

# SPLC REPORT

Southern Poverty Law Center

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## SPLC challenges, halts debtors' prison in Louisiana city court

BOGALUSA, La. – Rozzie Scott was ready to accept his punishment for stealing \$5 worth of ground beef and pizza to feed his family.

Appearing before the city court here, the 21-year-old

pleaded guilty and was fined \$450 plus court costs.

It was a harsh penalty, one he couldn't afford.

But the judge never asked whether he had a job or why he couldn't pay the fine. Instead, he

was given a choice: pay a \$50 "extension fee," giving him more time to raise the money, or go to jail.

Scott didn't have the money. So the judge ordered him thrown in jail, the modern-day version of debtors' prison.



SCOTT THREKELD

### Punishing the poor

Like many other towns and cities across the Deep South, the city of Bogalusa had begun to rely on heavy fines and fees to fund the court – and was jailing the poor when they couldn't pay.

In June, the SPLC filed a federal lawsuit to stop the practice.

In a town where more than a third of the residents live below the poverty line, the Bogalusa City Court gets a significant amount of its funding through fees, such as the \$50 "extension fee," which is not authorized by state law.

Bogalusa is not alone.

Across the country, lawmakers and courts have shifted more and more costs to those swept up in the criminal justice system, often resulting in disparate – and unfair – punishment for the poor.

Less than a week after the SPLC filed suit, Judge Robert J. Black agreed to temporarily stop jailing indigent people who can't pay and to stop collecting fees that fund his court. The agreement was in effect through early September while settlement discussions were underway.

"Funding the justice system on the backs of the poor is fundamentally unfair and creates a systemic incentive to find people guilty," SPLC Deputy Legal Director Sam Brooke said. "We're pleased that the Bogalusa

*Continued on page 5*

The city judge in Bogalusa, Louisiana, charged poor people an "extension fee" to remain out of jail if they couldn't pay fees and fines in full – an unconstitutional act that incentivizes guilty findings in the court system.

### IN THIS ISSUE

\* \* \* \*

SPLC president on radical-right threat

PAGE 3

\* \* \* \*

Helping students explore race and police brutality

PAGE 4

\* \* \* \*



Ala. chief justice faces second ousting

PAGE 5

## SPLC reaches \$2.3 million settlement agreement for Jamaican guest workers

CHARLESTON, S.C. – They left their homes in Jamaica for opportunity.

From 2012 to 2014, guest workers from the Caribbean nation traveled to the Kiawah Island Inn Golf Resort to work as housekeepers, cooks, servers, bell persons and similar positions at the luxury resort near Charleston.

### Workers lost thousands in pay

After the workers arrived, however, they were systematically cheated out of their wages, according to a federal lawsuit filed by the SPLC. In June, a federal judge gave preliminary approval to a settlement agreement that will see the resort pay \$2.3 million to more than 240 workers.

"We are pleased to have reached an agreement that will compensate these workers for their losses," said Jim Knoepp, SPLC senior attorney. "When workers use our nation's guest worker program, they expect that a very basic promise will be upheld: They will be paid the wages they earn."

The suit alleged that the workers were improperly charged hundreds of dollars in recruitment fees and forced to pay excessive housing and transportation costs that pushed their wages below the minimum required under the H-2B guest worker program.

The federal program allows employers to hire temporary foreign workers only when they certify that they cannot find enough local workers to fill their needs. Employers are required to pay a "prevailing wage" that the U.S. Department of Labor has determined will not have an adverse impact on U.S. workers.

Kiawah Island Golf Resort is a lavish tourist destination. Some rooms at the resort's The Sanctuary hotel have fetched more than \$1,000 per night. It has five golf courses, including The Ocean Course, site of the 2012 PGA Championship and 1991 Ryder Cup.

Its website lists a number of honors: *Condé Nast Traveler* named the island as the No.1 island in North America and the

No. 2 island in the world; *Golf World* magazine named it the top resort in the United States; and *Forbes Travel Guide* honored its hotel with The Forbes Five-Star Award.

### SPLC fighting to fix the broken guest worker system

The settlement is the latest in a string of successful SPLC lawsuits seeking to reform the program and protect the rights of vulnerable guest workers. Last year, the SPLC reached a \$20 million settlement agreement with a Gulf Coast marine services company to resolve labor trafficking lawsuits brought on behalf of hundreds of former Indian guest workers. The lawsuits described how Signal International defrauded and exploited guest workers hired to repair damaged oil rigs and related facilities.

Guest workers are not permitted to change jobs if they are abused. The Department of Labor supervises the program but provides extremely limited oversight

of H-2B employers and recruiters. The SPLC documented rampant abuses within the program in its report *Close to Slavery*. It found that guest workers are

routinely subjected to human trafficking, cheated out of wages and held virtually captive by employers or labor brokers who seize their documents.



### Morris Dees receives civil rights honor

SPLC Founder and Chief Trial Counsel Morris Dees received the President's Award from the National Education Association at its Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner on July 3 in Washington, D.C. When the NEA merged with the American Teachers Association (which represented African-American educators in segregated schools) in 1966, the organization carried on the ATA's tradition of honoring human and civil rights heroes each year and annually rededicating itself to the unfinished task of creating a just society.

## SPLC REPORT

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The Southern Poverty Law Center is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. Using litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy, the SPLC works toward the day when the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity will be a reality. The SPLC also sponsors the Civil Rights Memorial, which honors the memory of individuals who died during the civil rights movement.

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### A MESSAGE FROM SPLC PRESIDENT RICHARD COHEN

# Poll watchers and the voter fraud myth

We're almost there. The most important ritual in our democracy is less than two months away.

It's been a wild ride, certainly the strangest presidential campaign I've ever seen – and, surely, one of the most consequential.

It seems to get even stranger every day.

