



**Connecting the Dots:  
*Combating Hate and Violence in America***

America is the only country in the world with more guns than people. Every single day, shootings tear our families and communities apart. And every year, we lose nearly 40,000 people to gun violence.

This isn't normal. And it doesn't have to be this way. But it will not change unless we face what's behind this epidemic of gun violence – and connect the dots between hatred, racism and white supremacy, and the manifestation of that hatred through violence.

We must connect the dots between this president locking children in cages, calling Latinx community members an “infestation,” and a white supremacist killer using the same language in an act of domestic terrorism taking 22 lives in El Paso. We must connect the dots between a president who sought to ban Muslims from entering the United States and a mosque burning to the ground the very next day. We must connect the dots between internet communities providing a platform for online radicalization and white supremacy, as propaganda outlets like Fox News fuel that fire, and the fact that hate crimes against Black and LGBTQ+ Americans are on the rise.

We must connect these dots. And we must not let these moments define us. Instead, what will define America from El Paso, Texas to Baltimore, Maryland to Chicago, Illinois is the resilience and radical hope that communities have shown in response to these tragedies.

We will confront division and hatred by restoring our faith in humanity, in one another, and this country. And it will take all of us – because when any one community is targeted, the very idea of America is under attack.

Today, Beto is calling on all of us to connect the dots and take immediate action to end the culture of hate and violence in America.

**Connect the dots to combat hate, white nationalism, and violence perpetuated by media and online radicalization:**

- 1. Mobilize the federal government to combat white supremacy, racism, and domestic terrorism.**
  - **Ensure that the FBI and DOJ prioritize right wing violence.** As President, Beto will make cracking down on white supremacy a top priority by treating far-right violence as an organized crime problem, improving data collection regarding hate crimes, allocating resources to fight domestic terrorism based on the severity of the threats posed by groups

likely to commit violent acts, and developing comprehensive strategies to protect minority communities from far-right violence.

- **Identify white nationalism as a threat in counterterrorism strategy and create dedicated domestic terrorism offices within DHS, DOJ and the FBI.** FBI Director Christopher Wray recently testified that there have been almost as many domestic terror arrests in the first three quarters of the fiscal year -- about 100 -- as there have been arrests connected to international terror. Wray also testified that the majority of the domestic terrorism cases were motivated by some version of white supremacist violence. Yet Trump has failed to make combating domestic terrorism a priority. As president, Beto will identify white nationalism as a threat in the National Counterterrorism Strategy and ensure the Department of Homeland Security has adequate resources to combat it. Beto will create an interagency task force to combat white supremacy and Neo-Nazism and restore the funding within DHS to target violence and terrorism prevention.

## **2. Hold internet companies accountable for hosting and allowing for the amplification of hate speech and domestic terrorism.**

- **Block terrorist content online.** The [New York Times](#) reports that, since 2011, a third of white extremists responsible for attacks were inspired by others who had carried out similar attacks. Yet the internet continues to serve as a breeding ground for the rise of domestic terrorists and white supremacists. Beto is calling on internet hosting companies to follow Cloudflare's lead to not allow 8chan back online and supports the closure of 8chan, Stormfront and other white nationalist communities housed on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.
- **Require large social media platforms to create systems designed to remove hateful activities on their sites.** Beto would require large internet platforms to adopt terms of service to ban hateful activities, defined as those that incite or engage in violence, intimidation, harassment, threats, or defamation targeting an individual or group based on their actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, immigration status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or disability. These companies also would be required to put in place systems designed to identify and act on content violating the terms of service. Platforms must be transparent when they block content and provide for an appeal process in order to guard against abuse.
- **Amend Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act.** Beto supports amending Section 230 of the CDA to remove legal immunity from lawsuits for large social media platforms that fail to change their terms of service and put in place systems as described above. Informational service providers of all sizes, including domain name servers and social media platforms, also would be held liable where they are found to knowingly promote content that incites violence.

