

Anti-immigrant hate groups are on the rise, and their shared agenda of persecuting immigrants and shaping racial demographics have found new sympathizers in the Trump administration. Language originated by hate groups has been weaponized, and veterans of hate group leadership now work for the government. The media, in using the language of these groups, legitimizes the insidious reasoning used to separate families, spread fear within immigrant communities, and profile American citizens.

Origins of Hate

The three most commonly cited anti-immigrant hate groups are the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), the Federation for American Immigration reform (FAIR) and NumbersUSA. They engage in media advocacy, research, and lobbying. All three organizations were **founded by John Tanton**, a retired Michigan ophthalmologist who also founded the pro-eugenics organization Society for Genetic Education.



“Modern medicine and social programs are eroding the human gene pool.”

- John Tanton

Source: [The Tanton Papers](#)

Often under the guise of supporting environmental conservation efforts, the groups have become successful fundraisers, and communicators of their anti-immigrant message. In 2018, all three organizations' combined assets totaled over \$25 million. While these organization may engage in respectable public demonstrations, such as press conferences and ad campaigns, their agendas remain rooted in segregation, eugenics, and racial discrimination. **FAIR received donations from The Pioneer Fund**, an organization that also funded eugenics research, and the works of white supremacist and segregationist Jared Taylor.

Increasing Influence

It is common practice for journalists to refrain from citing people and organizations with similar documented intentions, such as the KKK, Neo-Nazis, or Alt-Right leaders.

However, this precedent is ignored by most mainstream news publications when it comes to anti-immigrant hate groups. Define American's research of *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *USA Today* coverage indicates that citations of CIS, FAIR, and NumbersUSA increased by over 600% between six month periods in 2016 and 2018. *The Washington Post* was the most egregious of the four publications, citing the three hate groups nine times in the first half of 2016, and 50 times in the first half of 2018.

Jan-Jul 2016	FAIR	NumbersUSA	CIS
NYT	1	1	2
LAT	0	0	0
WaPo	1	0	8
USAToday	1	1	1

Jan-Jul 2018	FAIR	NumbersUSA	CIS
NYT	8	3	16
LAT	2	0	7
WaPo	6	7	37
USAToday	4	3	9

Direct Ties to the Trump Administration

Jon Feere, Julie Kirchner, and Robert Law – former leadership from FAIR and CIS – all now work for immigration agencies within the federal government. Yet journalists cite these organizations for comment and context on immigration policies without disclosing that these organizations have close ties to the administration that created the policies.

Our Style Guide Recommendations

Journalists must stop citing anti-immigrant extremists who are part of the Tanton Network.

If they are cited, journalists should include the necessary context of their relationships within the Trump administration.

We ask journalists to instead cite organizations with views that are more representative of the common perspectives on immigration and not hate groups in their coverage of immigration.