

**How Radical, Dark Money-Funded Green Activist Groups Are Influencing Policy at the  
Department of the Interior**

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## **How Radical, Dark Money-Funded Green Activist Groups Are Influencing Policy at the Department of the Interior**

My name is Tyler O’Neil. I oversee the day-to-day operations of The Daily Signal as managing editor, though I am testifying in my personal capacity. I wrote a book, “Making Hate Pay: The Corruption of the Southern Poverty Law Center.”

Chairman Westerman, Ranking Member Grijalva, members of the committee, I am honored to be invited to testify before you today.

Extreme environmental activist groups appear to have broad sway in the Department of the Interior under President Biden. These groups can often get their agenda implemented by the federal government without the need to support new laws in Congress, encouraging bureaucrats who are favorably disposed to their ideas to rewrite existing rules and regulations.

For example, on July 12, 2023, six environmental groups petitioned the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management at Interior, urging the agency to “end a routine practice of fast-tracking approval for offshore oil and gas projects.” The groups, including Earthjustice and the Sierra Club, condemned Interior’s “categorical exclusion” for oil and gas activities beginning in 1981. The groups urged Interior to tighten restrictions for “oil-and-gas exploration and development in the Gulf” of Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

Two months later, Interior issued a press release bragging that it announced the “fewest offshore oil and gas lease sales in history” for the Gulf of Mexico. Its plan for the 2024-2029 National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program includes a maximum of three potential oil and gas lease sales.

“The Biden-Harris administration is committed to building a clean energy future that ensures America’s energy independence,” Interior Secretary Deb Haaland said. “The Proposed Final Program, which represents the smallest number of oil and gas lease sales in history, sets a course for the department to support the growing offshore wind industry and protect against the potential for environmental damage and adverse impacts to coastal communities.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Gulf and Environmental Groups Call on Interior Department to End Routine Fast-Tracking of Offshore Oil Drilling Projects.” EarthJustice. July 12, 2023. <https://earthjustice.org/press/2023/gulf-and-environmental-groups-call-on-interior-department-to-end-routine-fast-tracking-of-offshore-oil-drilling-projects> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> “Reflecting America’s Rapid and Accelerating Shift to Clean Energy, Interior Department Announces Fewest Offshore Oil and Gas Lease Sales in History in Proposed Final Program for 2024–2029.” Interior Department news release. Sept. 29, 2023. <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/reflecting-americas-rapid-and-accelerating-shift-clean-energy-interior-department> Accessed April 27, 2024.

The plan proved so extreme, it inspired legal action from America's largest fossil fuel industry association, the American Petroleum Institute. API sued Interior in February, arguing that the plan restricting future offshore fossil fuel lease sales puts American consumers at risk and threatens U.S. energy security.

"In issuing a five-year program with the fewest lease sales in history, the administration is limiting access in a region responsible for generating among the lowest carbon-intensive barrels in the world, putting American consumers at greater risk of relying on foreign sources for our future energy needs," Ryan Meyers, API senior vice president and general counsel, told Fox News.<sup>3</sup>

Earlier this month, the Sierra Club praised new rules from Interior laying out the five-year schedule for offshore wind leasing. While Interior restricts oil and gas lease sales in the Gulf to 3, it plans for 12 offshore wind auctions in federal waters between 2024 and 2028.

"We are enthusiastic about these developments and remain dedicated to *collaborating with the Biden administration* and all stakeholders to maximize the potential of offshore wind, which is crucial for enhancing energy security and meeting our climate goals," Sierra Club Deputy Legislative Director Xavier Boatright said (emphasis added).<sup>4</sup>

Oil is cheaper and more reliable than wind energy. In 2022, petroleum accounted for 31% of U.S. energy production, while all renewable energy sources only accounted for 13%. Wind energy accounted for only 29% of that 13%, meaning that wind energy accounts for about 3.8% of America's energy production.<sup>5</sup> Wind energy also involves harvesting rare earth minerals through strip mining, an intensive process with toxic byproducts.<sup>6</sup> Yet Interior is investing in wind and turning away from oil, largely for ideological reasons.

