

January 11, 2021

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
H-107 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise
Minority Whip
H-107 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Drew Ferguson
Chief Deputy Whip
H-107 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Liz Cheney
Republican Conference Chair
H-107 Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McCarthy, Rep. Scalise, Rep. Ferguson, and Rep. Cheney,

As the 117th Congress has officially begun, we, the undersigned 100+ national, state, and local organizations, strongly urge you to honor the precedent that you established in 2019 and deny Committee assignments to Members who have openly promoted and endorsed ideologies rooted in white supremacy and stemming from the dangerous and discredited QAnon conspiracy theory. QAnon presents a grave threat to our democratic institutions in its spread of anti-Semitic, racist, and extremist tropes, fueling hateful and violent rhetoric that has no place in Congress.¹

In January 2019, the House passed with strong bipartisan support H. Res. 41, a resolution condemning white nationalism and white supremacy as “hateful expressions of intolerance that are contradictory to the values that define the people of the United States.”² In October 2020, the House passed with nearly equally strong bipartisan support H. Res. 1154, a resolution condemning QAnon and its conspiracy theories, and emphasizing how the movement “very likely motivate[s] some domestic extremists, wholly or in part, to engage in criminal or violent activity,” and “very likely encourage[s] the targeting of specific people, places and organizations, thereby increasing the likelihood of violence against these targets.”³ Citing similar concerns, the FBI designated QAnon a domestic terrorist threat in 2019.⁴ Denying Committee assignments to Members who elevate and grant legitimacy to QAnon or who otherwise promote white supremacist ideology is necessary to prevent racist, incendiary rhetoric from taking hold in the Legislative Branch.

Two years ago and under your leadership, the Republican Steering Committee took decisive steps to condemn the promotion of such dangerous ideologies within the caucus by voting to remove then-Rep. Steve King (R-IA) from his cherished assignments on the Judiciary and Agriculture Committees following his endorsement of white supremacy and his long legacy of

¹ Kevin Roose, “What is QAnon, the Viral Pro-Trump Conspiracy Theory?,” *The New York Times*, October 19, 2020, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/article/what-is-qanon.html>.

² Rejecting White nationalism and White supremacy, H. Res. 41, 116th Cong., 1st sess. (January 15, 2019), available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/41/text>.

³ Condemning QAnon and rejecting the conspiracy theories it promotes, H. Res. 1154, 116th Cong., 2nd sess. (October 2, 2020), available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-resolution/1154/text>.

⁴ Victoria Vanderzielfultz, “Conspiracy Theory Trends: QAnon,” Homeland Security Digital Library, August 4, 2020, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://www.hsdl.org/c/conspiracy-theory-trends-qanon/>.

anti-Semitic and racist remarks.⁵ Throughout his career, King frequently used dehumanizing language when referring to immigrants and people of color, earning him praise from former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke and white supremacist Richard Spencer. Acknowledging King's history of making racist remarks and in support of the decision to remove King from these committee posts, Minority Leader McCarthy explained: "that is not the party of Lincoln and it's definitely not American."⁶

Removing Rep. King from his Committee assignments established strong precedent that the promotion of racist ideologies will not be tolerated. The same standard should be applied to Representatives Marjorie Taylor Green (R-GA), Lauren Boebert (R-CO), and Madison Cawthorn (R-NC).

During their recent campaigns, Representatives Greene and Boebert both openly promoted QAnon ideologies:

- In a video posted to YouTube this summer, Greene claimed the anonymous founder of QAnon, referred to as "Q," was "a patriot" and highlighted that "there's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to take this global cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles out."⁷
- Greene has posted hours of video content on Facebook suggesting that "Muslims do not belong in government," and that Black people are "held slaves to the Democratic Party." In the videos she refers to George Soros as a "Jewish Democratic megadonor" and "a Nazi," and she said that if she were Black she would feel "proud" to see a Confederate monument because it would symbolize the country's progress since the Civil War.⁸
- In one video, Greene falsely equated Black Lives Matter protestors to the neo-Nazis and Ku Klux Klan members who terrorized Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017, claiming they are all "idiots" and rejecting racial disparities in the U.S.⁹
- In May, Boebert stated she hoped QAnon "is real because it only means America is getting stronger and better and people are returning to conservative values."¹⁰

