

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

April 11, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

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

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Collins, Chairman Murphy, and Ranking Member Britt,

Thank you for your continued 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). Congress appropriated a historic \$305 million in funding for the NSGP in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, which was a critical step toward meeting the high level of demand for these lifesaving measures. However, the increasing and extraordinary needs of at-risk populations unfortunately continues to grow. Therefore, as you draft the FY 2024 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, we respectfully ask you provide robust funding for the NSGP to address the needs of at-risk nonprofits around the country.

The nation's top law enforcement and counterterrorism experts warn that in the current threat environment, faith-based and charitable organizations are at high risk and vulnerable to threats posed by violent extremists. Law enforcement agencies report that for the past 24 consecutive years, anti-Jewish bias crimes have accounted for the majority of anti-religious offenses recorded.

This year began with an incident in New Jersey that would have had devastating damage if not for the funds received by the NSGP. The shatter-resistant doors and cameras that recorded a masked man throwing a lit Molotov cocktail at Temple Ner Tamid in Bloomfield,

N.J. protected against destruction and captured the perpetrator.^[1] In the past, we have also seen a gunman deterred from entering a predominantly African American church in Jeffersontown, Kentucky, due to upgrades the institution made to its security system.^{[2][2]}

The NSGP is perhaps our greatest weapon in defending against violent attacks and threats against nonprofits in our communities. The grant program supports critical security investments, such as 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. Because the faith-based community and other at-risk nonprofit institutions often lack the needed resources required to deter, detect, and prevent threats and attacks alone, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has strongly advised government investments to fill the gap.^[3]

Congress established NSGP to make these investments by improving the security of at-risk faith-based and charitable organizations. Unfortunately, today's threat environment provides a compelling public interest in protecting our religious communities and nonprofit groups, especially in this moment of rising vandalism, hate crimes and antisemitism. Successful attacks not only damage the vital health, human, social, cultural, religious, and humanitarian services and practices these institutions provide, but they seed incalculable anguish in every freedom-loving American.

These collective costs to our country underscore the value of efficient NSGP investments and our room for growth. Indeed, DHS reports that the NSGP is consistently oversubscribed in context of the total program amount requested versus annual program appropriations. For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to adequately fund NSGP in FY 2024.

We look forward to working together to protect our at-risk and vulnerable communities and nonprofits from today's increasing threats and attacks. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

^[1] NBC 4 New York, "NJ Molotov cocktail Temple toss, Church anti-racism event 'incident' spark state probe," January 31, 2023.

^{[2][2]} Business Insider, "The man accused of fatally shooting 2 people at a Kroger grocery store reportedly tried to enter a black church minutes earlier," October 26, 2018.

^[3] Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency; December 18, 2020; Link: https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Mitigating%20Attacks%20on%20Houses%20of%20Worship%20Security%20Guide_508.pdf



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