

**DHS Technical Drafting Assistance**  
**March 16, 2016**

In General: DHS is supportive of efforts to foster community partnerships to counter violent extremism. The DHS Office of Community Partnerships already has the authority to conduct the types of efforts described in this bill.

Sec. 1: DHS supports the updated title, “Combating Terrorist Recruitment Act of 2016.”

Sec. 2(a): DHS cautions that public perception of how these testimonials are obtained could affect the Department and the USG’s community engagement and countering violent extremism efforts—especially with the Muslim community. If the community believes this information is obtained from informants, intelligence gathering, or surveillance, and the information is then widely disseminated, it could have a negative impact on DHS community partnerships. These partnerships are central to community engagement and CVE programming.

Sec. 2(a): There is some ambiguity in the term “disaffected.”

Sec. 2(a)(2): DHS recommends against using the term “propaganda.” Propaganda is a non-neutral term that connotes state action. Describing ISIL messaging as “propaganda” implies that ISIL is a legitimate state. Recommend using the term “communications” rather than “propaganda.”

**March 22, 2016**

Overall: DHS is supportive of efforts to foster community partnerships to counter violent extremism. As stated previously, DHS already believes it has the authorities for efforts outlined in the “Combating Terrorist Recruitment Act of 2016.”

- Because of the rapidly evolving nature of the threat landscape posed by violent extremists, flexibility in countering violent extremism (CVE) is very important. To date, DHS CVE efforts have focused on community outreach, raising awareness of the threat of radicalization and recruitment from designated foreign terrorist groups, and providing training and technical assistance to State, Local, and Community partners.
- The DHS Office of Community Partnerships (OCP) presently does not have designated staff to identify, evaluate, and develop written products or trainings pertaining to the testimonials of former or estranged violent extremists or their associates.
- DHS assesses that in order to develop such an effort would potentially pose a significant burden on already limited resources, and require scrupulous attention to the civil rights, civil liberties, and privacy of the individuals involved.

- While this bill grants DHS the authority to coordinate with other Departments and Agencies as needed, particular sensitivities need to be made with deference to future prosecutions, testimony, or investigations by DOJ and FBI.

**March 23, 2016**

Overall: DHS is supportive of efforts to foster community partnerships to counter violent extremism. As stated previously, DHS already believes it has the authorities for efforts outlined in the “Combating Terrorist Recruitment Act of 2016.”

- Because of the rapidly evolving nature of the threat landscape posed by violent extremists, flexibility in countering violent extremism (CVE) is very important. To date, DHS CVE efforts have focused on community outreach, raising awareness of the threat of radicalization and recruitment from designated foreign terrorist groups, and providing training and technical assistance to State, Local, and Community partners.
- Gaining and maintaining the trust of the community is central to the success of our outreach efforts. Accordingly, the Department is sensitive to creating the public perception that these testimonials are obtained through those efforts. Even using otherwise public statements, will still require the Department to pay scrupulous attention to the civil rights, civil liberties, and privacy of the individuals involved.
- Lastly, while this bill grants DHS the authority to coordinate with other Departments and Agencies as needed, in certain instances, we note that our ability to do so may be constrained by the law enforcement and prosecutorial equities of federal and state officials.