How are these activist groups able to influence the administration in this way?

It may come as a surprise to many Democrats that the Left has a larger "dark money" network than the Right. A New York Times analysis showed that 15 of the most politically active nonprofit organizations that generally align with Democrats spent more than \$1.5

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<sup>3</sup> Catenacci, Thomas. "Biden admin hit with legal challenge over historic restrictions on offshore oil drilling." Fox News. Feb. 12, 2024. <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/biden-admin-hit-legal-challenge-historic-restrictions-offshore-oil-drilling> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> "Sierra Club Statement on Biden Administration Five-Year Plan for Offshore Wind." Sierra Club news release. April 24, 2024. <https://www.sierraclub.org/press-releases/2024/04/sierra-club-statement-biden-administration-five-year-plan-offshore-wind> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> "U.S. energy facts explained." U.S. Energy Information Administration. <https://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/us-energy-facts/> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Allen, Virginia. "Fact-Checking Wind and Solar Claims: Climate Expert Makes Case for 'Realism.'" The Daily Signal. April 3, 2024. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2024/04/03/fact-checking-wind-solar-claims-climate-expert-makes-case-realism/> April 27, 2024.

billion in 2020, compared to only \$900 million spent by a comparable sample of the most politically active groups aligned with Republicans.<sup>7</sup>

While “dark money” is not inherently nefarious, networks like the pass-through nonprofits under the Arabella Advisors umbrella can cloak the true source of donations. Arabella Advisors, a for-profit company, has launched multiple nonprofits, through which it funnels money to special projects. Those special projects, like the secretive group Governing for Impact, use their money to influence national policy. Governing for Impact claimed that the Biden administration acted on “more than 20” of its specific recommendations.<sup>8</sup>

The Arabella network has funneled money to many left-wing groups that impact the Biden administration, pushing radical agendas that do not advance America’s interests.

The Center for American Progress receives a great deal of money through the Arabella network. The Hopewell Fund funneled \$315,000 into CAP between 2020 and 2022.<sup>9</sup> The New Venture Fund poured \$2.97 million into CAP between 2012 and 2021.<sup>10</sup> The Sixteen

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<sup>7</sup> Vogen, Kenneth P. and Shane Goldmacher. “Democrats Decried Dark Money. Then They Won With It in 2020.” The New York Times. Jan. 22, 2022. Updated Aug. 21, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/29/us/politics/democrats-dark-money-donors.html> Accessed April 12, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Schoffstall, Joe. “Secretive Soros-funded group works behind the scenes with Biden admin on policy, documents show.” Fox News. April 26, 2022. <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/secretive-soros-funded-group-works-behind-scenes-biden-admin-policy-documents> Accessed April 15, 2024.

<sup>9</sup> “The Hopewell Fund.” Form 990 Schedule I for 2020, 2021, and 2022, accessed on April 22, 2024, via ProPublica. [https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/473681860/202143169349311614/IRS990ScheduleI\(2020\)](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/473681860/202143169349311614/IRS990ScheduleI(2020))  
[https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/473681860/202203139349304855/IRS990ScheduleI\(2021\)](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/473681860/202203139349304855/IRS990ScheduleI(2021))  
[https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/473681860/202333149349300038/IRS990ScheduleI\(2022\)](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/473681860/202333149349300038/IRS990ScheduleI(2022))

<sup>10</sup> “New Venture Fund.” Form 990 Schedule I for 2012-2021, accessed on April 22, 2024, via ProPublica. [https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/display\\_990/205806345/2013\\_12\\_EO%2F20-5806345\\_990\\_201212](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/display_990/205806345/2013_12_EO%2F20-5806345_990_201212) (2012)  
[https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201413219349306531/IRS990ScheduleI\(2013\)](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201413219349306531/IRS990ScheduleI(2013))  
[https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201523209349314357/IRS990ScheduleI\(2014\)](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201523209349314357/IRS990ScheduleI(2014))  
[https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201623359349300312/IRS990ScheduleI\(2015\)](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201623359349300312/IRS990ScheduleI(2015))  
[https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201723179349305572/IRS990ScheduleI\(2016\)](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201723179349305572/IRS990ScheduleI(2016))  
[https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201843169349302864/IRS990ScheduleI\(2017\)](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201843169349302864/IRS990ScheduleI(2017))  
[https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201903169349302480/IRS990ScheduleI\(2018\)](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201903169349302480/IRS990ScheduleI(2018))

