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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

November 29, 2017

The Honorable Elaine Duke
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Madam Acting Secretary:

I am writing with concern regarding the Administration's proposed cuts to vital Department of Homeland Security (DHS) counterterrorism measures, particularly in light of the recent terror attack in New York City.

President Trump's Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget request included cuts to key DHS counterterrorism programs that states and localities rely on to prevent and respond to terror threats and incidents. Although the Administration's proposal would increase DHS's overall budget, counterterrorism programs would be cut by \$582.8 million. Some programs would be reduced significantly, such as Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) Teams, which would suffer a 74% reduction. Other critical counterterrorism grant programs like the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), the Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks (CCTA) Grant Program, and the Law Enforcement Officer (LEO) Reimbursement Program would be eliminated entirely.¹ Cuts of this magnitude hinder communities' abilities to protect Americans from terrorist attacks and keep our country safe.

These programs not only help our nation's largest cities, like New York City and Washington, D.C., but also smaller metropolitan areas like those in my own state of Missouri. For instance, the CCTA Grant program is assisting the Kansas City and St. Louis regions in developing local preparedness plans, integrating response structures, enhancing communications systems, among other actions.² The LEO Reimbursement program helps St. Louis Lambert International Airport defray hundreds of thousands of dollars in costs to meet federally-mandated

¹ Minority Staff, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Fighting Terror: Administration's Budget Slashes Counterterrorism Programs as Attacks Continue to Increase Abroad* (July 13, 2017).

² Mid-America Regional Council: \$2.2 Million Grant Will Help Region Prepare For, Prevent and Respond to Terrorist Attacks (July 14, 2017).

security standards.³ UASI helped St. Louis, along with more than 30 other cities nationwide, in assisting bomb squads, SWAT teams, and hazardous material response units.⁴

PROPOSED CUTS TO DHS COUNTERTERRORISM PROGRAMS				
	FY 2017 Enacted Budget	FY 2018 Budget	Total Cut	% Cut
Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)	\$10,000,000	\$0	-\$10,000,000	-100.00%
Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks (CCTA)	\$35,940,000	\$0	-\$35,940,000	-100.00%
Law Enforcement Officer Reimbursement Program (LEO)	\$45,000,000	\$0	-\$45,000,000	-100.00%
Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) Operations	\$58,100,000	\$15,100,000	-\$43,000,000	-74.01%
Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)	\$605,000,000	\$48,844,000	-\$156,156,000	-25.81%
State Homeland Security Program (SHSP)	\$467,000,000	\$349,362,000	-\$117,638,000	-25.19%
Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG)	\$350,000,000	\$279,335,000	-\$70,665,000	-20.19%
Port Security Grant Program (PSGP)	\$100,000,000	\$47,809,000	-\$52,191,000	-52.19%
Public Transportation Security Assistance	\$100,000,000	\$47,809,000	-\$52,191,000	-52.19%
TOTAL	\$1,771,040,000	\$1,188,259,000	-\$582,781,000	-32.91%

During Kirstjen Nielsen’s confirmation hearing to be Secretary of Homeland Security, she and I discussed cuts to these essential counterterrorism programs. Replying to my question as to whether or not New York relied on DHS counterterrorism grant initiatives to respond to the ramming attack on October 31, 2017 that killed eight people,⁶ she indicated that New York City likely did use resources directly connected to DHS programs to respond to the attack. Specially, Ms. Nielsen said, “I don’t have any doubt that they did.”⁷ I am concerned that the Administration would cut these programs without an adequate understanding of their use in preventing and responding to terror attacks.

³ Email from Rhonda K. Hamm-Niebruegge, Airport Director, St. Louis Lambert International Airport, to Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Minority Staff (June 20, 2017).

⁴ Memorandum from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to Members of Congress, FY 2017 Preparedness Grant Programs and Homeland Security National Training Program Award and Allocation Announcement (Sept. 1, 2017).

⁵ Minority Staff, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Fighting Terror: Administration’s Budget Slashes Counterterrorism Programs as Attacks Continue to Increase Abroad* (July 13, 2017).

⁶ Terror Attack Kills 8 and Injures 11 in Manhattan, New York Times (Oct. 31, 2017) (www.nytimes.com/2017/10/31/nyregion/police-shooting-lower-manhattan.html).

⁷ Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, *Nomination Hearing for Kirstjen M. Nielsen to be Secretary U.S. Department of Homeland Security*, 115th Cong. (Nov. 8, 2017).

In order to better understand how resources from DHS-administered counterterrorism programs are used, please provide answers to the following questions:

1. Did DHS conduct a risk analysis before these significant program cuts were included in the President's FY 2018 budget? If so, please provide a copy of the analysis. If not, please explain why.
2. Did any counterterrorism programs from the above list help New York City respond to the ramming attack that occurred on October 31, 2017? Which ones?
3. Did any of the counterterrorism programs from the above list help New York City prevent or respond to other terrorist attacks in New York City? Which programs?
4. Did any of the counterterrorism programs from the above list help other cities prevent or respond to terrorist attacks in the United States? Which ones?

I request that you provide responses to these questions no later than December 20, 2017. If you or members of your staff have any questions about this request, please ask your staff to contact Julie Klein with my Committee at 202-224-2627. Please send any official correspondence relating to this request to Lucy Balcezak at Lucy_Balcezak@hsgac.senate.gov. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member

cc: Ron Johnson
Chairman