

Dear Member of Congress,

In the past few months, the cities of El Paso, Texas and Gilroy, California each experienced mass shootings carried out in the name of white supremacy. Sadly, while these incidents were tragic they were not entirely unexpected; data collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation shows that hate crimes increased in 2017 for the third consecutive year and one study concluded that counties that hosted a 2016 Trump campaign rally experienced a 226 percent increase in reported hate incidents as compared to similar counties that did not host such a rally.¹ At a time when odious ideologies are increasingly leading to deadly consequences, the anti-immigrant group, Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR),² will host their annual radio row, *Hold Their Feet to the Fire* on September 25th and 26th at the Phoenix Park Hotel in Washington D.C. bringing together talk radio hosts from across the nation to broadcast live.³

We, the undersigned organizations, write to express our strong condemnation of the upcoming event and urge Members of Congress to not amplify FAIR's dangerous anti-immigrant rhetoric and political platform and not legitimize FAIR by attending this event.

Over the years, *Hold Their Feet to the Fire* has played host to radio show personalities who use their platforms to spread hateful anti-immigrant vitriol. One frequent participant, Lars Larson, wrote on his website in 2016 that "Illegals commit murder, rape, robbery and the like. It has to stop."⁴ In 2011, Roan Garcia-Quintana, a board member of the white nationalist Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), was photographed at the event.⁵ The CCC was the group that Charleston terrorist Dylann Roof cited in his manifesto as his gateway into white nationalism.⁶ Just days after last month's terrorist attack against Latinos in El Paso, a regular attendee of the event, radio talk show host Marc Cox,⁷ conducted an interview with Heritage Foundation's Genevieve Wood, who mocked the idea of a rise in white supremacy and called it ridiculous and unsubstantiated.⁸

Hold Their Feet To the Fire is one of the biggest events organized each year by FAIR, a group that was designated as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center because of its close ties to white

¹ Michael Kunzelman and Astrid Galvan, "Trump words linked to more hate crimes? Some experts think so," Associated Press, August 7, 2019, at <https://www.apnews.com/7d0949974b1648a2bb592cab1f85aa16>.

² "Federation for American Immigration Reform." Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.

<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/federation-american-immigration-reform>.

³ "Tag: 'Hold Their Feet to the Fire.'" TALKERS magazine: The bible of talk media RSS. Accessed September 6, 2019. <http://www.talkers.com/tag/hold-their-feet-to-the-fire/>.

⁴ "Emboldened FAIR to Flood the Talk Radio Airwaves at Annual Hold Their Feet to the Fire Event." Southern Poverty Law Center. Accessed September 6, 2019. <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2017/06/27/emboldened-fair-flood-talk-radio-airwaves-annual-hold-their-feet-fire-event>

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Talk, 97.1 FM. "@MarcCox971 Making Some Radio Magic from @FAIRImmigration #HoldTheirFeetToTheFire. David Ray with MC NOW Discussing Common Sense Immigration Reform. More Here: <https://t.co/PLaz8FiXX2> Pic.twitter.com/kKhvMywS4m." Twitter. Twitter, September 5, 2018. <https://twitter.com/i/web/status/1037289576157655040>

⁸ "The Left Is Painting Anyone Not Trending Socialist as a White Supremacist." FM NewsTalk 97.1, August 7, 2019. <https://971talk.radio.com/blogs/marc-cox-morning-show/heritage-foundation-s-genevieve-wood>

supremacists.⁹ FAIR is the flagship organization of the anti-immigrant movement, founded by John Tanton in 1979.¹⁰ Tanton, the architect of the modern day anti-immigrant movement, was inspired by racist ideologies grounded in the eugenics movement and population control.¹¹ In 1975, Tanton wrote the “The Case for Passive Eugenics” in which he promoted eugenics and the practice of restricting childbearing to the years between 20 and 35, and lamented that “Hitler’s reign in Nazi Germany did little to advance the discussion of eugenics among sensitive persons.”¹² In 1993, Tanton wrote, "I've come to the point of view that for European-American society and culture to persist requires a European-American majority, and a clear one at that."¹³

