

The Anti-Defamation League was founded in 1913 "to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all." Now the nation's premier civil rights/human relations agency, ADL fights anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry, defends democratic ideals and protects civil rights for all.

Press Release

ADL: Sovereign Citizens Create Vigilante “Grand Juries” in Latest Attempt to Flout the Law



New York, NY, February 20, 2014 ... Adherents of the sovereign citizen movement are forming their own vigilante “grand juries” in counties across the United States in an attempt to exact pressure on local government officials to accede to their anti-government demands and whims.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which monitors domestic anti-government groups and reports on their activities, has noted with concern the attempted formation of numerous so-called “common law grand juries” or people’s grand juries” in various counties across the country.

The sovereign citizens claim their bogus “grand juries” have the authority to conduct investigations, issue indictments, and remove officials from office. The juries have made demands or harassed government officials in several counties in New York, Florida and elsewhere.

“The sovereign citizen movement is an extreme anti-government movement whose adherents believe that they can virtually ignore all laws and regulations because they view the all established government institutions as illegitimate,” said Mark Pitcavage, ADL Director of Investigative Research. “The movement loves to create fictitious judicial or governmental entities, having formed various ‘people’s grand juries’ in the 1980s and 1990s -- and the so-called common law grand juries are only the latest variation of this long-running scheme.”

The sovereign citizen group behind this attempt to form [bogus grand juries](#) is the National Liberty Alliance, formed in 2011 as the New York Liberty Alliance by sovereign citizen guru John Darash of Poughkeepsie, NY. It recently launched a nationwide effort to recruit new members, and Darash and his followers have spent most of their time establishing “common law grand juries” in counties across the country. The Liberty Alliance boasts of having 852 county organizers in 36 states and nearly 2,000 members from coast to coast.

According to ADL’s research, Darash’s organizers are most active in Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Washington state. The group claims to have established more than 100 “common law grand juries” during the past year,

although a number are just notional at this stage. Some of these grand juries, however, have already begun harassing government officials and making demands.

“How these bogus grand juries will enforce their claims to power remains murky,” said Dr. Pitcavage. “During an Internet radio interview, Darash said his group would contact county sheriffs about making arrests. If a sheriff refused, they would ostensibly ‘indict’ him and go to the undersheriff. He also issued a veiled threat that if those steps didn’t work, there was another unspecified step they might take, which he likened to an ‘atomic bomb.’”

In January, common law juries in Marion and St. Johns counties in Florida sent a “Writ of Mandamus” to county officials demanding a budget of \$1.5 million, office space and equipment and a meeting room with a conference table and chairs.

In New York State, Darash’s common law grand juries claim to have signed a “true bill” charging the chief clerk in Greene County with numerous “crimes” related to her alleged failure to file paperwork for the “grand jury,” according to ADL. They also “fined” a Greene County judge the amount of “100 ounces of silver,” citing 23 separate “violations” for failing to provide demanded documents and refusing to speak to their “board of review,” and allegedly sent harassing documents to a number of judges.

The Anti-Defamation League, founded in 1913, is the world's leading organization fighting anti-Semitism through programs and services that counteract hatred, prejudice and bigotry.