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**ADL AND PRINCETON'S BRIDGING DIVIDES INITIATIVE RELEASE NEW
REPORT TRACKING THREATS AND HARASSMENT AGAINST LOCAL OFFICIALS**

Analysis Shows Top Areas of Concern and Trends Heading into 2022 Midterm Elections

New York, NY, October 19, 2022 ... Today, ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) and Princeton University's Bridging Divides Initiative (BDI) [launched a new data collection initiative that tracks threats and harassment of local elected officials](#). This first-of-its-kind project is an ongoing study to systematically evaluate threats and harassment of local officials across the United States using public event-based data.

"Threats and harassment against local officials present a significant challenge to American democracy," said Oren Segal, Vice President of the ADL Center on Extremism. "This dataset shows the pervasiveness of threats and harassment around the country. We urge policymakers and communities to use these data to better understand this dangerous phenomenon and create better policy to more effectively count and counter future incidents."

As opposed to surveys and stories, event-based data allow for observed assessment of incidents. This permits the followers to understand patterns, and thus enable more effective evidence-driven policy. The research team scanned through over 10,000 datapoints from public sources, narrowing the search to over 400 individual cases. Findings include:

- Threats of **death** and **gun violence** are more than twice as common as any other form of threat (13%).
- **Intimidation** was the overwhelming form of harassment (29%).
- Threats or harassment of **election officials** or **poll workers** span 21 states and make up about 34% of all incidents tracked. Of these incidents, the states with the highest percentage of threats

or harassment incidents include **Pennsylvania** (16%), **Georgia** (14%), **Michigan** (13%) **Wisconsin** (10%), and **Arizona** (6%) which make up 59% of all threats or harassment to election officials or poll workers.

- **Women** officials were targeted at a higher frequency than others, totaling 42.5% of incidents. Adjusting for the proportion of women in local offices, the data reveal that women are targeted 3.4x more than men.
- Approximately half of all recorded cases of threats and harassment targeted someone who had previously been targeted or who received **multiple threats**; the remainder were aimed at new targets.
- **Education**-related incidents revolved heavily around COVID-19 (61%), followed by so-called “critical race theory” (7%) and LGBTQ+ related issues (7%).

ADL and BDI partnered with other organizations in sharing data, including the Brennan Center for Justice, the National League of Cities, the Prosecution Project, and the Armed Conflict Locations and Events Date Project.

“Data-driven analysis is critical in helping communities respond to emerging challenges,” said Shannon Hiller, Director of Princeton University’s Bridging Divides Initiative. “By observing incidents and events data over time, researchers and policy makers can take action to protect civic space.”

The dataset is intended to grow as a “living dataset,” incorporating new variables and new cases over time. Future iterations will include expanding the analysis beyond local officials to state and federal, as well as specific data on the outcomes of threats and harassment, such as resignations of officials, charges against perpetrators, or measures communities can employ such as enhanced security.

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ADL is the leading anti-hate organization in the world. Founded in 1913, its timeless mission is “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” Today, ADL continues to fight all forms of antisemitism and bias, using innovation and partnerships to drive impact. A global leader in combating antisemitism, countering extremism and battling bigotry wherever and whenever it happens, ADL works to protect democracy and ensure a just and inclusive society for all.

The Bridging Divides Initiative (BDI) is a non-partisan research initiative based at Princeton University that tracks and mitigates political violence in the United States. BDI supports efforts to grow and build local community resilience throughout elections and other periods of heightened risk, laying a foundation for longer-term work to bridge the divides we face as a nation.