Thirty Fund poured \$300,000 into the center between 2014 and 2021, with \$250,000 of that sum earmarked for “environmental (climate, conservation & energy) programs.”<sup>11</sup>

The Center for American Progress advocates for “environmental justice,” and praised the administration for advancing “an unprecedented climate, clean energy, and environmental justice agenda.”<sup>12</sup> CAP claims that “long-standing racial and environmental injustices disproportionately expose communities of color to climate pollution.”<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, the Department of the Interior is directing \$2 billion in funds through the so-called Inflation Reduction Act and other laws President Biden signed.<sup>14</sup>

Who determines where those funds go? None other than John Podesta, former chairman of Hillary Clinton’s campaign and founder of the Center for American Progress. Podesta serves as senior advisor to the president for clean energy innovation and implementation, and he oversees “implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act’s expansive clean energy and climate provisions.”<sup>15</sup>

Climate policies like those the Center for American Progress advances make energy more expensive and drive production outside the U.S. Ironically, this makes it more likely that

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<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/202043389349300039/IRS990ScheduleI> (2019)

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/202113169349310971/IRS990ScheduleI> (2020)

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/202243139349303999/IRS990ScheduleI> (2021)

<sup>11</sup> “Sixteen Thirty Fund.” Form 990 Schedule I for 2014 and 2021, accessed on April 22, 2024, via ProPublica.

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/264486735/201533209349314223/IRS990ScheduleI> (2014)

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/264486735/202243119349300829/IRS990ScheduleI> (2021)

<sup>12</sup> “Securing Environmental Justice for All.” Center for American Progress report. March 25, 2024.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/how-the-biden-administration-is-fighting-for-clean-air-and-water-climate-protection-and-healthy-communities-for-all/> Accessed April 26, 2024.

<sup>13</sup> “Advancing Racial Equity and Justice.” Center for American Progress.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/advancing-racial-equity-and-justice/> Accessed April 26, 2024.

<sup>14</sup> “America the Beautiful 2023 Annual Report.” Department of the Interior. January 2024.

<https://www.doi.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-01/jan-2024america-beautiful-2023-annual-report508-1.pdf> Accessed April 26, 2024.

<sup>15</sup> “President Biden Announces Senior Clean Energy and Climate Team.” White House Briefing Room. Sept. 2, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/09/02/president-biden-announces-senior-clean-energy-and-climate-team/> Accessed April 26, 2024.

other countries, which do not produce fossil fuels as cleanly as America, will pollute the environment.<sup>16</sup>

Radical environmental groups have also gotten their staff appointed to positions of power in Interior.

Tracy Stone-Manning, Biden's pick to lead the Bureau of Land Management, faced accusations that she helped eco-terrorists put spikes in trees in order to cause physical harm to loggers who dared cut them down. A former prosecutor said he investigated her in 1989 and 1993, and he described her as "vulgar, antagonistic, and extremely anti-government." Stone-Manning confessed that she had edited, retyped, and sent a threatening letter to the U.S. Forest Service on behalf of tree-spiking eco-terrorists.<sup>17</sup> Stone-Manning later claimed she "had no involvement in the spiking of trees" and does "not condone tree spiking or terrorism of any kind."<sup>18</sup>

Stone-Manning worked for four years at the National Wildlife Federation, which claims to combat climate change to help wildlife. The NWF has also advanced climate alarmist predictions that later proved false.

