to 290 kilometers). "It was as if we'd cut the spacecraft's orbital altitude in half," Wilson said, "and it gave us a much better view of what's happening on the surface."

The [neutron spectrometer](https://mars.nasa.gov/odyssey/mission/instruments/grs/) can't directly detect water, but by measuring neutrons, it can help scientists calculate the abundance of hydrogen -- and infer the presence of water or other hydrogen-bearing substances. Mars Odyssey's first major discovery, in 2002, was abundant hydrogen just beneath the surface at high latitudes. In 2008, NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander confirmed that the hydrogen was in the form of water ice. But at lower latitudes on Mars, water ice is not thought to be thermodynamically stable at any depth. The traces of excess hydrogen that Odyssey's original data showed at lower latitudes were initially explained as hydrated minerals, which other spacecraft and instruments have since observed.

Wilson's team concentrated on those equatorial areas, particularly with a 600-mile (1,000-kilometer) stretch of loose, easily erodible material between the northern lowlands and southern highlands along the [Medusae Fossae Formation](https://www.jpl.nasa.gov/spaceimages/details.php?id=pia03770). Radar-sounding scans of the area have suggested the presence of low-density volcanic deposits or water ice below the surface, "but if the detected hydrogen were buried ice within the top meter of the surface, there would be more than would fit into pore space in soil," Wilson said.

The radar data came from both the Shallow Radar on NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter and the Mars Advanced Radar for Subsurface and Ionospheric Sounding on the European Space Agency's Mars Express orbiter and would be consistent with no subsurface water ice near the equator.

How water ice could be preserved there is a mystery. A leading theory suggests an ice and dust mixture from the polar areas could be cycled through the atmosphere when Mars' axial tilt was larger than it is today. But those conditions last occurred hundreds of thousands to millions of years ago. Water ice isn't expected to be stable at any depth in that area today, Wilson said, and any ice deposited there should be long gone. Additional protection might come from a cover of dust and a hardened "duricrust" that traps the humidity below the surface, but this is unlikely to prevent ice loss over timescales of the axial tilt cycles.

"Perhaps the signature could be explained in terms of extensive deposits of hydrated salts, but how these hydrated salts came to be in the formation is also difficult to explain," Wilson added. "So for now, the signature remains a mystery worthy of further study, and Mars continues to surprise us."

Wilson led the research while at Durham University in the U.K. His team - which includes members from NASA Ames Research Center, the Planetary Science Institute and the Research Institute in Astrophysics and Planetology - published its findings this summer in the journal Icarus

**The Anti Trump Train**

Puerto Rico was devastated by Hurricane Irma and then [Hurricane Maria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_Maria) a category 5 monster hurricane two weeks later.

**But Caren Yuliz Cruz Soto is a** [**Democrat**](http://www.cnn.com/2017/09/29/us/san-juan-mayor/index.html) **so she expects everything to be given to her for free.
So now she’s out on all of the liberal mainstream news outlets trashing President Trump.**

Mayor Caren Yuliz Cruz Soto went on a tirade against President Trump on Friday.

**The San Juan mayor accused FEMA and President Trump of offering her no help.
She said this in front of a pallet of US aid.**

Also note that in the video she didn’t have anyone behind her moving product.
Does Trump have to hand out the water bottles, too?

**You just can’t make this up.**

**Fascist in Spain**

Clashes between riot police and voters in Barcelona and other towns and cities across Catalonia have left hundreds injured as police beat peaceful demonstrators with sticks and fired rubber bullets into crowds. The clashes, which have been well-documented by journalists and members of the public, are resulting in a massive public embarrassment for the government in Madrid, as photos of elderly Catalonian pensioners with blood streaming down their faces have flooded the internet.

According to the Catalonian health ministry, 465 people have been injured during today's demonstrations, including at least nine local police officers and three Civil Guard officers. Here's a breakdown via the [Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2017/oct/01/catalan-independence-referendum-spain-catalonia-vote-live): 216 were hurt in Barcelona, 80 in Girona, 64 in Lleida, 53 in Terres de l’Ebre, 27 in Catalunya central and 25 in Tarragona.

Despite the crackdown, the Guardian reports that the majority of polling stations in the province have remained open. Spanish national police have closed down 46 in total (27 in Barcelona, six in Tarragona, six in Girona and seven in Lleida). The Guardia Civil have closed another 46 (14 in Barcelona, 12 in Tarragona, eight in Girona and 12 in Lleida). Catalan police, the Mossos, say they have closed 244 polling stations across Catalonia. In total, 336 polling stations have been shuttered. To put this in context, the Catalan government said more than 2,000 polling stations were set up across the province for the referendum. Meanwhile, the Spanish government said that three people, including one girl, have been arrested for civil disobedience and attacking officers.

According to the [FT](https://www.ft.com/content/45585b06-a62b-11e7-ab55-27219df83c97?mhq5j=e7), police confiscated voting papers and ballot boxes in Barcelona and elsewhere and fired rubber bullets to disperse crowds at the Ramon Llull school in Barcelona, a polling station in the city.. However, elsewhere in Catalonia, voting was carried out peacefully with the 17,000-strong local police force apparently being less interventionist in stopping the polling at certain stations. Since there is no electoral commission overseeing the referendum, little authoritative information was immediately available on the turnout for the vote and how it complied with normal standards. Police were ordered to shut down the region's electronic vote-counting system earlier in the week, meaning it could be a while before the results start coming in.

Catalonia's government spokesman says 337 people have been injured, some seriously, during the police crackdown Sunday on a banned referendum on breaking away from Spain.

Jordi Turull said he couldn't disclose more details about the wounded out of respect to their relatives.

Police fired rubber bullets near at least one Barcelona polling station, and have clashed with protesters throughout Catalonia.

The regional government's spokesman, Jordi Turull, blamed the violence directly on Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy and Interior Minister Juan Ignacio Zoido.

Turull said that actions by Spanish National Police and Civil Guard forces on Sunday were politically motivated and showed "a clear motivation to harm citizens."

Catalan international affairs director, Raul Romeva, said that regional authorities would appeal to European authorities for Rajoy's governments' violations of human rights.

**The Antioch Shooting**

A note found in the car of a man charged with shooting up a mixed-race Tennessee church made reference to revenge for a white supremacist’s massacre at a black church in Charleston, South Carolina, two years earlier, according to the Associated Press.

Officials read the note to AP staffers who say it could provide the motive of Emanuel Kidega Samson’s mindset at the time of Sunday’s shooting and a possible motive for the rampage, which killed a woman and wounded six other people.

The note referenced revenge or retaliation for Dylann Roof, the white supremacist who killed nine black worshipers at a South Carolina church in 2015 and has since been sentenced to death. It wasn’t clear what precisely Samson is alleged to have written about the Roof shooting, or whether his note contained other important details that might also speak to a motivation or state of mind.

The law enforcement officials spoke on condition of anonymity.

