

# Hundreds of Patriot Front fascists march in Washington during US 250th anniversary celebration

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Roughly 400 members of the fascist group Patriot Front marched through Washington D.C. on July 4, during official celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the United States. The white supremacists paraded near the U.S. Capitol, Union Station and the Metro system, carrying American and Confederate flags and chanting, “Reclaim America.” No arrests were reported.

The marchers wore khaki pants, white face coverings and tan hats bearing the Patriot Front logo: a fascio, a bundle of rods and an axe associated with Italian fascism. Many of the hats also carried slogans such as “Beware of foreign influence” and “American native,” underscoring the group’s fascist and anti-immigrant politics.

The spectacle was a stark expression of the political reality in the United States 250 years after the Declaration of Independence. Fascists were allowed to march openly in the nation’s capital, under conditions in which the White House is preparing further attacks on immigrants, socialists, protesters and all opponents of dictatorship. The same state that treats anti-ICE speech as a potential federal crime invoked “First Amendment” protections for an organization that openly advocates a white ethnostate.

Patriot Front is a neo-fascist and white supremacist organization founded by Thomas Rousseau after the deadly August 2017 “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, where anti-racist protester Heather Heyer was murdered. The group emerged as a split from Vanguard America, a neo-Nazi organization involved in that rally. Its founding manifesto calls for “American Fascism” and makes clear that non-whites are not “Americans.”

Since Trump’s return to the White House, the group

claims to have held marches and demonstrations in several US states, including Preston, Idaho; Charlotte, North Carolina; Kansas City, Missouri and Nashville, Tennessee.

The fascists were largely met with hostility or indifference from D.C. residents. Reuters photographers and local media documented the group riding Metro trains, producing widely shared images of ordinary passengers, including black residents, forced to sit beside rows of masked white supremacists.

The march provoked a revealing response from leading figures in the Republican Party and its media apparatus. Rather than condemn the fascists, they claimed, without evidence, that the march was staged by the left or by anti-fascists. Fox News host Laura Ingraham wrote on X, “I call fake. Looks more like Antifa in costume. No one should be allowed to cover their faces.” Utah Senator Mike Lee wrote, “Patriot Front: Brought to you by leftists who don’t know that patriots don’t wear masks.” In another post, Lee asked, “Are these really the most believable fake white supremacists SPLC money can buy?” He later added, “Democrats need to stop reminding America of their racist history.”

These statements are a political cover-up aimed at concealing the obvious fact that the group’s fascist and anti-immigrant politics are virtually inseparable from the Trump movement and modern Republican Party. The group’s politics overlap directly with the program advanced from the White House by Stephen Miller and the Trump administration: the demonization of immigrants, the assertion that the United States belongs to a mythic “native” population, and the use of racism as the ideological spearhead of dictatorship.

The official response to the march further exposes the class character of “free speech” under the Trump administration. Asked by CNN’s Dana Bash about the Patriot Front march, Interior Secretary Doug Burgum said that while he personally disagreed with the group’s message, “there are plenty of things that I see that I might personally find offensive, irreprehensible, [sic] but in America, free speech is allowed, and this is by the whole spectrum of things.”

This invocation of “free speech” for fascists stands in stark contrast to the draconian sentences handed down in the Prairieland case, where 15 defendants face over 500 years in prison, overwhelmingly for political activity directed against the far right. It likewise contrasts with the treatment of ordinary people who have criticized the government’s mass deportation operation and the murders of Renée Good and Alex Pretti.

Last week, David Streever, who emailed former ICE Director Todd Lyons denouncing the killings, was visited months later by Homeland Security Investigations agents at his home. Paigelynne Gonyea, who called on social media for the indictment of Jonathan Ross, the ICE officer who murdered Good, was confronted by federal agents at a polling station and handed a notice warning, “YOU MAY BE IN VIOLATION OF FEDERAL LAW.”

The Democratic Party, for its part, has offered no serious response to the fascist march in the capital. As of this writing, there has been no prominent national campaign by leading Democrats denouncing Patriot Front’s appearance in Washington. This silence flows from the class character of the Democratic Party, which fears above all that opposition to fascism, police repression and dictatorship will develop outside the framework of the two-party system and take the form of an independent movement of the working class.

Patriot Front and similar fascist organizations are able to fester because the social force capable of sweeping them aside, the working class, is politically blocked by the Democratic Party and its allied trade union apparatus. The Democrats issue occasional statements of concern about “extremism,” while funding the police, ICE, the military and the intelligence agencies that cultivate, protect and make use of the far right. They do not seek to mobilize workers against fascism because such a movement would immediately come

into conflict with the capitalist system and the state institutions both parties defend.

This was the essential political content of the July 4 events in Washington. On the 250th anniversary of the United States, fascists were permitted to march openly through the capital. The same ruling class that invokes “free speech” for masked white supremacists threatens anti-ICE critics, prosecutes left-wing protesters and hands down draconian sentences against those accused of opposing the far right.



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