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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

May 11, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Murphy  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Leahy and Murphy, and Ranking Members Shelby and Capito,

Thank you for your consistent support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) under the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) and the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP). As you determine Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Homeland Security Appropriations priorities, I respectfully urge you to appropriately fund the NSGP. Additionally, I believe that any increase of NSGP funding should be derived from an increase in the allocation to the FY 2023 Homeland Security Appropriations bill and not from redirected funding. Nonprofit faith- and community-based organizations in urban, suburban, and rural communities continue to face significant threats of lethal violence and acts of terror and the NSGP is providing them with the essential tools they need to protect lives.

The NSGP provides for grants to nonprofits deemed at risk of terrorist (or violent extremist) attack, to acquire and install physical security enhancements, conduct preparedness planning, training and exercises, and contract security personnel. 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. According to FEMA<sup>1</sup>, the following are just a few examples of the effectiveness of NSGP:

- During a shooting on the street next to a Jewish family services agency in Denver, the agency was struck on two sides of the building with bullets impacting windows. The

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<sup>1</sup> Email from the Division of Congressional Affairs at FEMA on April 25, 2022.

agency used NSGP funds to put impact resistant film on exterior windows and glass doors. This impact resistant filming stopped two bullets from penetrating the building during this incident.

- A Community Center/Federation operates at two locations in Tampa, FL and has approximately 20,000 combined visitors daily. They provide services such as an assisted living facility, preschool, after school care, summer camp, senior programs, an event center, city-operated art center, and much more. The security camera system has provided evidence to local law enforcement on numerous occasions to help apprehend vandals, violent attackers, hate crime participants, etc. This resource has helped build a much stronger relationship with the local law enforcement agencies. The grant recipient also cites their ability to respond to threats quickly and efficiently also serves a deterrent to potential attackers and criminals.
- A synagogue in Columbus, Ohio used NSGP funds to put shatterproof film on windows and doors and hire a special duty officer. The film on their front door helped deny entry to an attacker and law enforcement responded immediately because they were already on-site protecting worshipers and preschoolers.
- An education institution in Houston, TX had an incident where someone was sitting on the fence by one of the early childhood playgrounds and was threatening to enter. School administrators were able to see this activity on the security cameras and alert the authorities when he refused to move. The cameras also allowed the school administrators to see that the individual returned a few hours later, and were then also able to handle appropriately. Access controls have also been key to school security. It has happened several times that strange vehicles try to enter the school's parking lot for unknown reasons, and the vehicle gates remain closed until the school ascertains why anyone is requesting entrance.
- During an armed hostage crisis at a Colleyville, TX synagogue, a surveillance camera system the synagogue upgraded through a NSGP grant was critical to law enforcement as the video coverage gave the decision makers, the negotiators, and others general situational awareness before they subdued the terrorist and rescued the hostages.

These examples illustrate the critical security upgrades being provided to meet the persistent threat of lethal violence and acts of terror against faith- and community-based institutions in the United States, which have been threatened, burned, bombed, and hit with gunfire. For these reasons, I respectfully encourage you to appropriately fund the NSGP, so our nation can do all that it can to protect at-risk faith- and community- based nonprofits from increasing extremist and hate-motivated threats.

Sincerely,



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Senator Rob Portman