Samson, a U.S. citizen who moved to the U.S. from Sudan as a child, has been charged with murder, and the FBI and U.S. attorney’s office in Nashville quickly opened a civil rights investigation into the shooting.

Police have said Samson, masked and wearing a tactical vest, fatally shot a woman who was walking to her vehicle and then entered the rear of Burnette Chapel Church of Christ and shot six other people, walking silently down the aisles with a .40-caliber handgun. The case immediately called to mind the killings at Emanuel AME Church, in Charleston, South Carolina. But unlike that church, which is mostly black, Burnette Chapel in the Nashville neighborhood of Antioch has a diverse congregation with people of various ethnicities, a detail noted in the report. And church members told investigators that Samson had attended services a year or two ago.

Police records say Samson, who is black, had expressed suicidal thoughts in June and had a volatile relationship with a woman that twice involved police this year. He made bizarre Facebook posts in the hours before the shooting, including one that read: “Everything you’ve ever doubted or made to be believe as false, is real. & vice versa, B.”

Metro Nashville Police say investigators recovered four guns after the shooting that were bought legally from in-state retailers: the 40-caliber handgun allegedly used in the shooting; a military-style AR-15 rifle found in a case in Samson’s vehicle; and a 9 mm handgun recovered from the church. Police say a relative gave the guns to Samson for safe keeping.

Police say Samson bought a .22-caliber pistol found in his SUV.

**The Reign of the Judges**

While the arrival of Justice Neil Gorsuch made major headlines, the cases last term did not gain much attention. The Court’s [2017-2018 term](http://www.heritage.org/courts/report/overview-the-supreme-courts-2017-2018-term), however, promises to be one for the history books.

In their first few weeks back, the justices will tackle several important issues including partisan gerrymandering, the Waters of the U.S. rule, and corporate liability under the Alien Tort Statute. Here’s a look at these upcoming cases.

**Partisan Gerrymandering**

On Oct. 3, the Supreme Court will be pulled into the political thicket of legislative redistricting in Gill v. Whitford*.* This case out of Wisconsin involves the Republican-controlled legislature’s 2011 redistricting plan.

A three-judge panel invalidated the plan, finding that the Republican legislature intended to “entrench” its power—despite the fact that the plan complied with traditional criteria, such as compactness and contiguity, and that the Supreme Court has previously declined to hear cases involving partisan gerrymandering, as opposed to racial gerrymandering challenges.

In this case, the challengers have come up with a new theory for challenging a plan that otherwise meets the Supreme Court’s criteria.

This new theory—the “efficiency gap”—claims that votes for one party over a certain threshold are “wasted” and shows that a plan has been drawn to pack voters of one party into a small number of districts.

Another explanation is that like-minded voters simply tend to live near one another.

Will the Supreme Court decide to intervene? Or will the justices say that political disputes are better left to the political branches?

Given that the “efficiency gap” theory could spell doom for one in three redistricting plans, the Court may be reluctant to endorse it.

**Alien Tort Statute**

On Oct. 11, the Supreme Court will look at whether the Alien Tort Statute applies to corporations.

The law, which was part of the Judiciary Act passed by the first Congress in 1789, allows district courts to hear tort actions brought by non-U.S. citizens for violations of the law of nations or a treaty of the United States.

In the early years of our republic, this law provided foreign ambassadors an avenue for legal redress in the event they were harmed while in the United States. Since the 1980s, it has been used as the basis for lawsuits alleging human rights violations.

The issue that the Court will hear in Jesner v. Arab Bank PLC is whether corporations may be liable under this law. The Court previously considered this very issue in Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum (2013), but ruled that American courts lacked jurisdiction since the alleged misdeeds took place outside the United States.

Jesner involves claims brought by victims of Hamas against Jordan’s Arab Bank for holding accounts for terrorists and sending large sums of money from its New York branch to support attacks in Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip.

Now, the Supreme Court is poised to answer the question it left open in Kiobel: Does the Alien Tort Statute apply to corporations?

**Waters of the U.S.**

Also on Oct. 11, the Supreme Court will look at a challenge to the Obama administration’s “Waters of the United States” rule.

The EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers issued the rule in 2015 defining which “waters” are subject to regulation under the Clean Water Act. It extends federal control over just about every puddle in America.

Property owners, businesses, and several states went to court to challenge this power grab.

The issue before the Supreme Court is whether the challengers filed suit in the right court. They argue that under the Clean Water Act, most challenges to EPA and Corps actions must be brought in district court, and only a limited number of actions should be filed directly in an appeals court.

But the multiple challenges were consolidated and heard by the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals.

The challengers argue that the lower court’s interpretation of the Clean Water Act’s jurisdictional provision muddies the water and departs from the clear text of the statute Congress enacted. This approach, the challengers argue, has led to wasteful litigation and delayed a resolution of the merits of this case.

Though EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt announced the government will [withdraw the Waters of the U.S. rule](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/06/27/trump-administration-to-propose-repealing-rule-giving-epa-broad-authority-over-water-pollution/?utm_term=.1cc58d7252af), it has not yet done so.

**Other Cases**

The Court was supposed to hear arguments in the travel ban case, but after the Trump administration [issued a new order](http://dailysignal.com/2017/09/28/trumps-latest-travel-order-common-sense/), the justices cancelled the oral argument and asked the parties to file briefs addressing whether the case is now moot. Thus, the Court ultimately may dismiss the case without issuing a decision.

In addition, the Court has agreed to hear more than 40 other cases, including:

* Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission, deciding whether a state can force a baker to make custom cakes for same-sex weddings;
* Husted v. A. Philip Randolph Institute, a challenge to Ohio’s voter roll cleanup process;
* Carpenter v. United States, which looks at police’s warrantless seizure of cell phone location records; and
* Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Council 31—a challenge to public unions forcing nonmembers to subsidize the costs of collective bargaining.

**Just How Anti-American is the UN?**

A woman who hijacked two aircraft in Europe of behalf of a Palestinian terrorist group almost half a century ago was feted as an invited guest at a European Parliament event on Tuesday evening, despite the fact her group is on the European Union’s terrorist list.

Leila Khaled, a member of the political bureau of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), took part in an event in Brussels entitled “The Role of Women in the Palestinian Popular Resistance,” organized by a left-wing parliamentary group.

The poster advertising the event and naming the three speakers identifies her affiliation: “Leila Khaled – Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.”

Just [early last month](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017R1420&from=EN), E.U. ministers decided to keep the PFLP on the union’s list of designated terrorist organization. The PFLP has been on the list –  now comprising 21 groups – since June 2002.

Tuesday’s event was organized by members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from a far-left Spanish party, Izquierda Unida, which is part of the “European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) group at the European Parliament.



