

Hate groups are on the rise, and our country is in the throes of an increasingly emboldened anti-immigrant government which is trampling on the rights of undocumented American immigrants and citizens alike. Mainstream media publications are inadvertently legitimizing anti-immigrant hate speech by using the same language as this administration in their coverage.

Under the current 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 hate groups, and government are legitimizing this toxic rhetoric used as a reason to separate families and profile American citizens.

It has been common practice in recent decades not to cite hate groups, such as the KKK, neo-Nazis or “alt-right” leaders on common matters of policy or public discourse. Practices regarding anti-immigrant hate groups should be no different.

Ethical and fair journalists should not reference these organizations. We are asking journalists to be diligent in quoting sources from different perspectives, not known hate groups.

If journalists decide they have to cite these organizations in stories about the administration's immigration policies, they should make sure to disclose that these groups have direct ties to the government agencies responsible for crafting and enforcing said policies.

Example: “Chain Migration”

- Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), which have been designated as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center, have for years advocated for policies to rein in what they call “chain migration.” “Chain migration” is a derogatory euphemism for family-based migration, a cornerstone of America’s immigration policy.
- “Chain migration” is meant to put in the audience’s mind the image of hundreds of people entering the United States through a single family member sponsoring said family members. This is false.
- Upon becoming president, Donald Trump hires senior staff from FAIR and CIS. John Feere, Julie Kirchner, and Robert Law -- former leadership staff from these groups -- all now work for immigration agencies within the federal government.
- President Trump begins to talk about the evils of “chain migration” in tweets and in speeches. Some reporters covering the president start using the term without properly contextualizing the erroneous use of the euphemism and the facts about family-based migration.
- Reporters then go to FAIR, and CIS to comment on the evils of “chain migration,” without disclosing that these groups helped create this term, that they are SPLC-designated hate groups, or that they have direct ties to the administration.
- With the phrase “chain migration” legitimized by reporters, the Trump administration uses the issue as a reason to increase its draconian anti-immigrant policies, such as separating children from their parents at the border, slashing refugee acceptance, and banning Muslims from certain countries.

Our Style Guide Recommendations:

- Journalists must stop citing hate groups, confirmed by the Southern Poverty Law Center, as the representatives who oppose organizations advocating for the freedoms of immigrants.
 - Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR)
 - Center for Immigration Studies (CIS)
- These groups should never be cited without including the necessary context that they are hate groups or have relevant relationships within the Trump administration.
- We are asking journalists to cite organizations with views that are more representative of the common perspectives on immigration and not hate groups in their coverage of immigration.