

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 28, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Frelinghuysen and Ranking Members Leahy and Lowey,

On October 27, 2018, a gunman opened fire in a Pittsburgh synagogue, at least the third mass shooting event in a house of worship in three years and the deadliest attack on the American Jewish community in our country's history. Eleven congregants lost their lives in a holy space, a place that should have been safe for worship and celebration. Even as our nation continues to grieve, we recognize that this attack was part of a broader pattern of violence motivated by hate.

The Department of Homeland Security's September 2018 National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) bulletin described "one of the most challenging threat environments since 9/11, as foreign terrorist organizations exploit the Internet to inspire, enable, or direct individuals already here in the Homeland to commit terrorist acts." These terrorist acts include attacks against perceived "soft targets," like religious and cultural community centers, which have limited security measures in place, making them vulnerable to attack.

We regret that nonprofit organizations – especially religious institutions, schools, and community centers – have become targets for violent attacks and believe we have a responsibility to address the motivating factors behind these threats. But as long as the threat remains, we must take steps to ensure these facilities have the necessary resources to improve their security if they wish to do so. Many of our offices have seen increased interest in the DHS Nonprofit Security Grant program in the wake of the Pittsburgh attack, and we write today to encourage you to ensure these grants are robustly funded in any FY19 appropriations package.

Your leadership ensured that in FY18, nonprofits in the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) regions could compete for \$50 million in funding nationwide. You also helped secure \$10 million for nonprofits which did not qualify for UASI funding, but which also face security threats. We ask that as you negotiate towards a final appropriation for FY19, you consider the increased demand for these resources in today's environment. We support, at a minimum,

funding at the House-appropriated levels of \$50 million through UASI and \$10 million through the State Homeland Security Grant program.

We have also heard from some nonprofit organizations that are seeking to make security improvements as quickly as possible. Since FEMA cannot begin the allocation process without a full year appropriation, we urge you to ensure that, should a Continuing Resolution be necessary, you include appropriation of these funds in that package.

Security improvements such as those funded by the DHS Nonprofit Security Grant program are an important step towards supporting communities and congregations profoundly shaken by the events in Pittsburgh, Charleston, and Sutherland Springs, Texas, among others, over the past several years. While we recognize much more remains to be done beyond investing in security, we urge your strong support for robust funding of the Nonprofit Security Grant program in the FY19 appropriations cycle and stand ready to work with you on this issue.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Rob Portman
United States Senator




Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



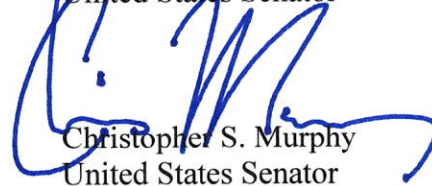
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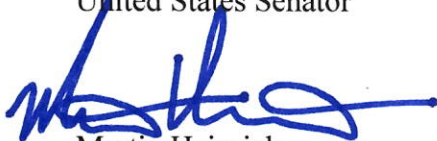
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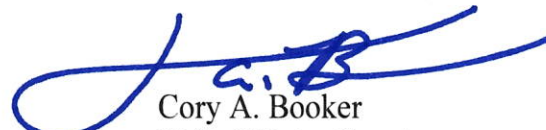

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United States Senator

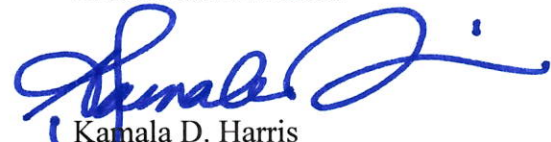

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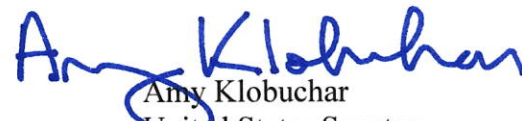

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Thomas R. Carper
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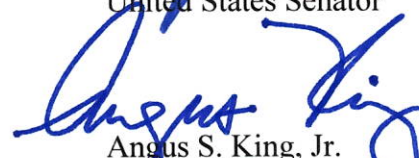

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Bernard Sanders
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Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

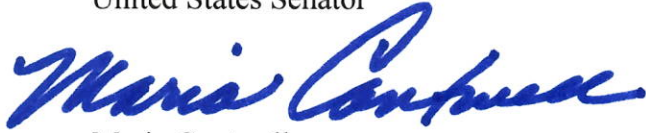

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