

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

January 17, 2024

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

According to new reports, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) paid an activist group \$700,000 to “write blog posts that criticized Donald Trump and other conservatives under the guise of ‘media literacy.’”<sup>1</sup> Your Department has consistently weaponized the federal government to attack conservatives using taxpayer dollars, first by colluding with private social media companies to censor conservative viewpoints and now by funding private actors to create affirmative propaganda to “counter” conservatives. This is an outrageous use of federal funds and abuse of power. All these funds should be clawed back by the federal government immediately, and anyone involved in making this grant should be fired.

Your Department provided a grant to the University of Rhode Island’s Media Education Lab to create “counter-propaganda.” This grant was given through the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) Grant Program, which “provides funding ... to prevent targeted violence and terrorism.”<sup>2</sup> In its application, the Lab wrote that it would address “propaganda and misinformation concerning topics including immigration, racial justice, the coronavirus, and vaccination” and “build on top of concerns about so-called ‘fake news’ and ‘cancel culture.’”<sup>3</sup> The Lab planned to use funds to create “counter-propaganda.” Your Department gave them \$700,000 to do so.

There appears to be a pattern of funneling taxpayer dollars through the TVTP program to disparage conservatives. Last year, reports indicated that your Department provided a grant to a University of Dayton program to fight “domestic violent extremism and hate movements.”<sup>4</sup> The year prior to the grant award, the university’s Human Rights Center—which runs the program—hosted a seminar during which the Christian Broadcasting Network, the National Rifle Association, Fox News, and other mainstream conservative organizations were included in a “pyramid of far-right radicalization” with neo-Nazis and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dailywire.com/news/how-the-biden-administration-used-a-counter-terrorism-grant-to-fund-anti-conservative-propaganda>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/tvtpgrants>

<sup>3</sup> <https://cdn.mrc.org/static/pdfuploads/COMPLETE+TVTP+Grant+Proposal+for+Courageous+RI+%28Unredacted%29.pdf-1704479299785.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://web.archive.org/web/20230531110044/https://udayton.edu/artsscience/ctr/hrc/extremism/extremism-prevention.php>

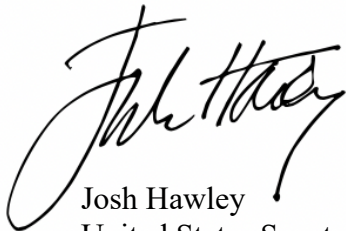
white supremacists.<sup>5</sup> Your Department gave the University of Dayton program more than \$350,000.

This amounts to the use of government funds to further President Biden's political agenda. Such an allegation would have been inconceivable four years ago, but you have consistently weaponized the Department against conservatives through the creation of the Disinformation Governance Board and the so-called Homeland Intelligence Experts Group, which includes John Brennan, James Clapper, and others who tried to suppress the Hunter Biden laptop story.<sup>6</sup> Your Department has also coordinated with Big Tech companies to censor conservative views—as the Fifth Circuit has found in *Missouri v. Biden*. Now, we are learning that the Biden Administration has been outsourcing so-called counter-propaganda to private liberal entities. You should claw back all funds provided to entities to combat so-called misinformation and ensure this never happens again.

In addition, please provide the following information by January 31, 2024:

1. How many other grants has the Department approved to private entities to create propaganda?
2. Who participated in approving this grant and will you hold them accountable?
3. What other similar entities have received funding under the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long, trailing flourish.

Josh Hawley  
United States Senator

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/university-program-linking-christians-republicans-nazis-granted-dhs-funds-part-anti-terror-initiative>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2023/09/19/secretary-mayorkas-announces-establishment-homeland-intelligence-experts-group>