

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

December 16, 2022

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
U.S. Capitol Building, S-221
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
U.S. Capitol Building, S-230
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell,

Thank you for your continued support for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). As you work to craft the FY23 Omnibus, we respectfully ask you to robustly fund the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) at \$180 million and \$180 million for the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) NSGP. As you know, these accounts provide critical security resources to at-risk faith-based and nonprofit institutions located in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Security investments acquired through the NSGP program include physical security enhancements, emergency preparedness planning, training and exercises, and enhanced engagement and collaboration between public and private community representatives as well as their state and local homeland security and emergency management government agencies. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recognized the serious nature of these threats in the two most recent National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletins, which warned that acts of extremist-motivated violence are likely to continue against faith-based institutions, schools, and racial and religious minorities. Nationwide reporting on related threat incidents underscore the frequency, complexity, and geographic breadth of these concerns:

- Despite only 11,883 of 18,812 law enforcement agencies across the country submitting data to the FBI due to a change in reporting mechanisms, the Bureau still reported 7,262 hate crimes in 2021, down from 8,263 in 2020 – the highest number ever reported – when a far larger percentage of agencies reported.¹
- On December 4, Hassan Yehia Chokr was charged with two counts ethnic intimidation for threatening Jewish children and adults, as well as Black guards, at a Detroit synagogue.²
- On November 18, Matthew Mahrer and Christopher Brown were arrested in New York's Penn Station. Brown had a Swastika armband and ski mask; and a backpack containing a firearm, extended magazine and 19 rounds of ammunition was recovered from Maher's apartment. On

¹ Washington Post, "Latest FBI Data on Hate Crime Plagued by Lack of Reporting Nationwide," December 12, 2022.

² Detroit Free Press, "Police: Dearborn Suspect Told People at Michigan Synagogue they were 'Going to Die'," December 5, 2022.

December 7, the Manhattan District Attorney indicted Brown for terroristic threats to the Jewish community and Mahrer for conspiring with him in this thwarted attack.³

- On November 14, the FBI announced that it had identified one juvenile who was responsible for a series of bomb threats to Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) between January 4 and February 1, 2022. It is still investigating additional threats to HBCUs that appear to have originated overseas.⁴
- On November 3, the FBI issued a warning to synagogues throughout New Jersey about “credible information” of an increased threat. On November 10, Omar Alkattoul was arrested and charged for threatening to attack a synagogue.⁵
- On October 27, 2018, Robert Bowers attacked the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, killing 11 worshipers, the deadliest attack on Jews in American history. Jury selection for his trial will begin on April 24, 2023.
- On August 30, Jonathan Warren, of Indianapolis, Indiana, was sentenced to 147 months in Federal prison for transmitting threatening communications in interstate commerce and possessing a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence after committing multiple crimes including a drive by shooting into the Masjid E Noor Mosque in Indianapolis, where multiple worshipers were observing the Eid al-Fitr holiday.⁶
- On August 19, Las Vegas Police arrested Andrew Gorrellick, on charges of making false terrorist threats to kill Jewish people in more than 40 tweets associated with his Twitter account.⁷
- On August 26, the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights issued a warning that antisemitic incidents were on the rise in the commonwealth and have “become a statewide and dangerous issue.” The warning reflected a jump from just two incidents reported in 2019 to hundreds of incidents reported this year.⁸
- On August 5, the nation recognized the 10th anniversary of the mass attack at an Oak Creek, Wisconsin, Sikh temple, where an armed white supremacist killed seven people.
- On May 26, authorities identified Arnold Edward Ashland as the Minnesota man accused of attacking several racial minorities in Michigan and threatening mosques in the metro Detroit area.⁹

The NSGP program is a critical component to the nation’s response to threats targeting the nonprofit sector, but the program is significantly over-subscribed. This year’s (FY 2022) NSGP award results made this clear. FEMA reviewed almost 3,500 grant applications but was able to fund only approximately 1,800. The total security investments requested amounted to almost \$450 million, but FEMA had only \$250 million to invest, including the important 5% that Congress provided to strengthen the agency’s program management. In response, DHS recommended Congress appropriate a total of \$360 million to the FY23 NSGP program to align the program closer to the level of demand.

³ Manhattan District Attorney, “D.A. Bragg Announces Indictments in Thwarted Terrorist Attack on Jewish Community,” December 7, 2022.

⁴ FBI, “Update on Threats Targeting Historically Black Schools,” November 14, 2022.

⁵ New York Times, “New Jersey Man Arrested in Connection with Threat to Synagogues,” November 10, 2022.

⁶ United States Attorney’s Office, Southern District of Indiana, “Indianapolis Man Sentenced to Over 12 Years in Federal Prison for Threats and Weapons Charges Related to Drive by Shooting of Masjid E Noor Mosque,” August 30, 2022.

⁷ KSNV Las Vegas, Nevada, “Las Vegas Man Arrested for Alleged Terrorist Threats against Jewish Community,” August 24, 2022.

⁸ WDRB Louisville, Kentucky, “Rise in Antisemitic Incidents in Kentucky Causes Concern among State, Jewish Leaders,” August 26, 2022.

⁹ Detroit Free Press, “FBI Identifies Man Accused of Racial Attacks and Mosque Threats in Michigan,” May 26, 2022.

Unfortunately, today's threat environment, including rising antisemitism and hate, provides a compelling public interest in protecting against attacks on the nonprofit sector that would disrupt the vital health, human, social, cultural, religious, and other humanitarian services and practices they provide to communities, and which threaten the lives and well-being of millions of Americans who operate, utilize, live, and work in proximity to them. For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to strengthen the Nonprofit Security Grant Program by robustly funding the UASI NSGP at \$180 million and \$180 million for the SHSGP NSGP.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

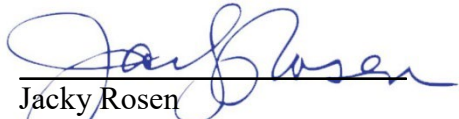
Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

CC:

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Chris Murphy, Chairman, Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Senate Committee on Appropriations