Donald Trump has raised the specter of massive voter fraud, saying that he could only lose Pennsylvania if “in certain sections of the state they cheat.” And he's proposed a remedy: volunteer poll watchers.

It's a remedy that's now being trumpeted by white supremacists and far-right conspiracy theorists.

The great irony here is that we have far more to fear from efforts to combat voter fraud, including the potential for an army of Trump poll watchers, than we do from any actual voter fraud.

#### Baseless claims of voter fraud

The claim that the integrity of our electoral system is threatened by people voting more than once, by pretending to be someone else, or by voting when they are not eligible has been a favorite of right-wing politicians and pundits in recent years.

As is well known by now, there is virtually no evidence to support the claim. Nonetheless, 15 states this year will have new voter restrictions in place to

combat the phantom problem, just in time for the presidential election. The total would have been 17, but federal judges this summer struck down North Carolina's law – possibly the harshest in the country – and blocked another in North Dakota.

Courts also have ruled against all or parts of voter restriction laws in Texas, Wisconsin, Michigan and Kansas in recent months. But those remain largely in effect pending further court action.

Most of these laws include strict photo ID requirements. Some also curtail early voting or limit the way people can register. All are part of a wave of new voting measures, including many enacted after the U.S. Supreme Court gutted a key portion of the Voting Rights Act in 2013.

While politicians who support the laws – and we're talking Republicans here – say they're needed to address voter fraud, they're actually designed to suppress voting by those who are likely to support their opponents. Experts say millions of people, largely the poor and people of color who have long been marginalized and who typically vote for Democrats, could be disenfranchised.

In North Carolina, a federal appeals court found that state lawmakers intentionally sought

to keep African Americans from the ballot box – methodically analyzing voting data to “target African Americans with almost surgical precision.” The court also exposed the whole premise of the law as a charade, writing that it “impose[d] cures for problems that did not exist.”

A recent study by a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles proves the point. Examining every credible allegation of voter fraud from 2000 to 2014, he found a grand total of 31 *potentially* fraudulent votes out of more than one billion ballots cast.

#### Poll watching or intimidation?

But despite all evidence to the contrary, Trump seems convinced that something fishy is afoot. He's urged his supporters to become poll watchers, to “make sure other people don't come in and vote five times.” Trump's campaign also has set up a web page asking for volunteers to monitor polling places in an effort to “stop crooked Hillary from rigging this election.”

Trump's call to action is now being promoted by white supremacists on Stormfront, the world's leading neo-Nazi website, something

that's not particularly surprising given how Trump has been embraced by the likes of David Duke. A Stormfront thread features a video by Alex Jones, America's No. 1 radical-right conspiracy theorist, claiming that “[t]hey stole the election from [Bernie] Sanders and are planning it for Trump.”

That Jones would be in Trump's corner is also not surprising. Trump has long traded in the same kinds of outlandish conspiracy theories that Jones hawks every day. Earlier this year, for example, Jones claimed President Obama is a “hardcore Wahhabist; he is al-Qaeda.” Trump, of course, was among those who mainstreamed the

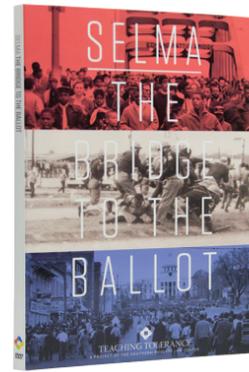
claim that Obama was some sort of Manchurian candidate who wasn't really born in this country.

Trump's poll watchers aren't going to uncover any voter fraud. What they're more likely to do, given the violence we've seen at Trump rallies and the support he's getting from avowed white supremacists, is intimidate people and suppress the vote.

And that, not surprisingly, is the same goal behind so many of the voter ID laws that have been enacted across the nation.



Richard Cohen



The SPLC is facilitating voter registration efforts across the country by providing free resources, including our Teaching Tolerance film *Selma: The Bridge to the Ballot*. For more information visit [selma.splcenter.org](http://selma.splcenter.org)

## MAILBOX

Just letting you know that I'm glad you're looking into the court system in Bogalusa, Louisiana. I had to pay that \$50 fee myself. I tried to explain that I'm a single mother with four kids, but that wasn't taken into consideration. Hopefully you will be able to help these people. It's such a shame!

**B.H.**

Bogalusa, Louisiana

I just wanted to thank every single one of you for your relentless dedication to civil rights in this country. I discovered your organization in college and have been donating when I can since then. I'm now 50. The need for your work unfortunately doesn't seem to abate completely, but you fill me with hope that continual change is possible, even in my short lifetime.

**V.P.**

Sierra Madre, California

I am humbled by the SPLC's story and can't imagine how

much worse it would be without you. We now have new Klans and horrible forces of violence that seem to keep growing. I have new heroes in my life, and they are all of you.

**B.M.**

Sisters, Oregon

We are so proud to be associated with you all and your organization. Please keep up your fine work to protect and ensure the liberties we hold dear are here for future generations.

**C. and P.W.**  
Spring, Texas

I've known of your work for years and have seen Mark Potok interviewed on various programs. I appreciate the work that you do to keep us all aware of changing times, attitudes and behaviors of the American people. I can only begin to imagine what it is like for all of you to have to research and report on the ugliness that can be pervasive in

our citizens and society as a whole. I also know – and while I may not like our ugliness on full display – it is our path as we continue to learn and grow as a nation. I see better times ahead for everyone. Again, my deepest appreciation for all that you do.

**R.R.**

Mesa, Arizona

I hope to contribute to your cause in some way, but for now the least I can do is say thank you for the work you do. I dread sounding sentimental, but as a person – specifically a member of the LGBTQ community – it really feels good to know that there are major smart players like the SPLC in the equal rights movement.