The PFLP’s Khaled with Sinn Fein MEP Martina Anderson, at the European Parliament on Tuesday, September 26, 2017. (Photo: Twitter)

Martina Anderson, an MEP from Ireland’s Sinn Fein – also a member of the GUE/NGL group – tweeted a photo of herself with “legendary Palestinian revolutionary Leila Khaled” at the event

“Fantastic Turnout in Brussels 4 Women in Palestinian Struggle Leila Khaled addressing a packed room – long live international solidarity,” Anderson tweeted.

A spokeswoman for Israel’s mission to the E.U., Michal Weiler-Tal, said meetings of this nature should not be allowed in an institution “which promotes democracy and Western values.”

“It is difficult to understand that a political group in the European Parliament, legitimizes and provides a platform for a convicted terrorist who hijacked American and Israeli airliners, to spread incitement and promote hatred and violence,” she said.

“Moreover, hosting such an infamous figure belonging to the PFLP – which E.U. law designates as a terrorist organization – is not only against our moral standards but also sabotages the efforts to fight terrorism,” Weiler-Tal added. “IThis is a terrible message to the Israeli public and goes against the values that Israel and Europe share.”

Earlier on Tuesday, the American Jewish Committee’s Brussels-based Transatlantic Institute called on the parliament’s president to prevent Khaled’s entry.

“It would be a sad irony if parliament, only days after crucially setting up a special committee on terrorism, were to welcome and lionize as a ‘resistance fighter’ a convicted terrorist who was captured in 1970 while hijacking a commercial airplane,” said the institute’s director, Daniel Schwammenthal.

(MEPs recently approved the [creation of a special committee](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170629IPR78658/special-committee-to-tackle-deficiencies-in-the-fight-against-terrorism) “to examine and evaluate the extent of the terrorist threat on European soil and look into any potential faults and malfunctions which might have allowed recent terrorist attacks in member states to occur.”)

Queries about Khaled’s invitation brought no response from the European Parliament by press time. A spokeswoman for the E.U.’s executive Commission said the meeting had been organized by an MEP “and was not an E.U. event.”



A poster for the European Parliament event made clear Khaled’s PFLP affiliation. (Image: Twitter)

**Hijacking drama**

Khaled, viewed by some as an “iconic” figure of Palestinian resistance, lives in Jordan. She is a member of the PFLP’s political bureau and head of the group’s “refugees and right of return department.”

The Marxist-leaning PFLP has been a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization since 1997, and is also considered a terrorist group by Canada and Australia.

It has claimed responsibility for dozens of terror attacks since the late 1960s, including hijackings, bombings, suicide bombings, shootings and stabbings. More recent PFLP attacks include an axe, knife and gun attack in which four worshipers and a policeman were killed in a Jerusalem synagogue in 2014.

In August 1969, Khaled and another PFLP terrorist hijacked a TWA flight en route from Rome to Athens and Tel Aviv, diverting it to Damascus where they blew up the Boeing 707’s nose section.

The Syrian government arrested the hijackers but released them without charge two months later. Syria also held two Israeli passengers for several months before freeing them in return for Syrian and Egyptian prisoners of war held by Israel.



The hijacked aircraft stand at Jordan’s Dawson’s Field in September 1970. The terrorists would later blow them up. (Photo: Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain)

The following year, Khaled was part of an ambitious PFLP multiple hijacking. On September 6, a TWA flight from Frankfurt to New York and a Swissair flight from Zurich to New York were diverted to a remote airstrip in Jordan called Dawson’s Field.

On the same day a third flight, an El-Al service from Tel Aviv to New York via Amsterdam, was hijacked after leaving Amsterdam. Khaled was one of two hijackers but the attempt failed after her accomplice, a Nicaraguan, was shot by an Israeli sky marshal and she was subdued. The plane made an emergency landing in London, where Khaled was arrested.

Two other flights would be hijacked in the drama. Two PFLP terrorists who had been prevented by security from boarding Khaled’s El-Al flight took a Pan Am Boeing 747 service from Amsterdam to New York instead, and diverted it to Cairo since it was too big to land at Dawson’s Field in Jordan. In Cairo they released passengers and crew and blew up the plane.

On September 9, a BOAC flight from Bahrain to London was seized and also diverted to Dawson’s Field.

In 2001, documents declassified by Britain’s Public Records Office under a 30-year rule, revealed that just three days after Khaled’s arrest, Britain was offering to free her as part of a deal being negotiated with the hijackers still holding hundreds of hostages, including 65 Britons, on the three planes in Jordan.

On September 12 the terrorists, who had moved their hostages by that time, blew up the three aircraft at Dawson’s Field. The next day, Britain announced it would free Khaled.

She was eventually released on September 30, along with other Palestinian terrorists being held in Swiss and German prisons. In exchange, the hijackers freed their remaining hostages.

The declassified documents showed that Prime Minister [Edward Heath’s government overruled U.S. objections](https://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/britain-overruled-us-concerns-gave-terrorists-documents-reveal) by agreeing to release Khaled, who was already wanted for the TWA hijacking the previous year.

**The Clinton Crime Syndicate**

Once upon a time, senior Obama Administration [officials insisted](http://thepoliticalinsider.com/flashback-susan-rice-unmasking-claiming-know-nothing-about/) that “nothing of the sort occurred” when asked about the inappropriate ‘unmasking’ of Trump Administration officials.

Seems like a bygone era. We know that unmasking did indeed occur. And a new report indicates that it took place at an alarming rate.

Multiple sources have confirmed with Fox News that Samantha Power, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, was making ‘unmasking’ requests in the final months of Obama’s presidency at a clip of more than one per day.

Every single working day in those final months, Power was trying reveal the names of Americans who had been incidentally collected in intelligence reports.

The former ambassador is also alleged to have made requests in the days leading up to President Trump’s inauguration.

“Unmaskings are supposed to be rare,” the Wall Street Journal wrote in an editorial, “and if the mere ambassador to the U.N. could demand them, what privacy protection was the Obama White House really offering U.S. citizens?”

It remains unclear why a U.N. ambassador would be unmasking American citizens in the first place, a process that, if conducted for genuine intelligence purposes, is legal, but, if used for partisan political purposes, remains illegal.

In July, Rep. Devin Nunes, chairman of the House Oversight Committee, [wrote to](http://www.foxnews.com/politics/interactive/2017/07/27/letter-from-nunes-to-coats-on-unmasking.html) Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats to inform him that his committee had learned “that one official, whose position had no apparent intelligence-related function, made hundreds of unmasking requests during the final year of the Obama Administration.”

While other ambassadors have made unmasking requests in the past, those number in the low double digits. Power’s requests exceeded 260.

The subsequent leaking of ‘unmasked’ U.S. citizens to the media, something that took place ad nauseam during President Trump’s first months of his term, is unlawful.

You may recall Rep. Trey Gowdy laying into former CIA director John Brennan, asking about his knowledge of Power’s role in unmasking. Brennan said he could not recall any such requests being made, somethings that seems unlikely if Power was making the requests nearly every day.