## **3. Galvanize the international community to counter extremist and violent rhetoric.**

- Donald Trump and right-wing authoritarians around the world are using racism to divide people across the globe. Combatting this requires global solutions. As president, Beto will sign the Christchurch Call to Action, which has been ignored by the Trump

Administration, and will require the National Counterterrorism Center to coordinate with international partners to investigate global links to white nationalist violence.

**Connect the dots between the NRA's influence in politics, lax gun laws, and failure of Congressional action and America's epidemic of gun violence.**

- 1. End influence of NRA in stifling progress on gun violence prevention.** Our system is broken when lawmakers are more representative of special interests like the NRA than people they were elected to serve who are being gunned down in their places of worship, schools and neighborhoods. As president, Beto will sign into law the No PAC Act, which he introduced as a Member of Congress, which would ban PAC contributions to Members of Congress or those seeking federal office.
- 2. Create a nationwide gun licensing system and registry.** Beto will work with Congress to create a nationwide gun licensing system that will ensure individuals seeking a gun undergo an assessment by law enforcement and a background check. Individuals must be 21 years old to receive a license, will be required to complete a certified gun safety training, and will need to renew their licenses every five years. Individuals will also be required to register their guns through a registry and all new handguns will be microstamped. In recognition of the country's long hunting tradition, those under 21 with hunting licenses will be able to lawfully possess firearms for hunting. States will have the flexibility to administer their own licensing systems, allowing them to set higher standards. Where a state does not have a system in place, the federal government will administer the system.
- 3. Require universal background checks at point of purchase.** The vast majority of Americans support background checks for individuals seeking to purchase guns, yet only 12 states and Washington, D.C. have adopted universal background checks. In order to receive a gun license, individuals would be required to undergo a background check.
- 4. Ban Assault Weapons, Trigger Cranks, Silencers, Bump Stocks, and High-Capacity Magazines.** Since the assault weapons ban expired in 2004, mass shootings have skyrocketed and become deadlier. Beto will work with Congress to ban the manufacturing, sale, and possession of military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.
- 5. Implement a national buyback program for banned assault weapons and handguns.** Weapons of war belong on the battlefield, not in our communities or on our streets. Beto is calling for a mandatory buyback program for assault weapons and a voluntary buyback program for handguns. To create a funding stream for buybacks, Beto will increase the excise tax on gun manufacturers and fines imposed on gun traffickers, and will enable ATF to purchase any banned assault weapons presented to the agency. Individuals who fail to participate in the mandatory buyback of assault weapons will be fined.
- 6. Make it harder for people to stockpile weapons.** As president, Beto will limit individuals to one gun purchase per month and direct ATF to deem any individual or business that sells over five guns in a single year a gun "dealer." Dealers are subject to background check requirements.
- 7. Implement Extreme Risk Protection Orders, also known as Red Flag Laws, and close loopholes so domestic abusers, those who pose a threat to themselves or others can't get**

**guns.** As president, Beto will establish a federal red flag law, allowing police departments in states without red flag laws to petition in federal courts to have weapons removed from those who present a danger to themselves or others. Beto will also work with Congress to close loopholes that allow dangerous individuals and domestic abusers from accessing guns, including the private sale loophole (online and gun shows), the boyfriend loophole, and the Charleston loophole.

- 8. Declare gun violence a public health emergency.** When 40,000 people a year die of gun violence, it is an emergency. Beto will use executive powers to direct his Surgeon General to recognize gun violence as a public health crisis and will invest \$320 million annually for the CDC and NIH to study gun violence.
- 9. Make gun trafficking a federal crime.** America's weak gun laws have contributed to the spread in gun violence abroad. Currently, individuals who traffic multiple guns to individuals prohibited from firearm possession or through straw purchases are often only able to be prosecuted for a paperwork violation. As President, Beto will address this by making gun trafficking and straw purchases federal crimes.