



April 20, 2018

*Co-Chairs*  
Teresa Wynn Roseborough  
Adam Klein

*Secretary*  
Eleanor H. Smith

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David Smith

*General Counsel*  
Nicholas T. Christakos

*President and  
Executive Director*  
Kristen Clarke

Scott Wagner  
Chief Executive Officer  
GoDaddy Inc.  
14455 North Hayden Road  
Suite 219  
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

Dear Mr. Wagner:

I am writing on behalf of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law ("Lawyers' Committee") in regard to Altright.com, a website for which GoDaddy provides domain registration services. Altright.com is in clear violation of GoDaddy's terms of service<sup>1</sup> as it includes content actively inciting violence, particularly against racial and ethnic minorities. We write to alert you to the violation and to call on GoDaddy to remove the offending website for its violations of the company's terms of service and for inciting violence against minority groups.

The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law ("Lawyers' Committee") is a non-profit organization formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to enlist the private bar's resources in combating racial discrimination and the resulting inequality of opportunity. The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law principal mission is to secure equal justice for all through the rule of law, targeting in particular the inequities confronting African Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities.

As a civil rights organization, we appreciate that you take your responsibilities seriously with respect to the infrastructure of the internet, and the attendant concerns regarding free speech and fair process. We applaud your prior action in ending services to the Daily Stormer in 2017, after the site included hateful content in the wake of the deadly Unite the Right white nationalist rally in Charlottesville. In explaining the decision to end its relationship with the Daily Stormer, a spokesman for GoDaddy explained that, in instances where a site "crosses over to promoting,

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<sup>1</sup> GoDaddy's Universal Terms of Service, available here: <https://www.godaddy.com/agreements/ShowDoc.aspx?pageid=UTOS>, are incorporated by reference in the Domain Name Registration Agreement entered into by any site using GoDaddy's registration services. (See Section 1. Overview, Paragraph 2, subsection (i), available at: [https://www.godaddy.com/agreements/ShowDoc.aspx?pageid=reg\\_sa](https://www.godaddy.com/agreements/ShowDoc.aspx?pageid=reg_sa)) The Domain Name Registration Agreement further incorporates the Universal Terms of Service in Section 8 of the Domain Name Registration Agreement, Your Obligations; Suspension of Services; Breach of Agreement; available here: [https://www.godaddy.com/agreements/ShowDoc.aspx?pageid=reg\\_sa](https://www.godaddy.com/agreements/ShowDoc.aspx?pageid=reg_sa)



encouraging, or otherwise engaging in violence against any person, we will take action.”<sup>2</sup>

Under GoDaddy’s Universal Terms of Service, incorporated into GoDaddy’s Domain Name Registration Agreement, users agree not to use the company’s “[s]ervices in a manner (as determined by GoDaddy in its sole and absolute discretion) that “is illegal, or promotes or encourages illegal activity; or [p]romotes, encourages or engages in terrorism, violence against people, animals, or property.” GoDaddy’s Universal Terms of Service further state that the company may

remove any item of User Content (whether posted to a website hosted by GoDaddy or posted to this Site) and/or terminate a User’s access to this Site or the Services found at this Site for posting or publishing any material in violation of this Agreement, or for otherwise violating this Agreement (as determined by GoDaddy in its sole and absolute discretion), at any time and without prior notice. GoDaddy may also terminate a User’s access to this Site or the Services found at this Site if GoDaddy has reason to believe the User is a repeat offender.

Altright.com includes content that “promotes” and/or “encourages” illegal activity and acts of violence against minorities and other historically marginalized groups. For instance, an article from January 26, 2018, entitled “Trump Can Enact His MAGA Agenda Anytime He Wants,” encourages use of live ammunition at the border, in order to create a “substantial chance that they [immigrants crossing the border] lose their life in the process.”<sup>3</sup>

The article goes on to argue that

**A little bit of lawlessness and savagery in the ranks of border patrol should be encouraged** (you see this in Bulgaria and Russia where private citizens and militias do much of the border patrolling, far more effectively I surmise). They are not afraid to dole out a little punishment to their would-be conquerors (megalomaniacal Muhammadans). **One of the West’s primary problems is that we have become too law-centered, too law-abiding. Superiors would do well to turn their heads to a bit of brutality and vengeance by our guys on the border, perhaps even tolerating a massacre here or there.**<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-godaddy-bans-daily-stormer-20170814-story.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://altright.com/2018/01/26/trump-can-enact-his-maga-agenda-anytime-he-wants/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://altright.com/2018/01/26/trump-can-enact-his-maga-agenda-anytime-he-wants/> (emphasis added).