"The National Wildlife Federation working with federal agency partners developed an innovative planning approach known as 'climate-smart conservation,'" the NWF claims on its website.<sup>19</sup> The National Park Service, part of Interior, collaborated with the NWF on Climate Smart Conservation and cited the federation in its materials on the project.<sup>20</sup>

The National Wildlife Federation's close ties to Interior should not come as a surprise. In 2009, an Interior Department investigation into the Bureau of Land Management found that BLM was consulting NWF staff on budgeting, and NWF staff were writing and editing official BLM materials that promoted the NWF's priorities. An Inspector General report concluded that National Landscape Conservation System directors had engaged in inappropriate

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<sup>16</sup> "Report: U.S. Beats Competitors With Low Carbon Intensity Oil." Energy In Depth. June 2, 2023. <https://www.energyindepth.org/report-u-s-beats-competitors-with-low-carbon-intensity-oil/> Accessed April 26, 2024.

<sup>17</sup> "Lead Investigator: Tracy Stone-Manning Helped Plan 1989 Tree Spiking & Was a Target of the Investigation." Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources news release. July 15, 2021. <https://www.energy.senate.gov/2021/7/lead-investigator-tracy-stone-manning-helped-plan-1989-tree-spiking-was-a-target-of-the-investigation> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>18</sup> Lefebvre, Ben, Anthony Adragna, and Burgess Everett. "Biden's BLM pick hit with new allegations from former investigator in tree-spiking case." Politico. July 15, 2021. <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/07/15/biden-blm-pick-allegations-499739> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>19</sup> "Climate-Smart Conservation." World Wildlife Federation. <https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Climate/Climate-Change/Climate-Smart-Conservation> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>20</sup> "Climate Smart Conservation Planning for the National Parks." National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/climatesmartconservation.htm> Accessed April 27, 2024.

relationships with advocacy groups creating “the potential for conflicts of interest or violations of law.”<sup>21</sup>

The Justice Department declined to prosecute in lieu of administrative action.

Stone-Manning is not the only former NWF staffer to move to the Department of the Interior. Laura Daniel-Davis, who served as the chief of staff at Interior under Obama, worked at the group for three years, as a vice president for conservation strategy and chief of policy and advocacy. In late 2020 and into 2021, she worked on climate issues on the Biden-Harris transition team, landing at Interior in 2021.<sup>22</sup>

Biden nominated Daniel-Davis to serve as assistant secretary of Interior for land and minerals management in June 2021, but the Senate Energy Committee deadlocked on her nomination, her nomination timed out, and Biden renominated her in January 2022. Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., announced his opposition to Daniel-Davis on March 10, 2023.

Manchin faulted the nominee for agreeing with a decision that Manchin said involved the administration “putting their radical climate agenda ahead of the needs of the people of Alaska and the United States.” The document involved Interior’s decision making on an oil and gas lease sale off the coast of Alaska.<sup>23</sup>

Biden appointed Daniel-Davis acting deputy secretary at Interior in October 2023.

“This appointment is yet another example of this administration disregarding Congress and elevating nominees when they are unable to get the bipartisan support needed for confirmation,” Manchin said in response. “Their insistence on ignoring the confirmation process to advance their agenda undermines the role of the Senate and should be troubling to everyone.”<sup>24</sup>

The NWF has promoted former Vice President Al Gore’s climate propaganda documentary “An Inconvenient Truth,” which predicted that “there will be no more snows of Kilimanjaro” by 2016. Yet it continues to snow on the mountain in Tanzania.

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<sup>21</sup> Straub, Noelle. “BLM employees too cozy with advocacy groups – IG.” The New York Times. Oct. 5, 2009. Archived. <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/gwire/2009/10/05/05greenwire-blm-employees-too-cozy-with-advocacy-groups-ig-20341.html> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>22</sup> “Laura Daniel Davis.” LinkedIn profile. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/laura-daniel-davis-74168859/> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Frazin, Rachel. “Manchin indicates opposition to Biden lands nominee over internal memo.” The Hill. March 3, 2023. <https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/3883311-manchin-jeopardizes-chances-for-biden-lands-nominee/> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>24</sup> “Manchin Statement on Daniel-Davis Being Named Acting Deputy Secretary at Interior.” Senator Joe Manchin news release. Oct. 31, 2023. <https://www.manchin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/manchin-statement-on-daniel-davis-being-named-acting-deputy-secretary-at-interior> Accessed April 27, 2024.