Since its founding, FAIR has received substantial financial support from racist and anti-immigrant sources. Between 1985 and 1994, the organization received around \$1.2 million in grants from the Pioneer Fund. The Pioneer Fund is a eugenicist organization that was started in 1937 by men close to the Nazi regime who wanted to pursue "race betterment" by promoting the genetic lines of American whites.¹⁴ Additionally, since 2005, the Colcom Foundation, established by the heiress Cordelia Scaife May, donated more than “\$150 million to groups in John Tanton’s anti-immigration network.”¹⁵ May is famously known for believing that “the United States was ‘being invaded on all fronts’ by foreigners, who ‘breed like hamsters’ and exhaust natural resources.”¹⁶

For almost four decades, FAIR has vilified immigrants and blamed them for a litany of America’s ills. The organization consistently pushes misinformation against immigrants and uses this event to help mainstream its un-American and anti-immigrant messages. Unfortunately, FAIR now enjoys a cozy relationship with the Trump administration,¹⁷ with former FAIR staffers and consultants embedded in key posts in the Department of Homeland Security and the White House.

We hope you will stand in support of *all* Americans and choose not to attend FAIR’s *Hold Their Feet to the Fire* event. We also encourage you to release a public statement denouncing anti-immigrant bigotry and the misleading, discriminatory, and dangerous work promoted by organizations like FAIR.

Thank you in advance for taking a stand against bigotry and hate.

⁹ “Federation for American Immigration Reform.” Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.

<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/federation-american-immigration-reform>.

¹⁰ “John Tanton.” Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d. <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/john-tanton>.

¹¹ “Ties Between Anti-Immigrant Movement and Eugenics,” Anti-Defamation League, accessed April 12, 2019, <https://www.adl.org/news/article/ties-between-anti-immigrant-movement-and-eugenics>.

¹² Ibid

¹³ “John Tanton,” Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed April 15, 2019, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/john-tanton>.

¹⁴ “Ties Between Anti-Immigrant Movement and Eugenics.” Anti-Defamation League. Accessed September 6, 2019. <https://www.adl.org/news/article/ties-between-anti-immigrant-movement-and-eugenics>

¹⁵ Kulish, Nicholas, and Mike McIntire. “Why an Heiress Spent Her Fortune Trying to Keep Immigrants Out.” The New York Times. The New York Times, August 14, 2019. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/14/us/anti-immigration-cordelia-scaife-may.html>

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Owen, Tess. “A Radical Anti-Immigration Group Infiltrated the GOP. Now It's in the White House.” VICE News. VICE News, May 3, 2017. https://news.vice.com/en_ca/article/mb9nb3/fair-trump-white-house-federation-for-american-immigration-reform

Sincerely,

National Organizations

African Communities Together

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

America's Voice

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action

Center for American Progress

Church World Service

Coalition on Human Needs

Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces

CREDO

Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM)

Franciscan Action Network

Generation Progress

Hispanic Federation

Immigration Hub

Interfaith Alliance

Islamophobia Studies Center

Jobs with Justice

NAACP

National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

National Center for Transgender Equality

National Council of Jewish Women

National Hispanic Media Coalition

National Immigration Law Center

National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund

National Organization for Women

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

New American Leaders

Only Through US

People for the American Way

Poligon Education Fund

Sojourners

South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

Southern Poverty Law Center

The campaign to TAKE ON HATE

The Shoulder to Shoulder Campaign

United We Dream

URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity

Veterans for American Ideals

State and Local Organizations

ACLU of North Carolina

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago

CAIR New Jersey

CASA in Action

Casa San Jose

Centro del Inmigrante, Inc.

Church Women United in New York State

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights

Community Visions

CRECEN

Equality California

Friends of Broward Detainees

Greater New York Labor Religion Coalition

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

Inland Coalition for Immigrant Justice (ICIJ)

Irish International Immigrant Center

Kids for College

Latinas Educating and Empowering Communities (L.E.E.C.)

LULAC of Riverside Council #3190

Make the Road New York

Michigan United

Mississippi Center for Justice

Nebraska Appleseed

New York Immigration Coalition

OneAmerica

Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition (PICC)

Poder Latinx

Pomona Economic Opportunity Center

Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

Rural and Migrant Ministry

SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center

Seattle Immigrant Rights Action Group

Silver State Equality-Nevada

Sisters of Mercy West Midwest

South Asian Fund For Education, Scholarship and Training (SAFEST)

Sunflower Community Action

Taos Immigrant Allies

Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition

The HANA Center

Voces de la Frontera

Wallingford Indivisible

Wayne Action for Racial Equality

Western States Center