

**THE NONPROFIT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM  
AND PROTECTING HOUSES OF WORSHIP: A  
VIEW FROM THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMU-  
NITY**

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**JOINT HEARING**

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,  
RESPONSE, AND RECOVERY

AND THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
INTELLIGENCE AND  
COUNTERTERRORISM

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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VIEW FROM THE AMERICAN JEWISH COM-  
MUNITY**

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**Tuesday, February 8, 2022**

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE,  
AND RECOVERY, AND THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE AND COUNTERTERRORISM,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittees met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., via Webex, Hon. Val Butler Demings [Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery] presiding.

Present from the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery: Representatives Demings, Cammack, Jackson Lee, Payne, Green, Watson Coleman, Higgins, and Miller-Meeks.

Present from the Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism: Representatives Slotkin, Pfluger, Jackson Lee, Langevin, Gottheimer, Malinowski, Guest, and Rice.

Also present: Representatives Thompson and Katko.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The Subcommittees on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery, and Intelligence and Counterterrorism will come to order. Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare the subcommittees in recess at any point.

Good morning again, everyone. I want to thank Chairwoman Slotkin and Ranking Member Pfluger for joining Ranking Member Cammack and me for this important hearing.

Thank you to our witnesses for joining us today to discuss who the dynamic terrorism threat landscape impacts the American Jewish community and the importance of Federal support to make their communities more safe.

As someone who spent nearly 3 decades in law enforcement, I was extremely troubled to see neo-Nazis shouting anti-Semitic slurs while parading through the streets of Central Florida. I am relieved that the individuals who viciously attacked a Jewish student have been charged with hate crime assault and grand theft. For one of the group's leaders this is the second time he has been charged with committing violent acts against innocent bystanders this year. These hateful and violent acts followed several incidents

in which anti-Semitic flyers were left outside homes across Central Florida.

We are joined today by Rabbi Konikov from Chabad of South Orlando, who I have been honored to join for many occasions, including joyful celebrations with his congregation. I appreciate, Rabbi, your leadership during these difficult events in our community and stand with you in rejecting anti-Semitic attacks on our neighbors, our friends, and in our communities.

All of this comes at a time when, as we learned at last week's hearing, we are seeing fringe extremist ideologies being mainstreamed and violent ideologies from across the spectrum embrace anti-Semitism. Let me be clear, anti-Semitism and targeted violence against religious institutions have no place in the United States of America.

Today, 20 years after 9/11, the terrorism threat landscape is far more complex with nonprofits such as religious institutions increasingly targeted by domestic and foreign terrorists. Last month, the Nation collectively held its breath as congregants at Sabbath service in a Texas synagogue were held at gunpoint by a terrorist.

I commend the heroic actions of Rabbi Cytron-Walker, one of our witnesses here today, who grabbed a chair, hurled it at the gunman. In other words, Rabbi Charlie took matters into his own hands, allowing congregants to escape. During the Colleyville attack, Rabbi Charlie credited his quick actions to security training, funded, in part, by the Nonprofit Security Grant Program. Under this program at-risk religious institutions and other nonprofits receive support to implement protective measures. These grants are critically important for religious institutions and they keep communities safe, which is more important now than ever.

As the terrorism landscape has grown more complex and houses of worship are increasingly being targeted, the demand for this program has risen exponentially. To meet this demand, Congress has increased funding for Nonprofit Security Grant Program. Even with the recent increases, we still see a growing need for organizations to access this funding. With the risk of attacks against faith-based communities, we must continue to invest in their security.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have consistently advocated for increased funding for this critical program. I was pleased to support a \$100 million increase in the Build Back Better Act last year and last week, joined my colleagues in calling for additional appropriations for the program for next year.

We have a great panel today. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about the challenges the American Jewish community faces and how Congress can do a better job to protect them.

[The statement of Chairwoman Demings follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN VAL DEMINGS

FEBRUARY 8, 2022

Thank you to our witnesses for joining us today to discuss the how the dynamic terrorism threat landscape impacts the American Jewish community and the importance of Federal support to make their communities more secure.

As someone who spent nearly 3 decades in law enforcement, I was extremely troubled to see Neo-Nazis shouting anti-Semitic slurs while parading through the streets of Orlando in recent days. I am relieved that the individuals who viciously attacked a Jewish student have been charged with hate crime assault and grand theft. For

one of the group's leaders, this is the second time he has been charged with committing violent acts against innocent bystanders this year. These hateful and violent acts followed several incidents in which anti-Semitic flyers were left outside homes across South Florida.

We are joined today by Rabbi Yosef Konikov from Chabad of South Orlando, who I have been honored to join for joyful celebrations with his congregation. I appreciate your leadership during these difficult events in our community and stand with you in rejecting anti-Semitic attacks on our neighbors, friends, and families.

