

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2017

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Roybal-Allard:

Thank you for your work in helping to ensure adequate resources are available to protect our communities from threats and disasters. As you craft the Fiscal Year 2018 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, we respectfully ask you to fund the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) at \$50 million.

These funds are especially important in light of the most recent United States Intelligence Community's assessment of threats to U.S. national security, which found that homegrown violent extremists, who draw inspiration from ISIL or other Sunni extremist organizations, continue to pose the most significant terrorist threat to the homeland. The increasing ability of ISIL to utilize sophisticated social media to inspire and motivate homegrown violent extremists from afar diminishes our ability to deter, detect, and disrupt an attack from happening. Moreover, US counterterrorism experts have assessed that homegrown violent extremists are now increasingly favoring softer civilian targets, such as places of worship.

According to a report released by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the number of hate groups in the United States rose in 2016, and least 550 of the 917 groups are anti-Semitic in nature. The report details groups active in 2016, which include 99 categorized as neo-Nazi, 100 as white nationalist, 130 as Ku Klux Klan and 21 as Christian Identity, a religious movement that says whites are the true Israelites and Jews are descended from Satan. Extremists come in many forms and extremist violence, whether inspired by ISIS, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, or carried out in the name of white supremacy, still remains a serious threat to communities across our nation.

The severity of homegrown violent extremism came into focus during the August 2006 deadly attack at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle. It was followed by the deadly attack at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in June 2009, and, then the April 2014 deadly attacks at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City and the Village Shalom retirement community. In January 2017 an unknown arsonist burned down the Islamic Center in Victoria, Texas, which had previously experienced vandalism and a break-in. This level of extreme violence has extended to attacks on churches, mosques, and other religious centers in recent years.

Since January 1st, at least 116 Jewish communal institutions, including community centers, schools places of worship, and others have received more than 160 bomb threats in 39 states. These incidents illustrate the many credible threats against non-profit institutions across the country and must be taken seriously.. With the rise of hate groups in our nation, now more than ever Congress needs to strengthen the NSGP program.

The NSGP program was designed to provide physical target hardening measures to protect against the threats the Department of Homeland Security has identified as of most concern to at-risk nonprofit institutions. These include: explosive device, arson, active shooter, assassination/kidnapping, chemical/biological agents and cyber-attacks. The NSGP program supports the physical target hardening measures necessary to protect these facilities against threats and to mitigate the effects of an attack, including the installation of access controls, barriers, blast-proofing, monitoring and surveillance capability, and cyber security enhancements.

The recent JCC bomb threats illustrate a growing record of plots, attempted attacks, and deadly occurrences targeting the Jewish community at home, a rise in anti-Semitic hate groups organizing, and an assessment by US counterterrorism experts that violent homegrown extremists are prioritizing 'soft targets,' such as Jewish communal institutions and other religious centers. For these reasons, we respectfully encourage you to increase funding for the UASI NSGP to \$50 million in addition to funds otherwise provided for UASI, so our nation can do all it can to prevent against direct threats to Jewish communities and protect at-risk nonprofit institutions from our country's greatest enemies.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Dan Donovan
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



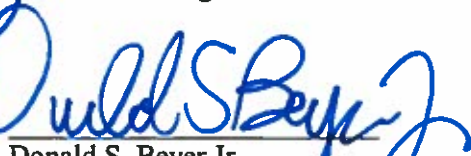
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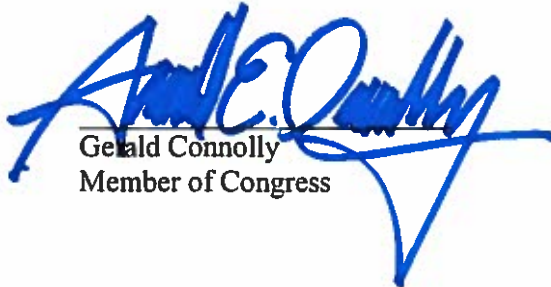
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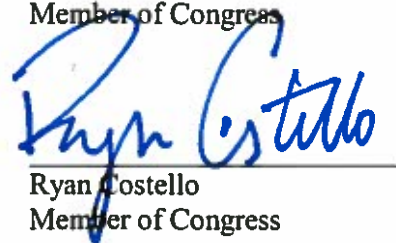
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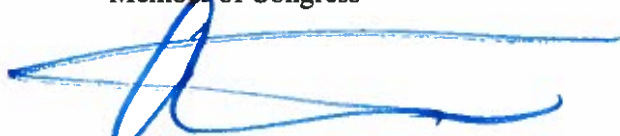

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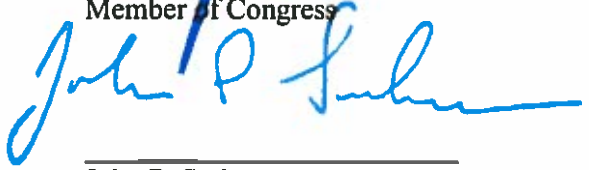
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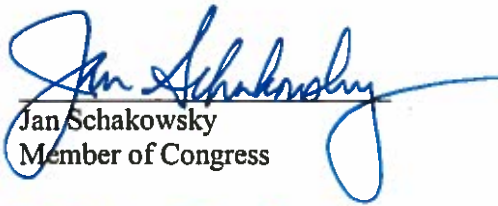
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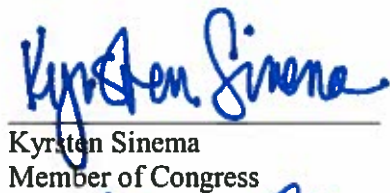


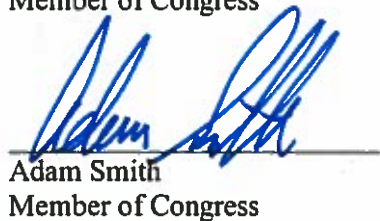
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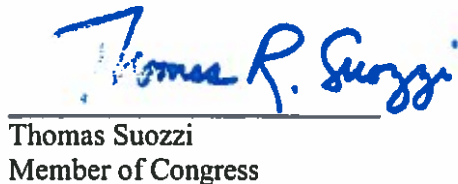

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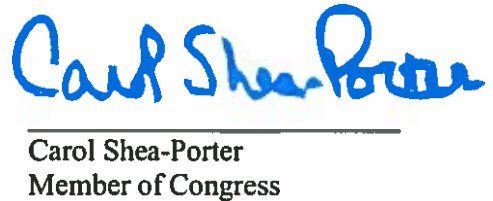

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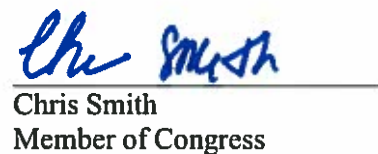


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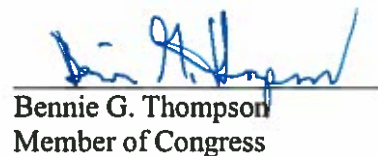

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