**D.T.**

Chicago, Illinois

Thank you for your piece about “Mother Emanuel.” I wonder how many deaths it will take until the people in charge have enough. Thank you for all the

hard work you do. I am so incredibly proud to support your work!

**P.B.**

Summerville, South Carolina

The work that every single one of you do is a blessing for us all and can never be adequately appreciated. Please never forget that.

**K.M.**

Alcalde, New Mexico

Just watched [SPLC President] Richard Cohen on Democracy Now (6/17/16). Thank you for the work you do. Not easy, but certainly necessary in our troubled world.

**S.D.**

Lewes, Delaware

I congratulate you on your ongoing work related to the rights of contract labor (H-2A, H-2B, and H-1B). Your publications are informative and insightful.

**L.P.**

Peoria, Arizona

# Intelligence Report: Far-right movement recruits sheriffs

A movement made up of sheriffs claiming to be the highest law enforcement authority in the country is growing nationwide as it exploits hot-button issues such as gun control to encourage sheriffs to defy federal laws they don't like.

The Summer issue of the SPLC's *Intelligence Report* details the growth of this segment of the antigovernment "Patriot" movement since 2009. At its center is the Constitutional Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association (CSPOA), which has mounted a concerted, long-term effort to recruit sheriffs and police officers.

"The phenomenon of the 'constitutional sheriffs' movement is deeply troubling and problematic," said Mark Potok, senior fellow at the SPLC and editor of the *Intelligence Report*.



FIND MORE INFO

[splcenter.org/fighting-hate/law-enforcement-resources](http://splcenter.org/fighting-hate/law-enforcement-resources)



COVER ART BY SEAN MCCABE

"These men and women are being told by extremist leaders that they have the right to decide what laws they want to enforce and can keep federal law enforcement agents out of their counties. That is utterly untrue, the very opposite of constitutional, and it in fact encourages sheriffs and their deputies to defy the law of the land."

The SPLC interviewed dozens of sheriffs who appeared on a list, compiled by the CSPOA, of almost 500 sheriffs who purportedly had "vowed to uphold and

defend the Constitution against Obama's unconstitutional gun measures." The movement is successfully exploiting concerns about gun, environmental and land-use regulations to bring law enforcement officers into the fold. There are about 3,000 sheriffs nationwide.

## SPLC training video highlights threat to public, other officers

The organizing of these sheriffs is occurring against the backdrop of the larger militia movement and the occupation at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon early this year by antigovernment extremists.

The SPLC also released a new law enforcement training video, a short film focusing on the rising threat of antigovernment extremists in the wake of the occupation in Oregon and a related 2014 armed standoff with federal agents in Nevada.

The video, along with previous training videos produced by the SPLC, can be viewed at [www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/law-enforcement-resources](http://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/law-enforcement-resources).

## FIGHTING HATE

# SPLC president warns Congress of far-right domestic terrorism's severity

*Editor's note: SPLC President Richard Cohen testified on June 28 about the threat of radical-right terrorism before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Oversight, Agency Action, Federal Rights and Federal Courts. In addition to written testimony, he delivered the following oral remarks to the subcommittee chaired by Sen. Ted Cruz:*

Our country faces threats of violent extremism from many sources.

The horrible massacre at the Orlando gay nightclub earlier by a gunman pledging allegiance to ISIS is but the latest example.

A year ago, it was the massacre of black churchgoers at Charleston's "Mother Emanuel" church by a white supremacist.

Two years ago this month, it was the murder of Las Vegas police officers by antigovernment zealots who had been at Cliven Bundy's ranch.

I would not take issue with the Obama administration's assessment that terrorism from those affiliated with or inspired by groups like ISIS "represent[s] the preeminent threat to our country."

But I would point out that the threat of violent extremism from those blinded by racial hatred and rage at the government are serious ones as well.

And while I would not go so far as to say that our government has been willfully blind to these latter threats, I would say that the record shows both Republican and Democratic administrations, as well as the Congress, have not always given these latter threats the attention they deserve.

## Militia numbers skyrocket

The clearest example of this point comes from the history of the domestic terrorism task force the Justice Department established after the Oklahoma City bombing.

The task force was scheduled to have one of its regular monthly meetings on 9/11.

But not only was that meeting canceled, the task force didn't meet again for 13 years as the threat associated with groups like al Qaeda came to dominate the government's attention.

During this period, the number of hate and conspiracy-minded antigovernment groups skyrocketed, and the level of violence from the radical right increased by a factor of four.

President Obama has been a particular lightning rod for the radical right.

The day after he was first elected, Stormfront – the world's leading neo-Nazi

website, whose members have committed numerous murders – reported that it was getting six times its normal traffic.

"There are a lot of angry white people looking for answers," the site's publisher, a former Klansman, explained.

When DHS released a report in 2009 assessing the likely backlash to the election of our first black president, the reaction from groups like the American Legion and members of Congress was so fierce that the report was withdrawn and the DHS unit that produced the report was allowed to wither.

## Threats must not be ignored

In 2014, the Justice Department finally revived its domestic terrorism task force after a white supremacist, Glenn Miller, killed three persons in Overland Park, Kansas, he thought were Jewish.

But still, there are indications that the threat of terrorism associated with groups like ISIS dominates the government's thinking.

The Oklahoma City bombing was the first terrorist incident that President Obama mentioned in his speech at the White House Summit on Countering Violence in 2015.

*Continued on page 8*

## INTELLIGENCE BRIEFS

### Neo-Nazi pleads guilty to murder, assault

PHOENIX – Ryan Elliott Giroux, a 42-year-old former member of the Hammerskin Nation racist skinhead group who was later involved in the Aryan Brotherhood prison gang, pleaded guilty in state court to 23 charges that included murder, attempted murder and aggravated assault.

The charges stemmed from a 30-minute rampage in Mesa that left one person dead and five wounded. Giroux has a 20-year criminal record that includes assaults on police officers and others.

