6-2024

Understanding Threats to Public Officials

Peter Simi  
*Chapman University*

Christopher Bader  
*Chapman University*

Seamus Hughes  
*University of Nebraska at Omaha*, seamushughes@unomaha.edu

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**Recommended Citation**

Simi, Peter; Bader, Christopher; and Hughes, Seamus, "Understanding Threats to Public Officials" (2024). *Reports, Projects, and Research*. 73.

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Threats against public officials are on the rise. It’s a disturbing trend that NCITE researchers at Chapman University are charting by tracking federal cases that involved threats against officials working in the criminal justice system, elections, politics, health care, and education.

**THREAT CASES BY STATE, 2013-2022**

Between 2013 and 2016 there were an average of 38 federal charges involving threats against public officials per year. **That number nearly doubled to an average of 62 charges per year between 2017-2022.**

The number of threats to public officials has continued to rise each year with **the largest volume against law enforcement/military (43%) and elected/election officials (41%).**

To illustrate the magnitude and breadth of threats against public officials, each dot represents a legal case where one or more individuals were charged with threatening a public official. Each legal case may involve one or more threats and one or more charges. The scale of the dot on the map represents the number of cases.

**Threats to public officials were geographically dispersed across all 50 states.**
Relying on federal charges and court documents, we constructed a dataset of communicated threats against US public officials (election/elected, education, health care, and law enforcement/military) from 2013 to 2022. Researchers focused on communications that included threats of bodily harm or death and resulted in federal charges. The dataset includes more than 500 cases and highlights the method of threat communication, type of public official targeted, criminal and mental health histories, and nature of the grievance, amongst other factors.

The maps represent the location from which the threat originated, not the location of the target. For example, a case originating in Houston may involve a person who lives in Houston accused of threatening a public official that lives in Washington, D.C. It is possible that multiple cases from an area involve the same individual charged with threatening public officials in separate cases.

The data collection and analyses are ongoing with a current focus on 2023 and 2024.

\textbf{Grant Acknowledgement and Disclaimer:} This material is based upon work supported by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security under Grant Award Number 20STTPC00001-04. The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as necessarily representing the official policies, either expressed or implied, of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

\textbf{For more information on this research, visit us at} \url{https://www.unomaha.edu/ncite/research/research-projects/simi-public-official-threats.php}