The Arabella Network group New Venture Fund sent \$800,000 to the National Wildlife Federation between 2010 and 2016.<sup>25</sup> The Windward Fund sent the NWF \$100,000 in 2020.<sup>26</sup>

Arabella is not the only major “dark money” player on the Left. The Tides Foundation pioneered the Arabella “fiscal sponsorship” model, allowing donors to cloak which projects they were funding by directing funds through a nonprofit.

The Tides Foundation has bankrolled the Southern Poverty Law Center, a group I wrote a book about in 2020. Between 2018 and 2022, the Tides Foundation sent the SPLC more than \$1 million.<sup>27</sup> Although the SPLC has an endowment of \$731.9 million, this still represents a significant investment.<sup>28</sup>

The SPLC may have indirectly influenced policy at the Department of the Interior. The SPLC has become notorious for two major projects: its “hate map” where it puts mainstream conservative and Christian nonprofits on a map with chapters of the Ku Klux Klan; and its

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<sup>25</sup> “New Venture Fund.” Form 990, Schedule I, for 2010-2016, accessed April 27, 2024, via ProPublica.

[https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/display\\_990/205806345/2011\\_11\\_EO%2F20-5806345\\_990\\_201012](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/display_990/205806345/2011_11_EO%2F20-5806345_990_201012) (2010)

[https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/display\\_990/205806345/2013\\_12\\_EO%2F20-5806345\\_990\\_201212](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/display_990/205806345/2013_12_EO%2F20-5806345_990_201212) (2012)

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201413219349306531/IRS990ScheduleI> (marked as 2014)

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201523209349314357/IRS990ScheduleI> (2014)

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201623359349300312/IRS990ScheduleI> (2015)

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/205806345/201723179349305572/IRS990ScheduleI> (2016)

<sup>26</sup> “Windward Fund.” Form 990, Schedule I for 2020, accessed on April 27, 2024, via ProPublica.

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/473522162/202143169349311234/IRS990ScheduleI>

<sup>27</sup> The precise figure is \$1,038,381. “Tides Foundation” Form 990 Schedule I for 2018-2022, accessed April 26, 2024, via ProPublica.

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/510198509/201913189349314251/IRS990ScheduleI> (2018)

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/510198509/202043149349304239/IRS990ScheduleI> (2019)

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/510198509/202133149349300708/IRS990ScheduleI> (2020)

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/510198509/202233189349313898/IRS990ScheduleI> (2021)

<https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/510198509/202400469349300305/IRS990ScheduleI> (2022)

<sup>28</sup> “Financial Information.” Southern Poverty Law Center. <https://www.splcenter.org/about/financial-information> Accessed April 26, 2024.



efforts to remove Confederate monuments from public spaces. The SPLC has demanded the removal of Confederate monuments and celebrated their removals.<sup>29</sup>

While it makes sense to remove monuments celebrating hateful Confederates like Nathan Bedford Forrest, who went on to found the Ku Klux Klan, the SPLC comes in with a sledgehammer when a scalpel is required. Robert E. Lee, for example, is more complicated. While he fought for the Confederacy, Lee later helped heal the nation after the Civil War. The SPLC also published a map plotting Confederate monuments across the U.S., including elementary and middle schools. The map even included Stonewall Elementary, in Lexington, Kentucky. The school wasn't named after "Stonewall" Jackson, the Confederate general, however. It had been named after a literal stone wall. While the SPLC later apologized and removed the school, the incident highlights the group's desire to find hate where there isn't any.<sup>30</sup>