⁵ Trip Gabriel, Jonathan Martin, and Nicholas Fandos, "Steve King Removed From Committee Assignments Over White Supremacy Remark," The New York Times, January 14, 2019, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/14/us/politics/steve-king-white-supremacy.html>; Dan Mangan, "GOP House fund won't help Rep. Steve King in Iowa race due to his support for white supremacists," CNBC, October 31, 2018, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/10/31/gop-fund-wont-help-steve-king-in-tight-race-due-to-white-supremacist-support.html>.

⁶ Trip Gabriel, Jonathan Martin, and Nicholas Fandos, "Steve King Removed From Committee Assignments Over White Supremacy Remark," The New York Times, January 14, 2019, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/14/us/politics/steve-king-white-supremacy.html>.

⁷ Isaac Stanley-Becker and Rachael Bade, "QAnon supporter, with Georgia primary victory, is poised to bring far-right conspiracy theory to Congress," The Washington Post, August 12, 2020, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/08/11/marjorie-taylor-greene-georgia-qanon/>.

⁸ Ally Mutnick and Melanie Zanona, "House Republican leaders condemn GOP candidate who made racist videos," Politico, June 17, 2020, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/06/17/house-republicans-condemn-gop-candidate-racist-videos-325579>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Jacob Knutson, "11 GOP congressional nominees support QAnon conspiracy," Axios, July 12, 2020, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://www.axios.com/qanon-nominees-congress-gop-8086ed21-b7d3-46af-9016-d132e65ba801.html>.

- Although Boebert has recently denied her support for QAnon, she reaffirmed her belief that there is a plot to undermine President Trump. In an interview, Boebert stated, “QAnon is a lot of things to different people. I was very vague in what I said before. I’m not into conspiracies. I’m into freedom and the Constitution of the United States of America.”¹¹

Although Rep. Cawthorn has not openly endorsed QAnon, his promotion of white supremacist ideology presents similar threats. When Cawthorn posted on social media a photograph of his 2017 visit to Hitler’s vacation home in Germany, he referred to the trip as a “bucket list” item that “did not disappoint.”¹² In a July visit to a section of the border wall funded through the #WeBuildTheWall campaign that is now the subject of federal criminal fraud charges, Cawthorn referenced a sex trafficking theory often promoted in QAnon circles.¹³ He stated, “What’s really going on is we are having a large group of cartels coming into our country, kidnapping our American children and then taking them to sell them on a slave market, on the sex slave market. Tens of thousands of our children are going missing every year and it’s because of cartels like MS-13 coming into our country and doing harm.”¹⁴

Even in the midst of their campaigns, congressional leaders spoke out against many of these statements. Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La) endorsed Greene’s opponent, emphasizing that her comments “don’t reflect the values of equality and decency that make our country great.”¹⁵ A spokesperson for Rep. Liz Cheney (R-Wyo) shared that the Congresswoman “opposes these offensive and bigoted comments.”¹⁶ In response to a question about Greene’s support for QAnon, Minority Leader McCarthy stated unambiguously that “there is no place for QAnon in the Republican party.”¹⁷ It is of the utmost importance that racist, violent ideologies not take hold of our democratic institutions.

¹¹ Keagan Harsha, “Colorado primary winner Lauren Boebert meets President Trump, distances herself from QAnon,” Fox Denver, July 6, 2020, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://kdvr.com/news/politics/colorado-primary-winner-lauren-boebert-meets-president-trump-distances-herself-from-qanon/>.

¹² Gary D. Robertson, “NC candidate defends posts; says he despises racism,” The Washington Post, August 12, 2020, accessed December 10, 2020, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/nc-candidate-defends-posts-says-he-despises-racism/2020/08/12/b10acd48-dce2-11ea-b4f1-25b762cdbbf4_story.html.

