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Mark (Moishe) Bane  
President

Rabbi Moshe Hauer  
Executive Vice President

Rabbi Josh Joseph, Ed.D.  
Executive Vice President &  
Chief Operating Officer

Jerry Wolasky  
Chairman, Advocacy

Nathan J. Diamant  
Executive Director

Howard Friedman  
Chairman, Board of Directors

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January 13, 2021

Hon. Gary Peters  
Hon. Rob Portman  
& Members of the  
U.S. Senate Cmte. on Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20510  
by electronic mail

Dear Senators,

We write to you on behalf of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America with regard to your committee's consideration of the nomination of Alejandro Mayorkas to be Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America ("Orthodox Union") is the nation's largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization, is a non-partisan religious entity and it has been the Orthodox Union's longstanding policy to neither endorse nor oppose nominees in the confirmation process. However, we feel compelled to share with you our views on a key issue of importance to our community and our experience with Mr. Mayorkas that are relevant to his nomination.

Over the past decade, it has been the sad reality that anti-Semitic attacks in the United States of America have risen dramatically. American Jews have been assaulted on city streets, bomb threats have been made against Jewish schools, and mortal attacks have been perpetrated upon synagogues in Pittsburgh, PA and Poway, CA.

During his tenure as Deputy Secretary of DHS during the Obama Administration, Mr. Mayorkas was a reliable and valued leader in ensuring that DHS's resources were utilized to enhance the security of our synagogues and schools in the face of threats and that all relevant DHS components had combatting faith-targeted violence, including anti-Semitism, as an intentional part of DHS's work.

Among the key aspects of this work, Mr. Mayorkas was very helpful to us in the implementation of DHS's Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). As you know, the Orthodox Union was among those who worked with bipartisan allies in Congress to create the NSGP and have its funds appropriated each year – most recently for this Fiscal Year at \$180 million. The NSGP provides critical grants to thousands of Jewish synagogues and K-12 schools and thousands of

houses of worship and nonprofits of other faith communities deemed to be at risk of violent attack. The NSGP grants are used to enhance the physical security of these “soft targets” where American citizens gather to exercise their fundamental rights. Then Deputy Secretary Mayorkas was very supportive in the effective implementation of the NSGP and other work by DHS to keep our communities secure.

The need for DHS to increase its work in combating violent extremism and thwarting violence targeted at the Jewish community, and other American faith communities, is even more pressing in 2021. Based on our past experience with him, we are confident that, if confirmed to be Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Alejandro Mayorkas will lead this aspect of the Department’s work effectively and for the welfare of the people of the United States of America.

Thank you for considering our views. We pray your committee’s deliberations will be expeditious and serve the nation well.

Sincerely,

*Nathan J. Diamant*  
Executive Director

*Jerry Wolasky*  
Chairman