### Klan leader lures officers into standoff

VIENNA, Ga. – What began as an eight-hour standoff after law enforcement officials responded to a domestic disturbance call ended with the apparent suicide of Klansman J.J. Harper, who had fired repeatedly at the officers.

Harper, 52, was known for his group American White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, which he described as "The One Man Klan." He wore a gas mask and bulletproof vest and was armed with several pistols and a shotgun during the standoff.

### White supremacist sentenced in bomb plot

RICHMOND, Va. – Robert C. Doyle, 34, was sentenced in federal court to 17.5 years in prison for his part in a white supremacist plot to bomb synagogues and African-American churches and to rob and murder a local coin dealer to finance those attacks.

Two co-conspirators, Ronald Cheney III, 33, and Charles Halderman, 30, had already pleaded guilty. The men were arrested after trying to buy weapons, a silencer and an explosive device from undercover agents. Authorities said the three were adherents of a racist version of Asatru, a pre-Christian Norse religion that is popular among white supremacists.

### Wildlife refuge occupier arrested on weapons charge

JOHN DAY, Ore. – The FBI arrested Michael Ray Emry at his home and charged the self-described "Picasso of machine guns" with illegally possessing an unregistered, fully automatic .50-caliber machine gun with its serial number filed off.

Emry, 54, was a "reporter" during the militia standoff earlier in the year

at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns, Ore. He broadcast on The Voice of Idaho, a pro-occupation website he created. In 2004, Emry avoided prison for building 66 illegal machine guns and a bomb by testifying against a cocaine dealer in Tennessee.

### Militia leader found guilty of child molestation

PHOENIX – Anti-immigrant extremist Chris Simcox, founder of the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps and co-founder of the Minuteman Project, was convicted of two counts of child molestation and one of furnishing pornography to a minor. He faces up to 37 years in prison.

The 55-year-old border vigilante, who once claimed to have personally seen Chinese Red Army troops on the Mexico-Arizona border, was acquitted of even more serious charges of sexual conduct with a minor under 12. The jury found that Simcox, who saw three of his own daughters testify against him, had molested a 5-year-old playmate of his daughters in 2012 and 2013.

### 'Sovereign' accused in two murders

GREAT CACAPON, W.Va. – After an eight-hour manhunt, police arrested Erick Shute on June 14 after three men were fatally shot with a military-style assault rifle at his rural West Virginia home.

Morgan County Sheriff Vince Shambaugh said Shute is a "sovereign citizen" extremist who had been involved in prior property disputes with the victims, identified as Jack Douglas of Great Cacapon and Travis Bartley and Willie Bartley, both of Hedgesville.

An AR-15 assault rifle was used to commit the killings, authorities said. The FBI has identified the sovereign citizens movement as a domestic terrorism threat.

### Parole denied to Klan bomber of Birmingham church

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – Ex-Klan member Thomas Edwin Blanton, Jr., 86, was denied parole on Aug. 3.

Blanton is serving a life sentence for bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, killing four young African-American girls in 1963.

He was convicted in 2001 for his part in planting a dynamite bomb that exploded while the girls were inside the church preparing for worship.

## TEACHING TOLERANCE

## Teaching about racism and police violence

The SPLC's Teaching Tolerance project has been providing free anti-bias resources to educators for more than two decades, but many of today's classroom topics are very different from those of the early 1990s.

The recent series of killings of unarmed black men, women and children by police officers – many of them captured on video – has spurred waves of protest and appeals for stronger protections against police brutality.

The incidents also have created a need among educators for high-quality resources to help them address the subject in the classroom.

Teaching Tolerance has responded with resources that can

help guide much-needed classroom discussion about implicit bias and systemic racism, and that can empower students to work for changes that will create a more just society.

### Addressing racial violence

In one newly designed web package, Teaching Tolerance's curriculum experts explore the sometimes-uncomfortable topic of race and the always-difficult topic of police brutality.

The web package was originally published in 2014 under the title "Teaching About Ferguson: Race and Racism in the United States."

In the months since, and in light of the July 2016 fatal shootings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile, the SPLC updated the package to include external resources and newer Teaching Tolerance resources that address institutional violence more broadly.

 TO VIEW THESE RESOURCES  
[tolerance.org/racism-and-police-brutality](http://tolerance.org/racism-and-police-brutality)

## SPLC LAWSUIT: MISSISSIPPI CHARTER SCHOOL FUNDING VIOLATES STATE CONSTITUTION

JACKSON, Miss. – Cassandra Overton-Welchlin doesn't like what is happening to public education in her state capital.

The state's charter schools are being funded in a way that is taking tax dollars away from the traditional public schools that most children rely on. She's worried that as more charter schools open their doors, more money will be diverted.

"I sent my children to a public school because I believe in traditional public schools," said the mother of two. "I'm outraged that state and local tax dollars are funding charter schools in a way that threatens the existence of important services, including services for those with special needs, at my child's school. As a taxpayer, I expect my property tax dollars will be used to support traditional public schools, which educate the vast majority of students in Jackson."

That's why Overton-Welchlin is a plaintiff in an SPLC lawsuit, filed in July, that calls for the court to strike down the funding provisions of the Mississippi Charter School Act, enacted in 2013.

The Mississippi Constitution requires schools to be under the supervision of the state and local boards of education to receive public funding.

But under the Mississippi Charter School Act, charter schools receive public funding even though they are exempt from the oversight of the state Board of Education, the Mississippi Department of Education and local boards of education.

Charter schools in Mississippi are accountable to the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board, a body that receives 3 percent of the public funding that goes to charter schools.

"A school operating outside the authority of the state board of education and the local school board cannot expect to receive public taxpayer money," said Jody Owens, managing attorney for the SPLC's Mississippi office. "The state constitution is clear on this matter."

