

**CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM
AGENDA SUMMARY FORM**

DEPARTMENT: Mayor & Council

AGENDA DATE: August 20, 2019

CONTACT PERSON NAME AND PHONE NUMBER: Representative Peter Svarzbein, (915-212-1002)

DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: All districts

STRATEGIC GOAL: Goal 2- Set the Standard for a Safe and Secure City

SUBJECT:

Discussion and action to establish the City of El Paso strongly implore the federal government to take the threat of white nationalists and/or white supremacists and/ or Neo-Nazi domestic terrorists as serious as ISIS or Al Qaeda, and to utilize all the same tools necessary that would be used to attack such threats for the purposes of preventing future terrorist attacks targeting race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion in any City in the United States of America.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:

The domestic terror attack in El Paso, Texas was acted out of a belief in a violent white supremacist ideology. The man accused of carrying out last weekend's deadly mass shooting at an El Paso Walmart confessed to officers while he was surrendering and later explained that he had been targeting "Mexicans".

There are more than 140 known active White Nationalist hate groups in the United States of America whose ideology is the driving force behind domestic terrorist attacks in El Paso, Pittsburgh, Poway, Charleston, and Charlottesville.

"Domestic terrorism" is defined in the Patriot Act of 2001, but there is no specific federal crime covering acts of terrorism inside the U.S. that are not connected to al Qaeda, ISIS, other officially designated international terror groups or their sympathizers.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:

Has the Council previously considered this item or a closely related one? No

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

How will this item be funded?

Has the item been budgeted? No

If so, identify funding source by account numbers and description of account. Does it require a budget transfer?

*****REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION*****

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the August 3, 2019 domestic terror attack in El Paso, Texas was reported to have been based on a manifesto that espoused a belief in a violent white supremacist ideology; and

WHEREAS, the man accused of carrying out the deadly mass shooting at a local Walmart confessed to officers that he had been targeting "Mexicans;" and

WHEREAS, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, as of 2018, there were more than 140 known active white nationalist hate groups in the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, white supremacist ideology was reported to have been the driving force behind domestic terrorist attacks in El Paso, Pittsburgh, Poway, Charleston, and Charlottesville; and

WHEREAS, while "domestic terrorism" was defined by the Patriot Act of 2001, and is currently codified in 18 U.S.C.A. §2331, there is no specific federal crime covering acts of terrorism inside the U.S. that are not connected to Al Qaeda, ISIS, other officially designated international terror groups or their sympathizers; and

WHEREAS, a domestic terror statute would allow the FBI more latitude to monitor internet activity by people espousing racist violence; and

WHEREAS, S.894, the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act of 2019, authorizes domestic terrorism offices within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and requires specified steps to prevent and report domestic terrorism; and

WHEREAS, the bill also authorizes a Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee (the "Committee"), which shall coordinate with key public safety officials to promote information sharing and ensure an effective joint effort to combat domestic terrorism; and

WHEREAS, S.894, Sec. 6(a) states as follows: "The joint terrorism task forces of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and State, local, and regional fusion centers,...shall each, in coordination with the Domestic Terrorism Executive Committee and the domestic terrorism offices...- (1) share intelligence to address domestic terrorism activities; (2) conduct an annual, intelligence-based assessment of domestic terrorism activities in their jurisdictions; and (3) formulate and execute a plan to address and combat domestic terrorism activities in their jurisdictions"; and

WHEREAS, under S.894, the DOJ, the FBI, the DHS, and the Department of Defense shall establish an interagency task force to combat white supremacist and neo-Nazi infiltration of the uniformed services.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

That the City of El Paso strongly implores the federal government to take the threat of white nationalists, white supremacists, and Neo-Nazi domestic terrorists as serious as ISIS or Al Qaeda, and to utilize all the same tools necessary that would be used to attack such threats for the purposes of preventing future terrorist attacks targeting race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion in any city in the United States of America.

CITY OF EL PASO

Dee Margo
Mayor

ATTEST:

Laura D. Prine
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Karla M. Neman
City Attorney