The movement to remove Confederate monuments arguably inspired vandals with Black Lives Matter to target statues of America's Founding Fathers. These vandals also targeted a monument celebrating the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts regiment, a regiment of black soldiers fighting for the Union. Vandals spray-painted anti-police messages and "RIP George Floyd" on the monument in 2020.<sup>31</sup>

The Southern Poverty Law Center appointed Kimberly A. Probolus-Cedroni, who received her Ph.D. in American Studies from The George Washington University, to help with the project "The Third Edition of Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy."<sup>32</sup>

In August 2022, Interior Secretary Haaland named Probolus-Cedroni to the Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names, an "advisory group to help identify and recommend changes to derogatory terms still in use for places throughout the country."<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> "SPLC Reports 48 Confederate Memorials Removed in 2022." Southern Poverty Law Center news release. April 12, 2023. <https://www.splcenter.org/presscenter/splc-reports-48-confederate-memorials-removed-2022> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>30</sup> Musgrave, Beth. "Stonewall Elementary gets an apology. It wasn't named for Confederate general." Lexington Herald-Leader. Oct. 18, 2017. <https://www.kentucky.com/news/local/counties/fayette-county/article179513491.html> Accessed April 28, 2024.

<sup>31</sup> O'Neil, Tyler. "The Violence Against This Civil War Monument Captures Just How Badly the George Floyd Riots Have Gone Wrong." PJ Media. June 4, 2020. <https://pjmedia.com/tyler-o-neil/2020/06/04/george-floyd-rioters-deface-civil-war-monument-celebrating-black-union-patriots-n495913> Accessed April 28, 2024.

<sup>32</sup> "Kimberly A. Probolus." American Council of Learned Societies. <https://www.acls.org/fellow-grantees/kimberly-a-probolus/> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>33</sup> "Secretary Haaland Announces Members of the Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names." Department of the Interior news release. Aug. 9, 2022. <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-haaland-announces-members-advisory-committee-reconciliation-place-names> Accessed April 27, 2024.

The minutes for the committee’s meetings on June 14 and June 15, 2023, mention that Probolus-Cedroni, now a public history teacher in Washington, D.C., noted her previous work with the SPLC, “where she worked on policies to remove Confederate memorials and monuments.” The minutes add, “She expressed her gratitude for being able to continue to work toward racial and social justice with the work of the committee.”<sup>34</sup>

According to OpenSecrets, the Southern Poverty Law Center contracted with the lobbying firm NVG, L.L.C. to lobby the Department of the Interior on “historic designations.”<sup>35</sup>

The SPLC praised Secretary Haaland for including Probolus-Cedroni on the committee, though the center did not mention her by name.

“We are thrilled with Secretary Deb Haaland’s announcement and her efforts to remove hateful names from public space,” SPLC Chief of Staff and Culture Lecia Brooks said in a statement. “Our *Whose Heritage?* Project contributes to this effort by mapping and tracking data on Confederate monuments and memorials – including some on federal land. We hope the tribal leaders, scholars, and activists on the committee will use our important resources.”

“Just as no person of color should have to serve on a military base named after a Confederate, no one should have to visit a national park whose name is rooted in legacies of hate and white supremacy,” Brooks continued.<sup>36</sup>

SPLC has faced harsh criticism for defining “hate” broadly. It publishes a “hate map” plotting mainstream conservative and Christian groups like Alliance Defending Freedom, the Center for Immigration Studies, the Federation on American Immigration Reform, and the Center for Security Policy as “hate groups” alongside Klan chapters.<sup>37</sup> Last year, the SPLC even added parental rights groups like Moms for Liberty and Parents Defending Education to the “hate map,” suggesting that moms and dads who want a say in their kids’ education are the modern equivalent of men in white hoods burning crosses.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> “Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names Meeting Minutes, June 14 and 15, 2023.” National Park Service. <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1892/upload/June-2023-Meeting-Minutes-2.pdf> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>35</sup> “Southern Poverty Law Center Is Represented By NVG, LLC.” ProPublica Lobbying Representation. <https://projects.propublica.org/represent/lobbying/r/301035891> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>36</sup> “SPLC Applauds Appointments to Advisory Committee on Reconciliation in Place Names.” Southern Poverty Law Center news release. Aug. 10, 2022. <https://www.splcenter.org/presscenter/splc-applauds-appointments-advisory-committee-reconciliation-place-names> Accessed April 27, 2024.