The report on Power’s frequency in unmasking comes at a particularly relevant time, as she prepares [to give testimony](http://thepoliticalinsider.com/obama-subpoena-target-over-unmasking/?source=TPIpost) before the House Intelligence Committee next month.

The most pressing question is: Did President Obama know that she was taking this action?

Barack Obama’s illegal domestic spying scandal continues to grow.

Intrigue has swirled around former National Security Advisor Susan Rice ever since it was revealed she was the one who requested the unmasking of Trump officials.

Now the cover up in this scandal traces straight back to Obama.

The watchdog group Judicial Watch filed a Freedom of Information Act Request for any documents pertaining to Rice’s request to unmask Trump officials caught up in the Obama administration’s surveillance.

The National Security Council responded that they no longer had the documents.

In fact, they had been turned over to Barack Obama’s Presidential library.

Under the law, this means they can be kept hidden from the public for five years.

*Breitbart* reports:

*“The National Security Council cannot hand over records relating to former National Security Adviser Susan Rice’s surveillance of Americans, because they have been moved to the Obama presidential library and may be sealed for as may as five years, conservative watchdog Judicial Watch announced Monday.*

*The NSC informed Judicial Watch in a letter dated May 23that materials related to Rice’s requests to know the identities of Americans swept up in surveillance of foreign targets, including any Trump campaign or transition officials, have been moved to the library.*

*The NSC’s Director of Access Management John Powers said in the letter:*

*Documents from the Obama administration have been transferred to the Barack Obama Presidential Library. You may send your request to the Obama Library. However, you should be aware that under the Presidential Records Act, Presidential records remain closed to the public for five years after an administration has left office.*

*Judicial Watch earlier this year filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for those documents, including of communications between Rice and any intelligence community member or agency regarding any Russian involvement in the 2016 elections, the hacking of Democratic National Committee computers, or any suspected communications between Russia and Trump officials.”*

This scandal exploded when classified intercepts of former Trump National Security Advisor Michael Flynn’s conversations with the Russians were illegally leaked to the Washington Post.

The leaks contradicted Flynn’s claims about his conversations with the Russian Ambassador and he was fired.

No one accused Flynn of any wrongdoing in his conversations, but they created a political embarrassment for the Trump administration and fueled media speculation that the Trump campaign had colluded with Russia during the 2016 election.

Covering up Rice’s requests conceals the paper trail that could expose whoever illegally leaked the classified intercepts to the Washington Post.

In addition, Rice herself may have violated the law.

Andrew McCarthy – a former federal prosecutor – wrote in *The National Review*:

*“In general, it is the FBI that conducts investigations that bear on American citizens suspected of committing crimes or of acting as agents of foreign powers. In the matter of alleged Russian meddling, the investigative camp also includes the CIA and the NSA. All three agencies conducted a probe and issued a joint report in January. That was after Obama, despite having previously acknowledged that the Russian activity was inconsequential, suddenly made a great show of ordering an inquiry and issuing sanctions.*

*Consequently, if unmasking was relevant to the Russia investigation, it would have been done by those three agencies. And if it had been critical to know the identities of Americans caught up in other foreign intelligence efforts, the agencies that collect the information and conduct investigations would have unmasked it. Because they are the agencies that collect and refine intelligence “products” for the rest of the “intelligence community,” they are responsible for any unmasking; and they do it under “minimization” standards that FBI Director James Comey, in recent congressional testimony, described as “obsessive” in their determination to protect the identities and privacy of Americans.*

*Understand: There would have been no intelligence need for Susan Rice to ask for identities to be unmasked. If there had been a real need to reveal the identities — an intelligence need based on American interests — the unmasking would have been done by the investigating agencies. The national-security adviser is not an investigator. She is a White House staffer. The president’s staff is a consumer of intelligence, not a generator or collector of it. If Susan Rice was unmasking Americans, it was not to fulfill an intelligence need based on American interests; it was to fulfill a political desire based on Democratic-party interests.”*

The documents which could expose these crimes have been squirreled away in the Obama Presidential library and are concealed from the pubic for up to five years.

Was this merely a routine administrative transfer of materials?

Or was it a more sinister piece to a larger cover up?

Antifa Underground

Comedian and social commentator Steven Crowder and his team recently went undercover in Antifa, and what they found is not shocking, but it is more conclusive evidence that Antifa is an insurgent, domestic terrorist organization working against the Constitution. The 11-minute video, released Thursday, details an undercover operation helmed by Crowder and his associates. As far as infiltrating Antifa goes, it was far easier to gain trust than one might think. Patience was key to the infiltration, but once they were in, the information came in like a flood.

What was discovered is Antifa’s willingness and dedication to violence. One of the individuals caught on film discussed their ownership of various weapons, from assault rifles to shotguns. Another boasted of their ownership of a handgun. Beyond this, one of the organizers handed out an ice-pick and another discussed how everyone should buy knives from the army surplus stores.

The most horrifying part of the entire video, though, was the fact that news media would not take the footage despite police being there to corroborate the validity of the content. All-in-all, it appears Antifa is getting protection from the silence of the MSM, not to mention the endorsements.

Antifa must be declared a domestic terror organization.

**DHS Designates ANTIFA a Terror Organization: So What?**

On the DHS website, the so-called “anti-fascist” group is described as a “subset anarchist movement” who focus on issues “involving racism, sexism and anti-semitism,” by inciting violence across the United States.

[DHS](https://www.njhomelandsecurity.gov/s/Anarchist-Extremists-Antifa-pkh2.pdf) reports: Self-described Antifa groups have been established across the United States and in several major cities, including New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco. A majority of New Jersey-based anarchist groups are affiliated with the Antifa movement and are opposed to “fascism,” racism, and law enforcement. Antifa groups coordinate regionally and have participated in protests in New York City and Philadelphia. There are three loosely organized chapters in New Jersey, known as the North Jersey Antifa, the South Jersey Antifa, and the HubCity Antifa New Brunswick (Middlesex County).

In December 2016, a group known as the Antifascist Action-Nebraska engaged in a doxing campaign against a prominent member of American Vanguard, a white supremacist organization. The group published his personal information on several social media platforms and posted fliers on the University of Nebraska Omaha campus, calling for his expulsion.

On March 28, a small fight occurred between Antifa members and supporters of the US President during a rally in Seaside Heights (Ocean County).  Because of advance publicity about the event on social media, local and state law enforcement officers were able to keep altercations to a minimum.

**Antifa: Inciting Violence Toward Far-Right Extremists**

Violent confrontations between Antifa members and white supremacists—as well as militia groups—will likely continue because of ideological differences and Antifa’s ability to organize on social media. In the past year, Antifa groups have become active across the United States, employing a variety of methods to disrupt demonstrations.