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This type of language clearly violates the provisions of GoDaddy's terms of service prohibiting content which "promotes or encourages" illegal activity or violence against people.

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We recognize that public sites that allow for user comments cannot control what comments posted by readers and our focus in this letter is on the content that AltRight.com produces, rather than comments. However, by promoting illegal and violent acts in its articles, AltRight.com's content has an impact beyond its published articles and encourages a downward spiral of violent and threatening posts in its comments' section. For example, comments on Altright.com encourage "gassing the kikes."<sup>5</sup> Other comments advocate for violence against women: "These whores need round-the-clock beatings, spankings, pussy poundings, throat-fuckings and humiliation to be put in their place and deprogram them from Kike-mindfucking."<sup>6</sup> In addition, many comments make direct threats against other users or specific individuals (e.g. "Shut your jew faggot mouth before I smash your jew faggot fake 'conservative' skull in with a lead pipe you inbred jew faggot pedo piece of shit I will take you as a slave, and I will shoot your entire jew faggot family in the head" and "Jason Kessler is an inbred jew faggot that needs its jew skull smashed in with an axe.").<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, we note that, unlike other sites that routinely remove content that promote or incite violence, or otherwise institute policies for engaging in the comments section,<sup>8</sup> Altright.com allows comments that incite violence against people

<sup>5</sup> <https://altright.com/2018/01/12/america-should-focus-on-making-the-world-safe-for-white-nationalism/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://altright.com/2017/10/02/amber-rose-slutwalk-is-a-new-low-for-western-women/#comment-3549456911>

<sup>7</sup> <https://altright.com/2017/08/14/discord-shuts-down-alt-right-server/#comment-3468042545>

<sup>8</sup> Many news sites have disabled comments altogether, including Recode, Mic, The Week, Reuters, The Chicago Sun-Times and Popular Science. Other sites, such as the Gawker Media family of sites, which includes Gawker, Jezebel, Lifehacker, Deadspin and Gizmodo among others, requires that most comments be approved before appearing. See Doug Gross, *Online comments are being phased out*, (Nov. 21, 2014), <https://www.cnn.com/2014/11/21/tech/web/online-comment-sections/index.html> and Justin Ellis, *What happened after 7 news sites got rid of reader comments* (Sept. 16, 2015), <http://www.niemanlab.org/2015/09/what-happened-after-7-news-sites-got-rid-of-reader-comments/>. See also terms of use for The Washington Times, "You may not post, send, submit, publish, or transmit in connection with these sites any material that: "threatens or abuses others, libels, defames, invades privacy, stalks, is obscene, pornographic, racist, abusive, harassing, threatening or offensive." (<https://www.washingtontimes.com/terms-of-use/>); Discussion and Submission Guidelines for The Washington Post, "You agree not to submit . . . content that . . . contains or advocates illegal or violent acts degrades others on the basis of gender, race, class, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or other classification." ([https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/ask-the-post/discussion-and-submission-guidelines/?utm\\_term=.ffec98cd3dab](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/ask-the-post/discussion-and-submission-guidelines/?utm_term=.ffec98cd3dab)).



to remain on the site in perpetuity.<sup>9</sup> Finally, comments encouraging violence may also raise legal concerns for sites.<sup>10</sup>

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We applaud GoDaddy for adopting terms of service that prohibit the use of your services to promote or encourage violence against people and urge you to take action, implement your terms of service, and stop providing services to Altright.com. We believe GoDaddy is clearly within its terms of service to cancel services provided to Altright.com. We ask that you contact our office by May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018 regarding your decision to provide services to Altright.com, despite the clear language in your universal terms of service agreement prohibiting the type of content found on the site and allowing GoDaddy to cut off service. You can reach our office by calling Becky Monroe, Director of the Stop Hate Project, at 202-662-8337 or emailing at [bmonroe@lawyerscommittee.org](mailto:bmonroe@lawyerscommittee.org).

Respectfully,

Kristen Clarke

President and Executive Director

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

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<sup>9</sup> Although we reviewed the site, we were unable to find any community guidelines or user policies concerning posting comments or otherwise engaging with Altright.com.

<sup>10</sup> For instance, in 2015, the Department of Justice issued a grand jury subpoena to the libertarian media site Reason.com, demanding that it identify six visitors to the site who had left comments calling for violence against a federal judge. Andy Greenberg, *Feds Want to ID Web Trolls Who 'Threatened' Silk Road Judge*, WIRED (Jun. 9, 2015).