<sup>37</sup> O’Neil, Tyler. “Making Hate Pay: The Corruption of the Southern Poverty Law Center.” New York: Bombardier Books, 2020. pp. 87-120.

<sup>38</sup> O’Neil, Tyler. “Far-Left Group Puts Moms for Liberty on Map With KKK Chapters.” The Daily Signal. June 6, 2023. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2023/06/06/breaking-southern-poverty-law-center-adds-parental-rights-groups-hate-map/> Accessed April 26, 2024.

In 2019, amid a racial discrimination and sexual harassment scandal that led the SPLC to fire its co-founder, a former employee came forward, calling the “hate” accusations a “highly profitable scam.”<sup>39</sup>

The SPLC has even suggested that the entire Roman Catholic Church should be considered a “hate group.” It cited as evidence of “hate” a direct quote from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the binding document stating the essential and fundamental content of the Catholic faith.<sup>40</sup>

Yet SPLC President Margaret Huang bragged to donors that in the early days of the Biden administration, federal agencies reached out to “solicit our expertise” to “help shape the policies” to counter “the domestic terrorism threat.”<sup>41</sup>

That’s not just braggadocio – the Justice Department listened to the SPLC right after it put Moms for Liberty on the “hate map.”<sup>42</sup> Biden appointed an SPLC attorney, Nancy Abudu, to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.<sup>43</sup> The FBI cited the SPLC in its notorious memo going after “radical traditional Catholics.”<sup>44</sup>

This group’s overly broad condemnations have no place at the Department of the Interior.

Radical environmentalist groups and groups like the SPLC enjoy the support of a dark money network that helps them influence the Biden administration, placing staff and leaders into the bureaucracy and moving the needle on policy in a way that weakens America’s energy sector and energy independence.

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<sup>39</sup> Moser, Bob. “The Reckoning of Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center.” *The New Yorker*. March 21, 2019. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-reckoning-of-morris-dees-and-the-southern-poverty-law-center> Accessed April 26, 2024.

<sup>40</sup> O’Neil, “Making Hate Pay.” p. 108.

<sup>41</sup> O’Neil, Tyler. “ORWELLIAN NIGHTMARE: Biden Admin Consulted Anti-Christian Group for ‘Domestic Terrorism’ Strategy.” *The Daily Signal*. Jan. 11, 2024. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2024/01/11/exclusive-biden-admin-approached-anti-christian-splc-help-shape-policies-counter-domestic-terror-threat/> Accessed April 26, 2024.

<sup>42</sup> O’Neil, Tyler. “SMOKING GUN: Biden DOJ Took Advice From Group Demonizing Concerned Parents, Docs Show.” *The Daily Signal*. March 7, 2024. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2024/03/07/exclusive-splc-ried-sic-doj-hate-crimes-division-moms-liberty/> Accessed April 26, 2024.

<sup>43</sup> O’Neil, Tyler. “5 Things to Know About Nancy Abudu, Leftist SPLC Lawyer Biden Tapped for 11th Circuit.” *The Daily Signal*. Feb. 1, 2023. Updated May 18, 2023. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2023/02/01/5-things-know-nancy-abudu-leftist-splc-lawyer-biden-tapped-11th-circuit/> Accessed April 26, 2024.

<sup>44</sup> O’Neil, Tyler. “WHISTLEBLOWER DOCS: FBI Cites Southern Poverty Law Center in Report on ‘Radical-Traditionalist Catholic Ideology.’” *The Daily Signal*. Feb. 8, 2023. <https://www.dailysignal.com/2023/02/08/whistleblower-docs-fbi-cites-southern-poverty-law-center-in-report-on-radical-traditionalist-catholic-ideology/> Accessed April 26, 2024.