All of this comes at a time when, as we learned at last week's hearing, we are seeing "fringe" extremist ideologies being mainstreamed and violent ideologies from across the spectrum embrace anti-Semitism. Let me be clear—anti-Semitism and targeted violence against religious institutions have no place in the United States of America.

Today, 20 years after 9/11, the terrorism threat landscape is far more complex with nonprofits such as religious institutions increasingly targeted by domestic and foreign terrorists. Last month, the Nation collectively "held its breath" as congregants at Sabbath service in a Texas synagogue were held at gunpoint by a terrorist.

I commend the heroic actions of Rabbi Cytron-Walker, one of our witnesses here today, who grabbed a chair and heaved it at the gunman, allowing the congregants to escape. During the Colleyville attack, Rabbi Cytron-Walker credited his quick actions security to security training that funded, in part, by the Nonprofit Security Grant Program or NSGP. Under this program at-risk religious institutions and other non-profits receive support to implement protective measures. These grants are critically important for religious institutions, and they keep communities safe, which is more important now than ever.

As the terrorism landscape has grown more complex and houses of worship are increasingly being targeted, the demand for this program has risen exponentially. To meet this demand, Congress has increased funding for Nonprofit Security Grant Program. Even with the recent increases, we still see a growing need for organizations to access this funding. With the rise of attacks against faith-based communities, we must continue to invest in their security.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have consistently advocated for increased funding for this critical program. I was pleased to support a \$100 million increase in the "Build Back Better Act" last year and, last week, joined my colleagues in calling for additional appropriations for the program for next year.

We have a great panel today. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about the challenges the American Jewish community faces and what Congress can do to aid them.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. I am not sure if the Ranking Member from my committee has joined us. Mrs. Cammack, are you—

Mrs. CAMMACK. Yes, I am.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. It is now my pleasure to introduce the Ranking Member of the Emergency Preparedness, Recovery, and Response Subcommittee, the gentlewoman from my home State of Florida, Mrs. Cammack, for an opening statement.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Well, thank you, Chairwoman Demings. Thank you to all my colleagues and our witnesses for being here today.

Now, before I begin, I would first like to take a moment to recognize Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker, whose quick thinking and use of his security training helped save lives. Without a doubt, you absolutely saved lives. I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to share your experiences here today with us.

I would also like to recognize the dedicated Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers who answered the call that day. Our first responders put their lives on the line every single day and we thank them for helping keep our communities safe.

Chairwoman Demings, Chairwoman Slotkin, Ranking Member Pfluger, I would like to thank you all for convening this hearing today to discuss FEMA's Nonprofit Security Program and the critical role that this program plans in protecting our houses of worship.

The event that took place at the Congregation Beth Israel Synagogue is, unfortunately, just the latest in a string of anti-Semitic attacks that have plagued Jewish communities both at home and abroad in recent years. In 2017, a retired French doctor was killed in her Paris apartment by an attacker motivated by anti-Semitism. The following year, much closer to home, a man shouting anti-Semitic slurs opened fire inside the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, killing 11. In December 2019, a Jewish kosher deli was attacked in Jersey City, New Jersey, leaving 4 victims dead.

While faith-based communities across the country face varying levels of discrimination, the American Jewish community continues to face a persistent threat of violence. This is a threat that has been shown to come from a variety of ideological motivations. According to the FBI's hate crime statistics, in 2020, there were 1,174 victims who were targeted due to their religion. Of those victims, the Jewish community accounted for a staggering 54.9 percent of all religious-bias crime. Nearly 55 percent, that is a staggering number and unacceptable.

These reported anti-Semitic incidents occurred at Jewish institutions, such as synagogues, Jewish community centers, and Jewish schools. The reported incidents included harassment, vandalism, and assault.

While the continued prevalence of these attacks can sometimes seem overwhelming, as Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker showed us, the proper use of security training and resources can absolutely help save lives. One of the most important resources available to houses of worship is FEMA's Nonprofit Security Grant Program. This competitive grant program provides funding to support the target-hardening and other security-related activities to nonprofit organizations that are at high risk for a terrorist attack. Specifically, the program seeks to integrate the preparedness activities of nonprofit organizations with the broader State, local, Tribal, and territorial preparedness efforts.

The vital nature of this program is highlighted by the fact that in fiscal year 2021, more than 3,300 nonprofit organizations submitted applications to this program. Almost 40 percent of the nonprofits that applied had never received this funding. However, due to the wide-spread demand for this program, less than half of the nonprofits that applied ended up receiving funding.

