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July 14, 2021

Hon. Gary Peters
Chairman
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Hon. Rob Portman
Ranking Member
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Chairman Peters and Ranking Member Portman,

We write to you on behalf of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America – the nation’s largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization – to express our support for the Pray Safe Act, S.2123, and encourage the Committee to report it favorably from today’s business meeting.

Since May 2021, there was a reported 400% increase in anti-Semitic attacks in the U.S. – with a large portion of these occurring at synagogues and other Jewish establishments. Earlier this month, a Rabbi was stabbed multiple times on the doorstep of his synagogue in Boston. There was a children’s day camp operating behind the doors at the time. Thankfully, the Rabbi was able to fend off the attacker, but most are not so fortunate.

The Pray Safe Act will provide useful tools to enhance the security of the American Jewish community and other faith communities. S.2123 would establish a federal clearinghouse on safety and security to govern best practices for faith-based organizations.

The clearinghouse at the Department of Homeland Security would operate in conjunction with other governmental agencies to educate and publish online best practices and recommendations for the safety and security of faith-based organizations. The clearinghouse would, among other things, provide information on targeted violence and terrorism prevention grants programs, as well as resources for applying for grants. S.2123 would enable faith-based organizations to access this information in one place – making these programs more widely accessible.

We are grateful for your leadership this Congress in the work of protecting American Jews and Americans of all faiths. Indeed, the freedom to worship – which is a foundational American value – cannot be enjoyed without a freedom from fear. Thank you and we look forward to working with you to have this legislation passed by the U.S. Senate.

Respectfully,

Nathan J. Diament
Executive Director

Jerry Wolasky
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