On April 18, following the Patriots Day Free Speech Rally in Berkeley, California—which turned violent—an Antifa member wrote, “Every Nazi that gets punched is a victory. . . . We must realize that these days are going to become more and more common, unless we put a nail in this coffin once and for all.”  On March 29, as a response to an Antifa post on social media, a national militia group wrote in an online article, “Whenever their kind [Antifa] assumes power, individual freedom, including of speech and worship, is brutally suppressed.”

Beginning in March, the Philadelphia Antifa Chapter used Facebook to encourage followers to disrupt a “Make America Great Again” event in Philadelphia, resulting in over 300 participants. Antifa’s presence resulted in law enforcement shutting down the event early for safety concerns. As of May, a manual on how to form an Antifa group—posted on a well-known Anarchist website in February—had approximately 13,500 views.

On February 1, the University of California Berkeley canceled a controversial speaker’s appearance following a protest by approximately 100 Antifa members. In response, far-right extremists assembled at a free-speech rally, which Antifa members disrupted, resulting in 10 arrests and seven injuries. Additionally, on April 15, Antifa and far-right extremists clashed at a demonstration, leading to 23 arrests and 11 injuries.

**Recent Anarchist And White Supremacist Confrontations**

On February 11, members of the 211 Crew/211 Bootboys, a white supremacist gang, allegedly attacked two brothers at a New York City bar after seeing a “New York City anti-fascist sticker” on the back of one of the victim’s cellphones, according to New York authorities.

In June 2016, 300 counter-protesters, including anarchist extremists, attacked 25 members of the white supremacist Traditionalist Worker Party with knives, bottles, bricks, and concrete from a construction site while rallying at the California State Capitol in Sacramento, injuring 10

**BLM is Immune to Lawsuits**

A federal judge ruled Thursday that Black Lives Matter was not an organization but a social movement akin to the tea party or the civil rights movement, and cannot be sued by a Louisiana police officer who was injured at a protest against police brutality last year.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Brian A. Jackson threw out a lawsuit an officer with the Baton Rouge Police Department filed anonymously against Black Lives Matter and DeRay Mckesson, one of the movement’s leading activists.

“Although many entities have utilized the phrase ‘black lives matter’ in their titles or business designations,” the judge wrote, “’black lives matter’ itself is not an entity of any sort.”

As such, Jackson said, Black Lives Matter cannot be sued “in a similar way that a person cannot plausibly sue other social movements such as the Civil Rights movement, the LGBT rights movement, or the Tea Party movement.”

The officer, identified as John Doe in court documents, claimed in the lawsuit that he was patrolling a Black Lives Matter demonstration in Baton Rouge on July 9, 2016, when someone threw a rock at his head, injuring his teeth and jaw. Mckesson attended the rally, which was held to protest the fatal shooting of Alton Sterling, a black man, by a white police officer.

The officer argued Black Lives Matter was a “national unincorporated association” and called Mckesson its leader and co-founder. He claimed the activists had gathered in Baton Rouge to incite violence against police and that Mckesson was responsible for the actions of the unidentified demonstrator who hurled the rock.

The judge disagreed.

“Plaintiff has pleaded facts that merely demonstrate that Mckesson exercised his constitutional right to association and that he solely engaged in protected speech at the demonstration that took place in Baton Rouge on July 9, 2016,” Jackson wrote.

The judge added that the officer hadn’t cited any evidence showing that Mckesson “exceeded the bounds of protected speech.” Beyond that, Mckesson couldn’t be held liable for others’ actions, he wrote.

The judge also denied the officer’s attempt to add the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter to the suit, writing that “a hashtag is patently incapable of being sued.” Nor could the officer sue the corporation Black Lives Matter Network Inc., according to the judge.

Mckesson was among nearly 200 people who were arrested in protests sparked by Sterling’s death. He was held for 16 hours on a charge of obstructing a highway. Local prosecutors ultimately dropped charges against him and dozens of others. He has long described Black Lives Matter as a call to end violence.

“It is an expected tactic that those in power will try to use the courts to silence activists and organizers,” Mckesson, who lives in Baltimore, told The Washington Post on Thursday. “I am thankful that the judge did not allow that to happen in this case.”

Donna Grodner, an attorney for the officer, didn’t immediately respond to a message seeking comment late Thursday.

At a hearing in June, Grodner argued that Black Lives Matter had shown “a level of national organization” by holding meetings, setting up national chapters and soliciting money, as the [Associated Press](https://apnews.com/b1a60cdffa1e46bb9146443d0a915e91) reported. An attorney for Mckesson responded that it was a leaderless movement with no governing body or formal membership.

In his ruling, Jackson wrote that the officer’s complaint cited no public statements from Mckesson except for a single quote the activist gave to the [New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/11/us/deray-mckesson-arrested-in-baton-rouge-protest.html). Shortly after being released from jail, Mckesson told the newspaper: “The police want protesters to be too afraid to protest.”

The judge noted that the statement “does not advocate — or make any reference to — violence of any kind.” Even if it did, he said, it could still qualify as constitutionally protected speech. The officer’s claim that Mckesson allegedly “did nothing to calm the crowd” fell short as well, according to the judge.

Mckesson and Black Lives Matter are named in a separate lawsuit in the same court, filed by an officer who was wounded when a gunman [opened fire](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/07/10/permanently-disabled-baton-rouge-officer-sues-black-lives-matter-for-2016-ambush-shooting/?utm_term=.a91de23ff359) on law enforcement officers in Baton Rouge last July. The gunman, Gavin Long, killed three officers and injured three others in the ambush-style attack before being fatally shot by authorities. He wrote in a suicide note that his actions were a “necessary evil” designed to retaliate against law enforcement.

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The officer’s lawsuit, which is still pending, accuses Black Lives Matter, Mckesson and other prominent activists of inciting the violence. They have denied wrongdoing.

**The Fascist War Against Free Speech**

YouTube is in hot water with conservative users and creators, with the Google-owned video giant accused of discriminating against the right as YouTube takes ads off content that it says violates the terms of service.

Last month, YouTube quietly [made moves](http://thehill.com/policy/technology/347868-google-launches-initiative-to-reduce-hateful-content-on-youtube) to remove advertisements on certain types of content that it says is not consistent with its terms of service. YouTube doesn’t serve ads on demonetized videos, meaning big hits to the bottom line for conservative YouTube personalities.

YouTube says that its efforts are aimed at cracking down on hate speech, but conservative and right-wing video creators say they’re frustrated by the changes.

The video streaming service began the initiative after several major companies like Coca-Cola, Amazon and Microsoft pulled their ads from YouTube in the spring after the [Times of London noticed](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/youtube-hate-preachers-share-screens-with-household-names-kdmpmkkjk) that advertisements for their brands appeared alongside videos of hateful, offensive or even pro-terrorist content.

YouTube creators who had advertisements removed from their content would also no longer receive payment from YouTube on those videos.