The lawsuit warns that opening more charter schools will compound the financial harm.

During the 2015-2016 school year, two charter schools were operating in the Jackson Public School District, and they received more than \$1.85 million in district funding – enough to pay the salaries of 42 teachers in traditional schools.

A third charter school recently opened within JPS's boundaries, and the district now stands to lose more than \$4 million in the current school year.

## SPLC files OSHA complaints against unsafe poultry plants

GUNTERSVILLE, Ala. – In an effort to improve conditions for poultry workers, the SPLC in recent months has filed federal safety complaints against two Alabama processing plants.

The latest complaint, in July, seeks an investigation by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) into how Farm Fresh Foods forced sanitation workers to work at dangerously fast speeds at its Guntersville facility.

### Little regard for workers

The complaint details the experiences of two workers who were required to race across slippery floors, often covered in blood or chicken entrails, to deliver chickens to processing lines.

They were not permitted to wash their hands or change their clothes between handling chicken waste and delivering the raw meat to the line. When these workers asked for safer conditions, they were suspended and eventually fired.

"It's clear from the treatment of these workers that Farm Fresh Foods has little regard for its employees," said Naomi Tsu, SPLC deputy legal director. "The company needs to listen to workers rather than retaliate against them. We've seen this happen again and again in the poultry industry."

In June, the SPLC filed an OSHA complaint on behalf of a former worker at a Wayne

Farms plant in Albertville who developed health problems after exposure to harsh chemicals. The former employee believes her co-workers are still being exposed to dangerous levels of chemicals used during the slaughter and processing of chickens.

The complaint is the second the SPLC has filed against

the plant failed to record injuries and discouraged workers from seeking treatment.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Government Accountability Office reported that injury and illness rates in the meat and poultry industry, which is known for underreporting such figures, outpace rates in the manufacturing industry overall.



The SPLC has filed a federal complaint on behalf of a former worker at an Alabama poultry plant owned by Wayne Farms – the same company fined more than \$100,000 by the federal government after an SPLC complaint uncovered safety violations at a different Alabama plant.

Wayne Farms. The first resulted in 11 citations to the company's plant in Jack, Alabama, and fines totaling \$102,600 in 2014. The agency found that workers were exposed to dangerous machinery as well as hazards that could result in falls and musculoskeletal disorders, such as carpal tunnel syndrome. It also found that

In 2013, the SPLC issued *Unsafe at these Speeds*, a report that found Alabama's poultry industry discourages workers from reporting injuries. Based on more than 300 interviews, it found that workers – many of whom are immigrants – are typically forced to endure dangerous conditions and silenced by threats of deportation and firing.

## Alabama school district focus of SPLC complaint on racially disparate discipline

DOTHAN, Ala. – At Northview High School in this south Alabama city, a 16-year-old black student was sent to the alternative school for 30 days for receiving a stolen cell phone – even though a school administrator searched his bag and failed to find the phone.

When it was later discovered that a white student had stolen the phone, the white student received only 10 days at the alternative school.

This example of racially disparate disciplinary practices is just one of several contained in a civil rights complaint the Southern Poverty Law Center recently filed against Dothan's public school system.

The complaint to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights charges that Dothan's schools routinely violate the civil rights of black children and children with disabilities by maintaining discipline and

arrest policies that disproportionately push them out of school for minor misconduct.

"Dothan's most vulnerable children are being systematically railroaded and written off because of racially discriminatory practices that often treat normal adolescent behavior like criminal activity," said Natalie Lyons, SPLC staff attorney.

The SPLC filed the complaint in August after initially working with the district to reform its harsh policies. But revisions adopted by the school board didn't go far enough.

The board, for example, failed to remove many vague and subjective offenses that give administrators broad discretion to discriminate against children of color.

The complaint notes African-American students represent approximately 55 percent of the district's students but 100 percent of expulsions in 2015-16 and 85 percent or more of the

students removed from class through practices such as suspension, in-school suspension and referral to alternative school.

Disciplinary actions against students with disabilities have more than doubled since the 2013-14 school year.

### Criminalizing children

Hundreds of students are sent to the alternative school for nonviolent adolescent misbehavior, even though the school supposedly serves as a last resort before expulsion is recommended. During the last school year, African-American students made up 90 percent of enrollment.

The complaint describes how the school criminalizes students by treating them as dangerous criminals – subjecting them to physical searches where they must take off their shoes, socks and belts – even though nearly a third of the students sent there in 2015-16 were in elementary school.

## FIGHTING HATE

## SPLC report puts spotlight on extremism in presidential campaign

The GOP primary campaign was marked by shocking levels of vitriol and bigotry that focused the national conversation on the state of extremism in America.

The SPLC released a timeline of these events in the Summer issue of the *Intelligence Report*.

GOP nominee Donald Trump kicked off his campaign in June 2015 with a speech in which he claimed Mexican immigrants were “bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists.”

### Hate center of campaigns

Two months later, he introduced his immigration plan: deport 12 million people, build a border wall (paid for by Mexico), and gut the 14th Amendment guarantee of citizenship to anyone born in this country.

Since then, he has made the border wall the centerpiece of his campaign. And, this past June, he claimed that U.S. District Judge Gonzalo Curiel couldn’t be impartial in a lawsuit accusing Trump University of fraud because he is “Mexican.” Curiel was born in Indiana to parents who emigrated from Mexico.

Earlier, Trump went after popular Fox News host Megyn Kelly, telling CNN in August 2015 that she had “blood coming out of her wherever.”

In November 2015, Trump claimed he watched the World Trade Center collapse on 9/11 “as thousands of people were cheering” in New Jersey. Multiple investigations of the alleged

celebration by Muslims found it didn’t happen, but Trump repeated the allegation and refused to retract it.