¹³ “Leaders Of ‘We Build The Wall’ Online Fundraising Campaign Charged With Defrauding Hundreds Of Thousands Of Donors,” United States District Attorney Southern District of New York, August 20, 2020, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/leaders-we-build-wall-online-fundraising-campaign-charged-defrauding-hundreds-thousands>.

¹⁴ Sally Kestin, Tom Fiedler and Peter H. Lewis, “Madison Cawthorn mingles with fringe, disavows QAnon but repeats debunked sex slave theory,” Citizen Times, August 26, 2020, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://www.citizen-times.com/story/news/local/2020/08/26/madison-cawthorn-disavows-qanon-but-repeats-debunked-sex-slave-theory/5638402002/>.

¹⁵ Ally Mutnick and Melanie Zanona, “House Republican leaders condemn GOP candidate who made racist videos,” Politico, June 17, 2020, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/06/17/house-republicans-condemn-gop-candidate-racist-videos-325579>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Susan Cornwell, “Backers of QAnon conspiracy theory on path to U.S. Congress,” Reuters, 26 October 2020, accessed December 10, 2020, available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-house-qanon/backers-of-qanon-conspiracy-theory-on-path-to-u-s-congress-idUSKBN27B14J>.

We call on you to honor your past precedent and give meaning to the idea that “there is no place for QAnon in the Republican party,” and that white supremacy is “contradictory to the values that define the people of the United States.” Promoting QAnon and white supremacist, anti-Muslim, and anti-Semitic ideas endangers the legitimacy of our government institutions and incites violence against vulnerable communities. We strongly urge you to demonstrate your disapproval of such ideologies and hold these Members accountable by denying them Committee assignments in the 117th Congress.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Alliance of Baptists

Ameinu

America’s Voice

American Baptist Home Mission Societies

American Family Voices

American Friends Service Committee

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)

Americans United for Separation of Church and State

ART NOT WAR

Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC)

Bend the Arc Jewish Action

Care in Action

Center for American Progress

Center for Countering Digital Hate

Center for Disability Rights

Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

Center for Popular Democracy

Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism - California State University, San Bernardino

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)

Common Cause

Community Change Action
Dangerous Speech Project
Disciples Center for Public Witness
End Citizens United / Let America Vote Action Fund
Fair Immigration Reform Movement Action (FIRM/A)
Families Belong Together
Free Press Action
Freedom Network USA
Freedom Road, LLC
Generation Progress
Global Project Against Hate and Extremism
Haitian Bridge Alliance
HEAL Trafficking
Herd on the Hill
Hispanic Federation
Human Rights First
ICNA Council for Social Justice (ICNA CSJ)
Islamic Society of North America
Islamophobia Studies Center
Jewish Women International
Just Cause Law
Kairo Action
Keshet
Latino Commission on AIDS
Lawyers for Good Government (L4GG)
League of United Latin American Citizens
MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund)
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger

Media Justice
Muslim Advocates
National Day Laborer Organizing Network
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Immigration Law Center
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Wesleyan Church
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Oxfam America
Pax Christi USA
People For the American Way
Poder Latinx
Polaris
Sojourners
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund
T'ruah
The Human Trafficking Legal Center
The Immigration Hub
The Sikh Coalition
The Sparrow Project
The TransLatin@ Coalition
UltraViolet
UndocuBlack Network
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
United We Dream
Vital Voices Global Partnership
Western States Center

WOLA

State and Local Organizations

Adhikaar

Carolina Jews for Justice

Casa San Jose

Church Women United in New York State

Cleveland Jobs with Justice

Community Visions

Council on American-Islamic Relations, California (CAIR-CA)

Equality North Carolina

Friends of Broward Detainees

Indivisible Eastside - WA

Indivisible Iowa

International Institute of New England

JCRC/AJC Kehillat Etz Chayim

Jewish Council on Urban Affairs

Lila LGBTQ Inc.

Make the Road New York

Mazzoni Center

NCAAT in Action

Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada

RAICES

Reviving the Islamic Sisterhood for Empowerment

Sakhi for South Asian Women

Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center,

South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center

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

Wallingford Indivisible

Wayne Action for Racial Equality

Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center