# Bipartisan condemnation for 'Unite the Right' rally

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<http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/12/politics/parties-condemn-white-nationalist-rally/index.html>

**(CNN)**As thousands of white nationalist and alt-right protesters descended on Charlottesville, Virginia, for the "Unite the Right" rally Saturday, causing violence and a state of emergency, voices from both sides of the aisle have emerged to condemn the gathering.

President Donald Trump, speaking in Bedminster, New Jersey, said he condemned "in the strongest possible terms this egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides, on many sides."

"It has been going on for a long time in our country -- not Donald Trump, not Barack Obama. It has been going on for a long, long time. It has no place in America," he added. He did not mention white nationalists and the alt-right movement in his remarks.

Trump also took to Twitter earlier Saturday afternoon to weigh in on the violent demonstration, which has caused Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe to issue [a state of emergency.](http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/12/us/charlottesville-white-nationalists-rally/index.html)

"We ALL must be united & condemn all that hate stands for," the President wrote. "There is no place for this kind of violence in America. Lets come together as one!"

Vice President Mike Pence echoed Trump's sentiment on Twitter, quoting the President's tweet and adding, "I stand with @POTUS against hate & violence."

"U.S is greatest when we join together & oppose those seeking to divide us," he continued.

The rally could be the "largest hate-gathering of its kind in decades in the United States," according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. Police began to break up crowds shortly before noon after city officials declared the gathering an "unlawful assembly."

But tensions between those attending the rally and counter-protesters [continued throughout the day](http://www.cnn.com/2017/08/12/us/charlottesville-white-nationalists-rally/index.html). At least one person was killed and 19 were injured a speeding car slammed into a throng of counterprotesters, according to [a statement](https://twitter.com/CvilleCityHall/status/896464401573842945) released on the City of Charlottesville's verified Twitter account. The driver was later taken into custody, the city said in a news release. It did not name the person.

Trump's failure to explicitly mention that white nationalists were behind the protests and violence drew criticism from Republican leaders, including Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch, the most senior Republican in the Senate.

"We should call evil by its name. My brother didn't give his life fighting Hitler for Nazi ideas to go unchallenged here at home," Hatch tweeted.

Hatch's office also responded to a march of torch-bearing white nationalists on Friday night, saying "their tiki torches may be fueled by citronella but their ideas are fueled by hate, & have no place in civil society."

Colorado Republican Sen. Cory Gardner also criticized Trump for not being specific in his condemnation of Saturday's violence.

"Mr. President - we must call evil by its name,"[Gardner tweeted.](https://twitter.com/SenCoryGardner/status/896472477844385792) "These were white supremacists and this was domestic terrorism."

First lady Melania Trump joined her husband in condemning the violence, as did the President's homeland security and counterterrorism aide, Thomas Bossert.

"Our country encourages freedom of speech, but let's communicate w/o hate in our hearts," the first lady tweeted Saturday afternoon. "No good comes from violence."

"The violence and hate in Charlotte (sic) are unacceptable. Protests must not undermine law and order, Bossert wrote on Twitter. He added that he has "confidence in state/local law enforcement."

White House adviser and first daughter Ivanka Trump chimed in on Sunday morning with a call for unity. "There should be no place in society for racism, white supremacy and neo-nazis," she tweeted. "We must all come together as Americans -- and be one country UNITED."

Other Republicans, including House Speaker Paul Ryan, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Sen. John McCain of Arizona and Republican National Committee Chairwoman Ronna Romney McDaniel, all spoke out against the rally.

Ryan wrote on Twitter Saturday that "the views fueling the spectacle in Charlottesville are repugnant."

"Let it only serve to unite Americans against this kind of vile bigotry," he continued. He later added "White supremacy is a scourge. This hate and its terrorism must be confronted and defeated."

McCain issued a passionate statement Saturday evening in response to the rally and the car attack.

"Our Founders fought a revolution for the idea that all men are created equal," his statement read. "The heirs of that revolution fought a Civil War to save our nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to that revolutionary proposition. Nothing less is at stake on the streets of Charlottesville, Virginia, where a violent attack has taken at least one American life and injured many others in a confrontation between our better angels and our worst demons."