Then, after ISIS attacks in Paris and a suburb left 130 dead that same month, Trump called for a “total and complete shut-down” of Muslims entering the United States.

After the massacre of 49 at a gay nightclub in Orlando this past June, Trump suggested repeatedly that “the Muslim community” must have been complicit. He also suggested President Obama might have been on the murderer’s side, saying “there’s something going on.”

### Far-right associations

Trump’s statements have earned him the support of white supremacists across America. Neo-Nazi David Duke, the well-known former Klan leader, told his followers this past February that “voting against Trump at this point is really treason to your heritage.” Trump refused to immediately disavow Duke, saying, “I don’t know anything about David Duke, okay?”

Trump wasn’t the only candidate to associate with far-right extremists.

In August 2015, Sen. Ted Cruz visited the Tupelo, Miss., headquarters of the American Family Association, an anti-LGBT group that spreads demonizing falsehoods about gay people. Its chief spokesperson, for example, has said that “[h]omosexuality gave us Adolph Hitler, and

homosexuals in the military gave us the Brown Shirts, the Nazi war machine and six million dead Jews.”

In November 2015, Cruz, Mike Huckabee and Bobby Jindal spoke at the National Religious Liberties Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, organized by pastor Kevin Swanson, who has called for punishing homosexuality with death.

In March of this year, Cruz held a Texas primary party at the Redneck Country Club founded by radio host John Berry, who has called black people “jungle animals” and mocked black victims of gun violence.

As the election wore on and Trump became the clear leader in the GOP race, his rallies became increasingly dangerous.

In February, he told supporters in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, that he would pay the legal fees of those who beat up protesters: “If you see somebody getting ready to throw a tomato, knock the crap out of them. Just knock the hell out of them. I promise you, I will pay your legal fees.”

The next month, white supremacist leader Matthew Heimbach was videotaped showing an African-American woman at a Trump rally in Louisville, Ky. And in Fayetteville, N.C., Trump supporter John McGraw sucker-punched a black protester who was being led away by police.

Trump told news outlets he was looking into paying McGraw’s legal fees.



MICHELLE LELAND

Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore could be removed from the bench as the result of a judicial ethics complaint filed by the SPLC after he instructed state judges to defy a federal court order and enforce the state’s ban on same-sex marriage.

## SPLC ethics complaints against Ala. chief justice headed to trial

The SPLC’s ethics complaint against Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore will be heard by the state’s Court of the Judiciary on Sept. 28 in a trial that could result in Moore being thrown out of office for the second time in his career.

Last year, the SPLC filed a series of ethics complaints after Moore instructed the state’s probate judges to defy a federal court order and enforce the state’s unconstitutional ban on same-sex marriage, which had been struck down.

### Moore’s claims dismissed

Those complaints led to formal charges being filed against Moore by the Alabama Judicial Inquiry Commission, which

effectively serves as the prosecutor in the ethics case against Moore.

Moore has argued that the case against him is improper because it involves a legal dispute between the state and federal courts, not a matter of ethics.

But the Court of the Judiciary rejected that argument after a hearing in early August, when it denied Moore’s motion to dismiss the case.

Moore also took his case to the U.S. District Court, hoping the same federal judiciary he has accused of “tyranny” would shut down the state proceedings against him. But the federal court dismissed his claim.

*Continued on page 8*

## SPLC challenges La. debtors’ prison

*From page 1*

court has changed its practices and hope this leads to a solution that will ensure equal and impartial justice.”

Scott, a Bogalusa resident, spent four hours in jail before his cousin was able to pay the extension fee. He worried about the future. “I am so scared I am going to be sent to jail again because I don’t have the money to pay my fines. It’s wrong to put me behind bars because I can’t afford it.”

### Ending debtors’ prisons

The lawsuit is part of a broader SPLC campaign to address criminal justice practices – particularly the revival of debtors’ prison – that unfairly punish the poor because of their economic status.

Debtors’ prisons were outlawed in the United States nearly 200 years ago. And in 1983, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Bearden v. Georgia* that judges cannot send people to jail for being too poor to pay court fines. They must first consider whether a defendant has the ability to pay but “willfully” refuses. As the SPLC has found, the

requirement is being ignored in many jurisdictions.

The SPLC has made major strides in the past two years, however.

In Montgomery, Alabama, the SPLC challenged the use of a for-profit “probation” company – Judicial Corrections Services (JCS) – to collect court debt from the poor. The SPLC’s client, Harriet Cleveland, paid \$140 a month toward her traffic fines, but \$40 was going to the company. After paying thousands over a period of years, she had nothing left to give and was thrown in jail.

The SPLC secured her release, sued the city and won a settlement that stopped the practice. Cleveland recounted her story for congressional staffers on Capitol Hill earlier this year and called for federal action to prevent others from going to jail simply for being poor.

In the town of Clanton, Alabama, the SPLC accused JCS of operating a court-sanctioned racketeering scheme under a contract with the town. Afterward, more than 100 other municipalities in the state canceled their contracts with the company, which closed all of its Alabama offices.

## TEACHING TOLERANCE HONORS TEACHERS WITH NATIONAL EDUCATION AWARD

The SPLC’s Teaching Tolerance project recognized five teachers with its 2016 Teaching Tolerance Award for Excellence in Teaching – a biennial award given to K-12 educators nationwide who excel at promoting respect and a passion for justice among students.

“These five teachers instill the respect and understanding that’s not only necessary for a student’s success in school but for navigating life in our increasingly diverse country,” said Maureen Costello, Teaching Tolerance director. “They

have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to helping students appreciate our differences, which helps ensure a better future for all of us.”