YouTube has occasionally demonetized and flagged certain types of content in the past, most notably when it [cut](http://people.com/social-media-stars/youtube-cancels-pewdiepie-show-anti-semitism-claims/) mega-popular video game personality Pewdiepie from making money on the platform for using racial slurs. But August marked an uptick in YouTube’s ad crackdown across the platform.

Luke Rudkowski, a YouTube video creator who has made his name chronicling various far-right figures, released a video on Aug. 10 [claiming that hundreds of his videos](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOkeJo2Tye8) had been demonetized at the beginning of the month, effectively killing his ability to make money on the platform.

“I haven’t even been cursing in any of my videos,” Rudkowski said, acknowledging that many of his videos are controversial. “And then YouTube invites people for this platform, which I joined and put my entire life into. And then YouTube just says, 'You know? We’re going to change our terms and services.'”

YouTube says that while it respects principles of free speech, its policies are aimed at making sure advertisers' needs are met.

"There’s a difference between the free expression that lives on YouTube and the content that brands have told us they want to advertise against," a YouTube spokesperson said. "Part of giving advertisers choice means giving them the choice to not run ads on sensitive content."

The company said that creators who feel that their content was incorrectly classified can file an appeal with Youtube.

But “Diamond and Silk,” two prominent YouTube creators who were hit hard by the site’s demonetization policies, [believe they were targeted](http://www.breitbart.com/tech/2017/08/11/youtubes-diamond-and-silk-believe-they-were-demonetized-for-trump-support/) for their support for President Trump.

“How was it OK to monetize our videos for the past two years and now those same videos are no longer eligible for monetization?” the two women, who have also appeared regularly on Fox News, asked.

YouTube’s ad changes have reached the wider conservative media, adding fuel to the right’s belief that tech giants are discriminating against conservative views.

“YOUTUBE DECLARES WAR ON POLITICALLY INCORRECT OPINIONS,” reads [one Infowars headline](https://www.infowars.com/youtube-declares-war-on-politically-incorrect-opinions/).

“I think it would be insane to suggest there’s not an active effort to censor conservative and independent views,” Lauren Southern, a conservative internet personality, [told the Daily Caller](http://dailycaller.com/2017/08/11/conservative-and-independent-youtube-channels-hit-by-censorship-and-demonetization/).

“There’s no merit hiring, there’s no support of free speech and there certainly is not an equal representation of political views at these companies,” Southern said, criticizing Silicon Valley.

Southern, who has recently focused on criticizing migration to Europe and even tried to block a rescue boat in one high-profile incident, boasts a significant presence on YouTube. Many of her videos appear to be demonetized.

But the crackdown hasn’t just been limited to conservative and right-wing voices. Non-political content is also being demonetized, creating another political headache for YouTube as it tries to convince advertisers that its platform is safe for their brands.

Last year, popular YouTube creator Philip DeFranco [claimed that one](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gbph5or0NuM) his videos had been demonetized. YouTube said that DeFranco’s video had been demonetized because he swore and used graphic video footage, according to DeFranco.

“I love YouTube. It’s well within their damn rights to do this. It is their website. It is also incredibly f---ing concerning,” DeFranco said in a video. “By taking away monetization, it is a form of censorship.”

Others have noticed that some LGBT content is being demonetized, as well. [The Outline pointed](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=hjgngZ4zTOo) out a [video by YouTube video creator Arielle Jane](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=hjgngZ4zTOo) from August that had been demonetized for no clear reason.

Earlier in the year, YouTube sparked controversy among some of its creators when its filtering tools flagged a video of two women exchanging wedding vows. The company [quickly announced](https://youtube-creators.googleblog.com/2017/04/an-update-on-restricted-mode.html) that it would make changes to the tools, which it said were “incorrectly filtering videos.”

YouTube’s ad crackdown, apparently meant to assuage advertisers who were spooked by earlier controversies, reflects an ongoing battle to make companies comfortable alongside user-generated content.

“Ten years ago advertisers wouldn’t run their ads alongside user generated content like on message boards,” says Jason Kint, CEO of the media trade association Digital Content Next.

YouTube is now caught in a bind as it struggles to crackdown on harmful content, withoutalienating popular video creators and their viewers.

“Advertisers are reconsidering whether they want to be anywhere near user-generated content, let alone the controversial pollution which litters Facebook and YouTube,” Kint said. “The trick is making sure they don’t also cut off the productive creators that are the innovators and artists of our media.”

**Facebook Censors Conservative Pages**

In an inexplicable move, during the past 48 hours Facebook has blocked or removed more than two dozen pages belonging to conservative Catholic organizations and individuals.

As of this writing, most if not all of the pages have been restored, with Facebook citing a “malfunction in the system” as an explanation.

According to Catholic News Agency (CNA/EWTN), a Facebook spokesperson said, "The pages were re-established. The incident was a malfunction of the spam detection mechanism in our platform. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused."

Most of the blocked pages had from several hundred thousand to six million followers.

The move affected millions of Catholics around the globe, with Spanish-speaking Catholics especially hard hit.

Many LifeSiteNews readers are familiar with Relevant Radio’s executive director, Fr. Francis J. Hoffman, whose Facebook page, Fr. Rocky, boasts more than 3.5 million “likes.”

Also among the blocked English-language pages is Catholic and Proud, which has six million followers.

[Catholic News Service](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/several-catholic-pages-blocked-from-facebook-without-explanation-59785/?platform=hootsuite) (CNS) reported that “of the known affected pages, 21 are based in Brazil and four are English-language pages, with administrators in the U.S. and Africa. Most of the blocked pages had significant followings — between hundreds of thousands and up to six million followers each.”

CNS added, “While it remains unknown why these pages were blocked, some of the page administrators have said they wonder whether they are being censored.”

[Breitbart](http://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2017/07/19/facebook-blocks-more-than-two-dozen-popular-catholic-pages-without-explanation/) reported that “observers have suggested that the 25 pages are just the tip of the iceberg and actual numbers of blocked Catholic pages could well be in the dozens.”

In a posting yesterday, [Fox News’ Todd Starnes](http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2017/07/18/why-is-facebook-purging-catholic-fan-pages.html), author and host of Fox News & Commentary, [asked](http://www.toddstarnes.com/column/why-is-facebook-purging-catholic-fan-pages), “ So why is Facebook purging so many Catholic Facebook pages? Well, no one can seem to get an answer.”

“You might recall that Facebook has a dark history of blocking conservative and Christian pages,” said Starnes, adding that he himself was once “blocked for running afoul of Facebook's community standards.”

Starnes concluded by taking a step back and looking at the bigger picture: “Let's hope people of faith stand alongside the Catholics as they try to persuade Mark Zuckerberg to reinstate their pages — because one day Facebook might shut down the Baptist pages or the Lutheran pages.”

What Facebook has yet to explain is why conservative Catholic pages were the only ones affected by the “glitch.” Some have wondered if this might not have been a glitch at all, but a trial balloon of sorts.

