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Center for Self Governance Statement: **Political Weaponization of Labels**

Labels (i.e. domestic terrorist, domestic extremist, white supremacist, right-wing, etc.) are being dubiously applied by certain non-profits, media, academics, social media, businesses, and law enforcement, as well as, Federal, State, and Local legislation, which target proponents of the precedent doctrine, known as ‘dual’ federalism¹. Additionally, legislation has been proposed², the result of which will be to silence, marginalize, imprison, and kill the political opponents of the modern doctrine known as ‘cooperative’ federalism³.

This matter is of extreme concern to our organization, our students, and, we believe, to the nation at large – that is, the elimination of a ‘dual’ federal system and the conversion to an exclusive ‘cooperative’ federal system.

Our non-profit organization teaches both ‘cooperative’ and ‘dual’ federalism as part of our public efforts to advance systematic politics through civics education. We have publicly stated we do not support, advocate, or practice racial supremacy or sovereign citizen (common law); nor do we advocate violence of any kind for political gain for any reason. And yet, we have been labeled, without due process, both ‘extremist,’ ‘white supremacist,’⁴ and ‘right-wing’⁵ by several non-profit and media entities – a result of our support for and promotion of ‘dual’ federalism.

In our experience, this type of verbal subterfuge hinders our ability to teach civics, raise funds for our non-profit, or host civil discourse about political doctrine and government structure, and places our staff and students in danger. The irony is that we train anyone, regardless of their partisanship, racial demographic, sexual orientation, religious preference, or immigration status, to ‘keep’ our country intact – not break it apart.

Our organization has observed and is archiving numerous examples of the dangers caused by labeling groups and individuals. Recent examples include the Tea Party movement⁶, Proud Boys⁷, Covington Catholic boys⁸, Jack Phillips⁹,

¹ **Dual federalism**, also known as **layer-cake federalism** or **divided sovereignty**, is a political arrangement in which power is divided between the federal and state governments in clearly defined terms, with state governments exercising those powers accorded to them without interference from the federal government. Dual federalism is defined in contrast to [cooperative federalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative_federalism) (“marble-cake federalism”), in which federal and state governments collaborate on policy. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dual_federalism. This approach accounts for political boundaries intended to prevent oppression and does not allow the governing to self-determine.

² <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/894/text>

³ **Cooperative federalism**, also known as **marble-cake federalism**, is a concept of **federalism** in which federal, state, and local governments interact **cooperatively** and collectively to solve common problems, rather than making policies separately but more or less equally (such as the **dual federalism** of the 19th-century.); https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cooperative_federalism. This approach does not account, however, for political boundaries intended to prevent oppression and allows the governing to self-determine.

⁴ <https://www.inlander.com/spokane/label-lynching-the-new-far-right-buzzword-has-become-part-of-the-malheur-standoff-narrative/Content?oid=11198236>

⁵ <http://www.rightwingwatch.org/organizations/center-for-self-governance/>

⁶ <https://www.colorlines.com/articles/yup-tea-partys-racist-study-finds-its-not-alone>

⁷ <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounders/proud-boys>

⁸ <https://www.salon.com/2019/01/28/anti-racist-activist-tim-wise-heres-what-id-tell-the-covington-catholic-boys/>

⁹ <https://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-baker-jack-phillips-responds-compared-nazis-holocaust.html>

Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh¹⁰, Vice President Mike Pence¹¹ and his wife, Karen¹², President Donald Trump¹³, Washington State Representative Matt Shea¹⁴, and numerous others.

Exploitation and weaponization of labels can have deadly consequences (for example, the unnecessary death of LaVoy Finicum on January 26, 2016). He was labeled by numerous U.S. media as a “domestic terrorist”¹⁵, “white supremacist”¹⁶, “right-wing militia member”¹⁷, and he was surveilled and ultimately killed¹⁸ by Federal & Oregon State law enforcement – this reprehensible deed completed without a warrant or due process of law.

To be clear, it is not our intention to disrupt or undermine legitimate national safety and security concerns, but we believe implementation of the suggestions below would help prevent labels being used as weapons against political opponents and ordinary citizens.

- A. Definition of ‘Domestic Terrorism’ is too broad**
- B. ‘Domestic Extremism’ lexicons need reform**
- C. Law Enforcement ‘Terrorism’ and ‘Extremism’ Training need checks & balances**
- D. Intergovernmental Cooperation Protocols, for ‘Extremism’ and ‘Terrorism’ need checks & balances**
- E. Non-governmental participation in ‘countering extremism’ needs public-private restrictions and liability re-evaluation**

Our report, *The Political Weaponization of Labels – ‘How U.S. Citizens Unwittingly Become ‘Domestic Terrorists,’* further outlines these suggestions and is available upon request.

We ask that Federal, State, and Local investigations, hearings, and reforms are vigorously pursued to ensure civil rights are safe-guarded, political discourse and education is respected and protected, law enforcement is not politically weaponized, and that ‘government of more stability,’ one that balances ‘dual’ and ‘cooperative’ federalism, is guaranteed for all partisans, religions, races, sexes, etc., for many generations to come.

Yours Humbly and Mutually Pledged,

Julius Botelho, Board Member

Bill Norton, Board Member

Ben Clymer, Board Member

Zach Brooks, Board Member

Mila Wood, Board Member

Diane Hardy, Board Member

Mark Herr, President

¹⁰ <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2018/09/05/kavanaugh-white-power-zina-bash-219733>

¹¹ <https://thinkprogress.org/mike-pence-colts-protest-f77a01531332/>

¹² <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/no-one-should-be-surprised-that-the-press-sought-to-tie-karen-pence-to-school-hate-crime-hoax>

¹³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/post-partisan/wp/2018/08/09/yes-donald-trump-you-are-a-racist/?utm_term=.abb634d3a87d

¹⁴ <https://www.npr.org/2019/12/20/790192972/washington-legislator-matt-shea-accused-of-domestic-terrorism-report-finds>

¹⁵ <https://www.adl.org/blog/robert-lavoy-finicum-the-making-of-a-martyr>

¹⁶ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/oregon-occupation-inside-the-malheur-national-wildlife-refuge-where-armed-farmers-are-protesting-a6799756.html>

¹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jan/06/oregon-standoff-who-are-they>

¹⁸ <http://media.oregonlive.com/oregon-standoff/other/2018/01/26/FINICUMLAWSUIT.pdf>