The awardees were honored at an awards ceremony in Montgomery, Alabama, in June. They are: Frances Weaver of Welsh Valley Middle School in Narberth, Pennsylvania; Karen Schreiner of Aspire Monarch Academy in Oakland, California; Christopher Widmaier of World of Inquiry School #58 in Rochester, New York; Leslie Wills-Taylor of Woodbrook Elementary School in Charlottesville, Virginia; and Cody Miller of P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School in Gainesville, Florida.

During the awards ceremony, Teaching Tolerance unveiled short videos highlighting each awardee’s teaching methods.

The videos are shared as a model for teachers across the nation and are available online at [tolerance.org](http://tolerance.org).

To qualify for the award, teachers must have demonstrated excellence in research-based classroom practices aimed at reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations and creating an equitable school environment. Each awardee received \$2,500.



RUSSELL ESTES

Each year, the SPLC’s Teaching Tolerance project selects five educators from across the country who excel and inspire with their dedication to anti-bias work in the classroom.

# TRIBUTE GIFTS RECEIVED BY THE SPLC FROM MAY 2016 THROUGH JULY 2016

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The SPLC accepts gifts in memory of someone who has died or in honor of a special occasion such as a birthday, anniversary or graduation. Donors may also give a gift just to say "thank you." The SPLC will send a card to the person honored or the family of the deceased. Complete this form and mail it with your contribution.

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# Former Olympian leaves legacy of justice at SPLC

Ruth Phillips Arent Anderson was a nationally renowned child psychologist and psychiatric social worker, author, speaker, educator, civil rights activist, Olympic medalist, and a strong supporter of the mission here at the Southern Poverty Law Center.

She was born in New York City in 1922, attended Horace Mann School and graduated from Skidmore College in 1943.

Ruth went on to earn her master's in psychology from the University of Iowa and master's in social work from the University of Denver.

She was an avid competitor and an Olympic medalist in swimming. She won two silver medals and a bronze medal in the 1942 Olympics, also known as the Olympics of no record. The games were slated to take place in Berlin, but were canceled because of World War II. Instead, the athletes held competitions in their home countries and the International Olympic Committee compiled their times to determine the winners.

## Civil rights activist

A remarkable matriarch with an immense capacity for love, Ruth passed away on Valentine's Day this year – a fitting exit for someone remembered for her unflinching sense of adventure, inquisitive nature and charisma.

While raising her four children – Margaret, Sally, Bonnie and Douglas – she served as the head of the League of Women

Voters for Colorado, as well as a civil rights activist and a community organizer.

## Compassionate author

One of the books she wrote is a guide for caregivers that helps children heal and recover from the difficulty of loss and the process of grief. Another book on managing childhood stress is written to a teen audience as a guide for young people going through trauma and examines causes and cures in concise and easy-to-read terms.

Ruth continued to write throughout her life and published a book of poems in her early 90s, which her daughter, Sally, illustrated.

In speaking with staff members here several years ago, Ruth declared how proud she was of the SPLC's mission for justice and tolerance, a mission she shared.

She became a gift annuitant with the SPLC in 1999, and for decades she shared her insights with the SPLC's Teaching Tolerance program, particularly her writings on post-traumatic stress among child survivors of societal violence.

Eventually Ruth moved to Corvallis, Oregon, where she was on the board of ALL (Academy for Life Long Learning) for many years and was active with "The Raging Grannies," a worldwide, non-violent organization of activists who dress up in clothes that mock stereotypes of older women and sing politically savvy protest songs.



Ruth Arent

# Scroll of Remembrance

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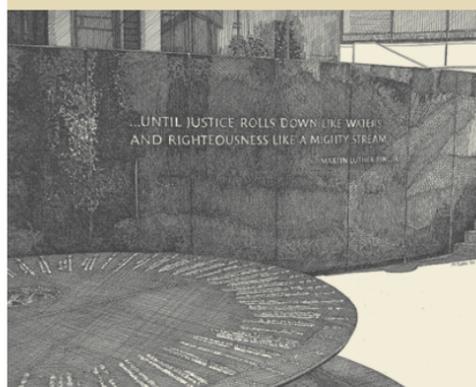
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# SPLC complaint: Louisiana traffic court violates the rights of Latinos

METAIRIE, La. – Marta\* spends her day painting high-rise buildings in Louisiana.

The work leaves her with paint on her hands at the end of the day, but it puts money in her pocket to support her children. Recently, the Latina had to spend that money on English classes costing about 10 times more than most classes in the area.

It wasn't by choice.

When she found herself before the First Parish Court of Jefferson Parish on a traffic charge, the court ordered Marta – like other Latino defendants with limited English skills – to attend 10 weeks of English classes taught at a local church.

## English classes were overpriced, ineffective, degrading

The classes often began the same way: The instructor stood at the front of the class and snapped her fingers, signaling students to pay her in cash. She regularly ridiculed students attempting to speak English.

By the end of the 10 weeks, students had typically paid about \$300 for the classes – far more than the \$25 per semester that students are charged elsewhere

for such English classes. Even worse, the court-ordered classes offered poor instruction. Some of the students also lost wages because they had to miss work.

Marta, however, paid her money because she knew what happened to people who couldn't pay.

"The police can come," she said in Spanish.

In March, the SPLC filed a complaint with the U.S. Justice Department over the court's practices, which treat Latinos with limited English proficiency more harshly for traffic offenses than others. The complaint also raises other concerns. It describes, for example, how Latino defendants were charged, without their consent, for inadequate interpretation services in court.

"Latinos in Jefferson Parish are being discriminated against because of their national origin," said Naomi Tsu, SPLC deputy legal director. "It's unconstitutional that these individuals were not even hearing the charges against them before being slapped with extra fees and expensive, subpar classes simply because they could not speak English fluently."

Latinos make up 14 percent of Jefferson Parish's population.

The Justice Department complaint was filed on behalf of four people charged with traffic offenses in the court. When they came to the First Parish Court to pay traffic fines, they were forced to sign forms written only in English and assigned interpreters who failed to explain the charges against them and did not properly convey evidence to the judge.