**Twitter and the Shadowban**

Former Breitbart news editor Milo Yiannopoulos is familiar with the suppression of free speech and the First Amendment by the politically correct left, having a speech at UC Berkeley canceled after [violent riots](http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/04/22/milo-yiannopoulos-plans-comeback-at-uc-berkeley.html) by the politically intolerant left. Pundits have dubbed the suppression of conservative speakers on campus the “heckler’s veto” which allows the arbiters of political correctness to deny a forum to those they disagree with.

Yiannopoulos is also familiar with another form of suppression of free speech, this time in social media forums such as Twitter called “shadowbanning”. Tweets of the kind President Trump is famous for are banned from being seen by other than a given account’s followers, limiting visibility. Twitter and its support team claim it is merely spanking those who violate their rules and terms of service, but [Yiannopoulos thinks](http://www.breitbart.com/tech/2016/02/16/exclusive-twitter-shadowbanning-is-real-say-inside-sources/) it is political correctness run amok with the goal of, as at Berkeley and elsewhere, of silencing conservatives:

Rumours that Twitter has begun ‘shadowbanning’ politically inconvenient users have been confirmed by a source inside the company, who spoke exclusively to Breitbart Tech. His claim was corroborated by a senior editor at a major publisher.

According to the source, Twitter maintains a ‘whitelist’ of favoured Twitter accounts and a ‘blacklist’ of unfavoured accounts. Accounts on the whitelist are prioritised in search results, even if they’re not the most popular among users. Meanwhile, accounts on the blacklist have their posts hidden from both search results and other users’ timelines….

The pattern of shadowban reports, which skews towards the alt-right, the populist right, and cultural libertarians, follows close on the heels of [Twitter’s establishment of a “Trust and Safety Council” packed with left-wing advocacy groups, as well as Islamic research centre the Wahid Institute](http://www.breitbart.com/tech/2016/02/09/twitter-unveils-new-trust-and-safety-council-featuring-feminist-frequency/)....

With shadowbans now confirmed by an inside source, there is little room for doubt that the platform is intent on silencing conservatives. Furthermore, it has demonstrated a complete lack of regard for transparency, concealing its shadowbanning system from users and hiding its political bias behind a veneer of opposition to online abuse….

Twitter CEO [Jack Dorsey](https://twitter.com/jack) says the purpose of shadowbanning is to limit the alleged abuse by spammers, so-called “trolls” and those who are just downright offensive and abusive. As [Fortune magazine](http://fortune.com/2017/02/16/twitter-time-out/) reported:

For some time now, Twitter has been trying to curb abuse and harassment on the service, after admitting that it hasn't done enough to stop trolls and deliberate misbehavior in the past. The latest step the company is taking is to throttle the reach of users it believes are being offensive or targeting others for abuse….

Twitter's crackdown on abuse started after CEO Jack Dorsey [announced](https://twitter.com/jack/status/826231794815037442) that the company was committing itself to tackling the problem, and also to doing so transparently and through an "open and real-time dialogue" with users.

The problem is that many users, particularly conservative ones, were never notified, never given their day in court, so to speak, and had to find out they were being shadowbanned from others. I know because I have a [Twitter account](https://twitter.com/gerfingerpoken2) that has been shadowbanned with no explanation from Twitter. This account has been used to promote my articles from my days as a contributor to Investor Business Daily’s editorial page to my current blogging at American Thinker. I tweet often, attaching photos and graphics to illustrate my point, and have even been written up in the [Washington Post](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/as-a-conservative-twitter-user-sleeps-his-account-is-hard-at-work/2017/02/05/18d5a532-df31-11e6-918c-99ede3c8cafa_story.html?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_term=.af7ed00b60ee) for my Twitter reach, my late but strong support for Donald Trump, and my use of schedulers, what some would call “bots”.

Does that make me a troll or a spammer? Technology has given us many tools to magnify our voices from iPhones and iPads to Twitter itself. Using schedulers to regularly tweet is just a new technology, one which Twitter allows, by the way, and to critics I say, good luck with your rotary dial phones and typewriters.

Twitter already allows users to mute accounts whose tweets they don’t want to see or to outright block those accounts they find annoying or even offensive. Twitter doesn’t have to do it for them by suppressing the free speech of certain individuals or groups.

Yes, I know it is Twitter’s sandbox and, yes, there are spammers uninterested in any real dialogue. Yes, there are porn bots and photos any reasonable person would find offensive. There are Twitter equivalents to yelling “fire” in a crowded theatre. But Twitter has gone beyond enforcing rules of civility to enforcing its view of political correctness, punishing conservatives who use social media, particularly those who are good at it.

Even Matt Drudge found himself caught up in Twitter’s censorship, further confirming the fact that Twitter shadow bans those on the right side of the political spectrum. As [Breitbart reported](http://www.breitbart.com/tech/2017/03/27/twitter-labels-drudge-report-sensitive-content-hides-posts-default/):

Earlier today, users on Twitter reported that tweets from the official account of the Drudge Report were being hidden from users behind a “sensitive content” filter.

A [screenshot published on the British news site Westmonster](http://www.westmonster.com/twitter-censors-drudge/) revealed the filtering of the Drudge Report, one of the largest and highest-profile conservative sites on the web….

The censorship was lifted later in the day, and tweets from the Drudge Report are now visible, even when users opt-in to Twitter’s “sensitive content” filtering. However, Twitter has not explained why the Drudge Report was placed behind the filter in the first place, and has not responded to a request for comment from Breitbart News at this time.Twitter started experimenting with [labelling entire user accounts as “sensitive” earlier this month](http://www.breitbart.com/tech/2017/03/10/twitter-tests-censoring-entire-user-accounts-over-sensitive-content/). Recently, we reported that the social media company is [using IBM’s “Watson” supercomputer](http://www.breitbart.com/tech/2017/03/23/twitter-using-watson-a-i-to-crack-down-on-abuse/) to identify “abusive” accounts on Twitter. Twitter’s bias against conservatives is well-known. The company frequently [bans](http://www.breitbart.com/milo/2016/07/19/breaking-milo-suspended-twitter-20-minutes-party/) or [locks](http://www.breitbart.com/tech/2015/12/17/bias-adam-baldwins-twitter-account-locked-after-criticizing-sjws/) the accounts of conservative users who have not broken its terms of service, while allowing [threats of violence against the President and First Lady](http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2016/11/13/twitter-allows-rape-melania-to-trend-after-site-explodes-with-trump-assassination-threats/) to run rampant on the platform.



