



Written by [Matt O'Brien](#) on May 5, 2026

SPLC Mischief Was Fueled by Media Complicity and Lazy Reporting

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is in a heap of trouble. The organization is facing a [federal indictment](#) charging it with 11 counts of wire fraud, false statements to a federally insured bank, and conspiracy to commit concealment money laundering. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, between 2014 and 2023 the SPLC secretly funneled more than \$3 million in donated funds to individuals who were associated with various violent extremist groups.

Thus, accountability is finally at hand for the SPLC, and this is welcome news for scores of individuals and organizations who have long known the true nature of the organization and been on the receiving end of its baseless smears and slander. But while the SPLC now has to answer for its actions, the question is whether anyone in the media will also be held accountable for their participation; namely, supporting the SPLC by recklessly parroting its lies and failing to scrutinize the legitimacy of the organization's wild claims.



Matt O'Brien

What the media has conveniently ignored over many years is that the SPLC operates as a far-left political attack machine masquerading as a social justice organization, a deception designed to fuel the well-engineered fundraising machine that has made them rich. The most recently [published tax filing](#) reveals the SPLC raised \$126 million in 2024 and held total assets of \$822 million — a good reason why the locals in Montgomery, Alabama, call the organization's towering headquarters the "Poverty Palace."

By failing to acknowledge that the SPLC was a biased political instrument of the Left, the media became useful apparatchiks for the organization. This was especially true after 2007, when America had a protracted debate about whether to grant amnesty to millions of illegal aliens and vastly expand immigrant admissions. When the public rejected the plans, the SPLC quickly identified immigration as a profitable new marketing niche and launched a vicious campaign of ad hominem attacks against organizations who support enforcement of U.S. immigration laws.

Central to those attacks was the SPLC-concocted term "hate group," for which it offered no objective criteria or definition, allowing them carte blanche to smear any group with whom they disagreed politically knowing that the media would lap it up. At the same time, the SPLC unfairly mixed legitimate public-policy organizations they had labeled as "hate groups" alongside truly despicable organizations



Written by [Matt O'Brien](#) on May 5, 2026

like the Ku Klux Klan and Aryan Nation. The purpose was to imply relationships or moral equivalency between the groups. Though none ever existed, the media was too lazy to delineate between fact and fiction.

The “hate group” label expanded beyond immigration policy groups. For years afterwards, the SPLC stirred the pot with increasingly absurd and spurious claims, even asserting at one point that 15 percent of Americans (45 million) belonged to so-called hate groups. It got to the point where any lawmaker or public policy group that endorsed the rule of law, traditional values, or a constitutionally limited government who had not yet been denounced by the SPLC was wondering what they were doing wrong. Though they overplayed their hand, the SPLC remained determined and their objectives were clear: Create fear, fuel discord, increase the organization’s wealth, and shut down policy debate. Their tactics were anti-American and loathsome ... and yet the media couldn’t get enough, reacting like Pavlov’s dogs whenever they heard the hate word.

Thus, whenever a reporter working on story called a conservative public policy group or individual to solicit insight and analysis, the journalist felt duty-bound to next call the SPLC for reaction, whereupon the reporter was often told, “Oh, they’re on our hate group list.” Predictably, the next day the story would publish with the policy group’s leader’s comments unfortunately prefaced by a qualifier that his group was listed a “hate group according to the SPLC.”

Because reporters neglected to investigate the veracity of the SPLC’s characterizations and failed to distinguish between advocacy reporting and news, reputations were damaged, Americans were deceived, and respect for journalism hit a new low.

To be fair, not all media have allowed themselves to be manipulated. At least three reputable news publications — *The Montgomery Advertiser* (SPLC’s hometown paper), *Harper’s* magazine, and *The Nation* — have all examined SPLC’s record and concluded that they routinely distort and exaggerate the truth for the purpose of fundraising.

In 1823, Thomas Jefferson wrote that “the only security of all is in a free press.” The operative word being “free,” which in journalism implies an absence of bias and influence, and an adherence to facts.

Had any of this been done, the SPLC “Poverty Palace” would have collapsed long ago given its dependence on media complicity. Until it does, no reporter with any professional integrity should ever consider the SPLC as a credible source of information.

Dr. Matt O’Brien is the deputy executive director at the [Federation for American Immigration Reform](#) (FAIR). Matt has 30 years of experience in immigration law and policy. Immediately prior to joining FAIR, he was the Assistant Chief Immigration Judge, overseeing the U.S. Immigration Court at Annandale, Virginia.



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.