"White supremacists and neo-Nazis are, by definition, opposed to American patriotism and the ideals that define us as a people and make our nation special," McCain continued. "As we mourn the tragedy that has occurred in Charlottesville, American patriots of all colors and creeds must come together to defy those who raise the flag of hatred and bigotry."

McConnell [tweeted](https://twitter.com/SenateMajLdr/status/896431863866241024), "The hate and bigotry witnessed in #Charlottesville does not reflect American values. I wholeheartedly oppose their actions."

And McDaniel said that hatred and bigotry was "dangerous (and) cowardly."

"Free speech may give them the right to do this but also empowers us to unite to loudly speak out against it," she wrote in a follow-up tweet.

Across the aisle, former President Barack Obama quoted Nelson Mandela in reaction to the day's violence.

"'No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin or his background or his religion. ... People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love. ... For love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite," he wrote in a series of tweets.

Trump's 2016 rival Hillary Clinton also took to Twitter to condemn the protests.

"My heart is in Charlottesville today, and with everyone made to feel unsafe in their country," the former secretary of state wrote. In a series of subsequent tweets, Clinton implicitly called out the President for his failure to specifically condemn the white nationalists who organized the event.

"The incitement of hatred that got us here is as real and condemnable as the white supremacists in our streets," she wrote "Every minute we allow this to persist through tacit encouragement or inaction is a disgrace, & corrosive to our values. Now is the time for leaders to be strong in their words & deliberate in their actions."

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi tweeted directly at the President about his remarks, writing: "Repeat after me, @realDonaldTrump: white supremacy is an affront to American values."

She also spoke out against the rally, tweeting, "Our nation is defined by the march of progress. Our strength lies in our diversity. We must reject hate."

Earlier, former President Bill Clinton tweeted, "Even as we protect free speech and assembly, we must condemn hatred, violence and white supremacy."

And former Vice President Joe Biden wrote on Twitter: "No. Not in America. We must be stronger, more determined and more united than ever. Racism and hate have no place here."

He also responded to Trump's "many sides" statement with a tweet reading "There is only one side. #charlottesville."

Former Vice President Al Gore, speaking at the progressive Netroots Nation gathering in Atlanta, said he "was surprised" by the President's statement.

"The statement appeared to give a kind of moral equivalence to the people who had organized this KKK-Nazi march and the people who said, 'We're going to stand against fascism and Nazism and racism, and we don't want that in our community,'" Gore said.

"Mr. President, for the sake of our country, I would urge you to try again," Gore said. "I say in all sincerity, Mr. President, I would urge you to give more thought to what it means to have a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan and Nazi movement marching and creating this kind of hatefulness."

Sen. Kamala Harris of California called the rally "un-American" in a tweet.

"We must all stand against hatred and bigotry, she wrote. "Our unity is our strength and diversity is our power."

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders wrote, "The white nationalist demonstration in #Charlottesville is a reprehensible display of racism and hatred that has no place in our society."

Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine called "displays of violence and bigotry" by white nationlists in Charlotte "sickening."

"The fact that people like David Duke cited the President to justify their views is a disturbing reminder that divisive rhetoric has sadly contributed to a climate where individuals who espouse hate feel emboldened," Kaine wrote in a statement Saturday.

He also penned a extensive response on Facebook to Friday night's march.

"I'm deeply disturbed that our country has to wake up to headlines of torch-wielding white nationalists promoting bigotry and inciting fear on a college campus in Virginia," he wrote. "Racist and anti-Semitic rhetoric sow seeds of hatred in our communities. That's not who we are, that's not what Virginians stand for, and we have no intention of moving backwards toward the division of the past. People peddling in hate from outside of Charlottesville will never define this vibrant community."

Admiral John Richardson, Chief of Naval Operations called the events in Charlottesville "shameful" and "unacceptable."

"The Navy will forever stand against intolerance and hatred" Richardson said in a statement posted on Twitter and Facebook.

"We want our Navy to be the safest possible place -- a team as strong and tough as we can be, saving violence only for our enemies."

*CNN's Dan Merica, Sophie Tatum and Eric Bradner contributed to this report.*