## Defendants have a right to know their charges

Three of the people named in the complaint had to pay \$130 each time they were assigned a court interpreter, in addition to courts costs and fines.

The Justice Department has repeatedly told courts that they must inform defendants of all charges pending against them and make interpretation services available free of charge.

The complaint urges the Justice Department to require the court to provide fully translated documents and certified interpreters at no cost.

*\*This individual's name has been changed to protect her identity.*

# SPLC lawsuit: Georgia violating federal law by denying driver's licenses to immigrants

ATLANTA – For years, Victor Escobedo has renewed his driver's license in Georgia.

But, this year, he was shocked when the state refused to renew it.

Although Escobedo has permission to work in the United States, the state denied his license because he could not prove his continuous lawful presence in the United States.

"I have a work permit, but that doesn't seem to matter to the state of Georgia," he said at the time. "I pay taxes and I am pursuing legal permanent residency, but I am suddenly not eligible to drive. I need to drive to get to work so I can support my family."

Escobedo is one of six people the SPLC and Atlanta immigration attorney Justin W. Chaney represent in a federal lawsuit filed against Georgia in April. It has resulted in a settlement agreement rescinding the state policy that denied driver's licenses to immigrants who, despite their current authorization to stay and work in the United States, were unable to demonstrate a history of continuous lawful presence.

The state has already notified license officials across Georgia of the change, resulting in licenses being issued to a reported 2,700

people in a month who might have otherwise been denied.

Driver's licenses also have been issued to Escobedo and the other immigrants who brought the case. A federal judge will oversee the agreement for 18 months. The agreement was announced in August.

"Georgia did the right thing by ending this unreasonable policy," said Naomi Tsu, SPLC deputy legal director. "It only served to punish people with every right to be in this country. We're glad the state recognized that this discriminatory policy was unacceptable."

## Thousands granted licenses

Under the settlement agreement, Georgia residents with a pending application for lawful permanent residency (also known as a green card) may obtain a driver's license.

The state changed the policy in May, shortly after the SPLC filed its lawsuit. A month later, 2,753 licenses were issued to residents meeting this standard.

That figure translates to an average of 119 licenses issued per business day to people who may have been denied under the previous policy, according to the agreement. Before the policy change on May 16, Georgia had

issued an average of only 19 licenses per business day (1,872 total) to such applicants for all of 2016.

## Policy caused worry, hardship

"I'm relieved that Georgia has ended a policy that caused so much needless hardship," said Jorge Rosillo Zaragoza, a plaintiff in the case. "We no longer have to worry about how we will get to work and meet other obligations. We can be productive members of the community."

Under Georgia law, driving without a license can result in hefty fines and a prison sentence of up to five years.

States do not have the authority to create immigration classifications that do not exist in federal law or to unilaterally assess the legality of a person's presence in the United States.

"It was right for the state to finally end this discriminatory policy affecting so many Georgia immigrants," said Chaney, the Atlanta immigration attorney. "In changing this practice, Georgia has affirmed that immigration enforcement is solely the business of the federal government."

The complaint was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, Atlanta Division.



SPLC President Richard Cohen testified on June 28 about the threat of radical-right terrorism before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Oversight, Agency Action, Federal Rights and Federal Courts.

# SPLC president urges Congress to take far-right domestic terrorism seriously

*From page 3*

But it was virtually the only mention of radical-right terrorism during the entire summit.

Two weeks after the Charleston massacre, the House Homeland Security Committee released a "terror threat snapshot" that didn't mention the killings.

Congress has held multiple hearings – as it should – on the threat of terrorism associated with groups such as al Qaeda.

But, as far as I know, neither the House nor the Senate has held hearings on the terrorism directed at law enforcement officials in the West by anti-government zealots such as the Bundys.

## Threat from armed militias

In fact, members of Congress as well as state and local officials have actually sympathized with the Bundys at times.

Again, the threat of extremist violence from individuals

associated with or inspired by groups like ISIS is deadly serious.

But it's not the only threat that we face.

## Singular focus threatens bonds

Furthermore, as the recent study by Duke University's Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security concluded, law enforcement's virtual singular focus on the threat of terrorism associated with groups like ISIS and its heavy-handed tactics risk fraying the bond of trust between law enforcement and Muslim communities that is so essential to effective law enforcement.

President Bush said it best: "We're not at war with Islam."

Muslim communities are part of the solution, not part of the problem.

 **FIND MORE INFO**  
[splcenter.org/cohen-testimony-june](http://splcenter.org/cohen-testimony-june)

# SPLC ethics complaint against Ala. chief justice headed to trial

*From page 5*

"Roy Moore has abused his power to push his personal agenda for far too long," said SPLC President Richard Cohen in response to the latest rulings.

"He told 68 probate judges to defy a federal court order that he disagrees with, and now he's playing word games to save his skin. His arguments are unseemly and dishonest. Alabama deserves better than a judge like Roy Moore who thinks he is above the law."

## Removed once already

Moore is currently suspended from the bench pending the outcome of the trial in September. If the Court of the Judiciary finds him guilty, he could be permanently removed from office.

The same court removed Moore from the bench once

before, in 2003, in response to an SPLC ethics complaint after he refused to comply with a federal court order to remove a Ten Commandments monument that he installed in the state judicial building. He was re-elected to the post in 2012.

## Counsel is anti-gay lawyer

Moore has deep ties to religious-right organizations and is the founder of the Foundation for Moral Law, which his wife now operates.

He is being represented by Mat Staver, founder of the virulently anti-LGBT Liberty Counsel and a former law school dean at Jerry Falwell's Liberty University.

Staver has supported the criminalization of homosexuality in the United States and abroad, and has likened the "homosexual lobby" to terrorists.