Indeed, with Twitter it depends on whose ox is being gored. Is Scott Adams, the creator of the cultural icon of all cubicle dwellers, Dilbert, a Twitter troll or spammer of offensive tweets? Or was it his support of Donald Trump that [put him in Twitter’s censorship crosshairs](http://www.breitbart.com/tech/2016/10/06/dilbert-creator-scott-adams-claims-hes-shadowbanned-on-twitter/)? In a [blog post](http://blog.dilbert.com/post/156377416856/should-twitter-and-facebook-be-regulated-as), Adams suggested that Twitter has shadowbanned him and other conservatives for political reasons:

The Constitution guarantees every citizen the right of free speech. But what happens when the most effective channels for that speech are corporations such as Twitter and Facebook? Does the government have an obligation to make sure those companies are not limiting free speech for some classes of users?...

…shouldn’t the federal government get involved if a few monopoly corporations start to control the national conversation by filtering out voices that disagree with them?

That seems to be the situation right now. For example, Twitter is apparently “shadowbanning” me because of my past Trump tweets, or so I assume. That means my tweets only go out to a subset of my followers. The rest don’t know I tweeted. My followers tell me this is the case. They have to visit my timeline to see my tweets….

I can’t be 100% sure that Twitter is shadowbanning me to limit my political speech. They might have a bug in their system, for example. But it would be a big coincidence if they are not, given how many Trump supporters were targeted by Twitter in the past year.

Twitter users like Adams usually find they are being shadowbanned only when their followers and others notice and report to them. Twitter says it gives warnings and details when its thought police are offended but Twitter, no pun intended, likes to operate in the shadows. Twitter needs to know that George Orwell’s 1984 was a warning, not a technical manual. Its insidious form of censorship goes beyond what even Big Brother could have dreamt of.

**Clinton Crime Syndicate Keeps Child Prostitution Money**

Hillary Clinton's campaign appears not to have returned or donated to charity the more than $5,000 in contributions from the former co-owner of a website linked to underage prostitution and whose donations have backed a number of current and former Democratic politicians into a corner.

Controversy surrounding donations from the owners of Backpage.com, an online classified website that has come under fire from politicians including Sen. Kamala Harris (D., Calif.), has forced a number of politicians—particularly in the state of Arizona—to return or donate the tainted contributions.

Jim Larkin, a former co-owner of Backpage, [gave](http://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/fecimg/?201610179032999301) a [$5,400](http://docquery.fec.gov/cgi-bin/fecimg/?201610179033012833) contribution on July 26, 2016, to the Hillary Victory Fund, a joint fundraising effort between the Clinton campaign, the Democratic National Committee (DNC), and more than 30 state Democratic parties. The money was then transferred to Hillary for America, Clinton's campaign committee.

The campaign appears to have not returned the money to Larkin, a search of Federal Election Commission records shows.

A number of Democratic politicians in Arizona have come under fire as a result of the contributions they received from Backpage's former co-owners as their legal troubles began to mount.

The [*Arizona Republic*](http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2017/04/14/allegations-increase-against-backpage-founders-have-become-big-political-donors-arizona/100421528/) published an investigative report in April that found Michael G. Lacey, the other co-owner of Backpage, donated $162,000 to Democratic politicians on the state and federal level in recent years.

Following the report, the [*Washington Free Beacon* discovered](http://freebeacon.com/politics/arizona-dem-took-contributions-owner-site-linked-underage-prostitution/) one politician who received contributions from an owner that the publication had missed: David Garcia, the Democratic candidate for governor in the state. Garcia [announced](http://freebeacon.com/politics/arizona-dem-took-contributions-owner-site-linked-underage-prostitution/) he would donate the money from his campaign to homeless youth and the victims of sex trafficking shortly after publication.

Other Democratic politicians in Arizona have done the same.

Former Democratic Congresswoman Ann Kirkpatrick, who is considering another run for the House of Representatives next year, [announced](http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/arizona/2017/09/26/sann-kirkpatrick-unloads-backpage-contributions-az-coalition-end-sexual-domestic-violence/700828001/) this week that she is donating the contributions to the Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence. Kirkpatrick [dumped](http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/arizona/2017/09/26/sann-kirkpatrick-unloads-backpage-contributions-az-coalition-end-sexual-domestic-violence/700828001/) the donations months after other politicians in the state had given theirs away.

The controversy surrounding Backpage.com spilled over after Arizona State University partnered with the Phoenix Police Department and [found](https://asunow.asu.edu/content/study-finds-extensive-prostitution-ads-backpagecom) that 80 percent of the postings on the adult section portion of the website involved prostitution. More than 900 ads were found in the Phoenix area alone, including advertisements for underage girls.

Backpage's practices caused the National Association of Attorneys General in 2013 to [urge](http://www.naag.org/naag/media/naag-news/ags-to-congress-amend-federal-law-to-fight-child-sex-trafficking.php) Congress to amend federal law to fight child sex trafficking and hold companies such as Backpage accountable.

The House of Representatives passed [legislation](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2014/roll222.xml) in May 2014 to punish companies that knowingly advertise commercial sex acts involving a minor or gain benefit from such advertisements. Rep. Ann Wagner (R., Mo.), the bills cosponsor, [referenced](https://wagner.house.gov/notforsale) Backpage as a vehicle "for advertising the victims of the child sex trade to the world."

The United States Senate unanimously passed a [resolution](https://www.portman.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2016/3/senate-passes-portman-resolution-to-hold-backpage-com-in-contempt-of-congress) in 2016, spearheaded by Sen. Rob Portman (R., Ohio), to hold Backpage in contempt of Congress for not complying with a subpoena. The company refused to [provide](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-backpage-california-trafficking/backpage-com-ceo-arrested-over-sex-trafficking-allegations-idUSKCN1262IW) documents on how they were combating trafficking in their advertisements.

Carl Ferrer, the chief executive officer of the website, was arrested in October 2016. Arrest warrants for Larkin and Lacey were later issued that [described](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-backpage-california-trafficking/backpage-com-ceo-arrested-over-sex-trafficking-allegations-idUSKCN1262IW) them as "controlling shareholders" of Backpage.

At the time of the CEO's arrest, then-Attorney General Kamala Harris, now a senator who is considered a potential Democratic candidate for president in 2020, [said](http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/10/07/497006100/ceo-of-backpage-com-arrested-charged-with-pimping) the website was "purposely and unlawfully" designed as an online brothel.

Harris twice brought pimping charges against Ferrer, Larkin, and Lacey; those charges were dismissed. However, the men are being prosecuted on money laundering charges in the state of California for profiting on the ads that allegedly facilitate prostitution, *Reason* [reported](http://reason.com/blog/2017/08/31/california-drops-kamala-harris-pimping).

The three men, along with two other executives, in January [appeared](http://abcnews.go.com/US/emotional-senate-hearing-finds-backpage-complicit-underage-sex/story?id=44762342) in front of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations in Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee released a report stating that not only was the site hosting the ads, they were actively editing them to remove words in relation to underage trafficking, ABC News [reported](http://abcnews.go.com/US/emotional-senate-hearing-finds-backpage-complicit-underage-sex/story?id=44762342) at the time.

Clinton's campaign and victory fund treasurers did not return requests for comment by press time.