

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 13, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman
Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Capito, Vice Chairman Leahy, and Ranking Member Tester,

Thank you for your continued support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). The NSGP provides critical security supports and enhancements to protect non-profit and faith-based organizations from terror threats. As you finalize the Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, we respectfully ask you to fund NSGP under the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) at \$50 million and also fund NSGP at \$40 million for non-UASI communities, under the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP).

The NSGP provides grant funding to nonprofit organizations at high risk of a terrorist attack that support security related activities including planning, equipment, training and exercises. The program has improved efforts to keep at-risk nonprofit organizations safe by promoting emergency preparedness coordination and collaboration between public and private community representatives as well as state and local government agencies. Today's quickly evolving threat environment requires the NSGP to help nonprofits adequately prepare and ready themselves for a terrorist attack.

Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) Director Chris Wray testified before the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee on November 5, 2019 that "Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs) are the greatest, most immediate terrorism threat to the homeland" and "domestic violent extremists collectively pose a steady threat of violence to the United States."¹ Director Wray noted that underlying and constant drivers for domestic violent extremism include racism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia. The FBI is "most concerned" by lone actor shootings

¹ "Worldwide Threats", testimony by Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Christopher Wray, Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee, November 5, 2019

https://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/worldwide-threats-110519?utm_campaign=email-Immediate&utm_medium=email&utm_source=congressional-testimony&utm_content=%5B765498%5D-%2Fnews%2Ftestimony%2Fworldwide-threats-110519

because they have primarily served as the dominant lethal type of domestic violent extremist attacks.²

Other reporting supports this concern. According to the FBI's 2018 Hate Crimes Statistics report, released on November 12, 2019, the Jewish community remains the number one target of faith-based hate crime offenses (58%), for the 22nd consecutive year³.

Additionally, according to a new report from the FBI's Behavioral Threat Assessment Center on lone wolf offenders, released on November 13, 2019, lone wolf attacks in the United States are particularly deadly, and the primary targets of attack after federal government facilities and law enforcement personnel are religious centers and personnel.⁴ There is a growing public record of incidents targeting synagogues, churches, mosques, and other religious centers and nonprofit organizations include shooting and mass shooting, arson and fire bombing, attempted bombing, assault, death threats, hoaxes, vandalism, and property damage.⁵ These incidents illustrate the many credible threats against nonprofit institutions across the country and must be taken seriously.

There is a rise of hate-related activity in our nation, a near record amount of threats facing members of faith-based communities, and assessments by U.S. counterterrorism agencies and the FBI that the threat to faith-based communities posed by domestic extremists is enduring. Congress needs to strengthen the NSGP program. For these reasons, we respectfully encourage you to fund the UASI NSGP at \$50 million and \$40 million for non-UASI, so our nation can do all it can to prevent direct threats to communities and protect at-risk nonprofit institutions from these grave threats.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Rob Portman
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator

² "Worldwide Threats", Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Christopher Wray, Senate Homeland Security Committee, November 5, 2019

³ "Hate Crime Statistics", Federal Bureau of Investigation, Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS)
<https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr/publications#Hate-Crime%20Statistics>

⁴ "Lone Offender: A Study of Lone Offender Terrorism in the United States (1972 – 2015)", Behavioral Analysis Unit, Federal Bureau of Investigation, November 2019

<https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/lone-offender-terrorism-report-111319.pdf/view>

⁵ "Nonprofit Security Grant Program, Threat Compendium: January 2019 to Present", The Jewish Federations of North America, November 15, 2019

<https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-42/2/116th%2520Congress%2520Threat%2520Chronology%252011.15.19.pdf>