As the lead Republican on the House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee for Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery, I remain committed, along with Chairwoman Demings, to strengthen our Nation's overall emergency preparedness by supporting programs like the Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

I also remain committed to working in a bipartisan manner to stop and combat anti-Semitism and violence across all religious groups. Freedom of religion is a cornerstone of our Constitution, and any violation of this freedom should not be tolerated. For this reason, I cosponsored a bipartisan resolution condemning the recent anti-Semitic terrorist act on the Congregation Beth Israel Synagogue.

In closing, I am incredibly proud to represent Florida's Third Congressional District, which has an incredible, vibrant faith com-



munity. In fact, my district includes the University of Florida, the Gator Nation, which is home to the largest Jewish student organization in the country, Gators for Israel. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on the importance of the Nonprofit Security Grant Program and the ways in which they have used this grant program to protect their faith communities and any recommendations that they have to improve this program moving forward.

With that, I thank you, Chairwoman Demings, and I yield back.  
[The statement of Ranking Member Cammack follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER KAT CAMMACK

Before I begin, I would first like to take a moment to recognize Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker, whose quick thinking and use of his security training helped save lives. I sincerely appreciate you taking the time to share your experiences here with us today.

I would also like to recognize the dedicated Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers who answered the call that day. Our first responders put their lives on the line every day and we thank them for helping to keep our communities safe.

Chairwoman Demings and Chairwoman Slotkin, I would like to thank you both for convening this hearing today to discuss FEMA's Nonprofit Security Grant Program and the critical role this program plays in protecting houses of worship.

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Specifically, the NSGP seeks to integrate the preparedness activities of these nonprofit organizations with broader State, local, Tribal, and territorial preparedness efforts.

The vital nature of this program is highlighted by the fact that in fiscal year 2021, more than 3,300 nonprofit organizations submitted applications to the program. Almost 40 percent of the nonprofits that applied had never before received NSGP funding.

However, due to the wide-spread demand for this program, less than half of the nonprofits that applied ended up received funding.

As lead Republican on the House Homeland Security Committee's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery, I remain committed to working with Chairwoman Demings to help strengthen our Nation's overall emergency preparedness posture by supporting programs like the Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

I also remain committed to working to combat anti-Semitism and violence against all religious groups. Freedom of religion is a cornerstone of our Constitution, and any violation of this freedom should not be tolerated. For this reason, I co-sponsored a bipartisan resolution condemning the recent anti-Semitic terrorist act on the Congregation Beth Israel Synagogue.

In closing, I am incredibly proud to represent Florida's Third, a district that has such a vibrant faith community. In fact, my district includes the University of Florida, which is home to the largest Jewish student organization in the country, Gators for Israel.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on the importance of the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, the ways in which they've used this grant program to protect their faith communities, and any recommendations they have to improve the grant program going forward.

Thank you and I yield back.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. I thank the Ranking Member for her opening statement. The Chair now recognizes the Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism, the gentlewoman from Michigan, Ms. Slotkin.

Chairwoman SLOTKIN. Thank you, Madam Chair. A warm, warm welcome to all of our witnesses.

Since I became the Chair of the Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism last year, about a year ago, we focused on how the threat to our communities has evolved over the last several years, from international terrorism to home-grown and domestic violent extremism. More and more we are finding that these extremist ideologies don't exist in isolation. The lines between hate and terror and conspiracy are increasingly blurring together.

The latest reminder of this truth and the catalyst for this hearing is what happened and what we saw in Colleyville, Texas, last month. Ordinary Americans came face-to-face with what happens when anti-Semitic ideology, terrorist ideology, is mixed with historic conspiracy theories about Jewish influence. This evolving threat is one that the Department of Homeland Security actually just highlighted yesterday in their latest National terrorism bulletin. As the ADL's Jonathan Greenblatt told our committee last week, "Anti-Semitism is at the beating heart" of this extremist ideology.

Therefore, Madam Chair, I ask unanimous consent to place in the record the National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin that was issued yesterday by DHS.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. Without objection.

[The information follows:]



February 7, 2022 2:00 PM ET

This Bulletin will expire on  
June 7, 2022 at 2:00 PM ET

\*\*The NTAS Bulletin issued on November 10, 2021 and  
set to expire on February 8, 2022 is hereby canceled.\*\*

## SUMMARY OF THE TERRORISM THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES

The United States remains in a heightened threat environment fueled by several factors, including an online environment filled with false or misleading narratives and conspiracy theories, and other forms of [mis-dis- and mal-information](#) (MDM) introduced and/or amplified by foreign and domestic threat actors. These threat actors seek to exacerbate societal friction to sow discord and undermine public trust in government institutions to encourage unrest, which could potentially inspire acts of violence. Mass casualty attacks and other acts of targeted violence conducted by lone offenders and small groups acting in furtherance of ideological beliefs and/or personal grievances pose an ongoing threat to the nation. While the conditions underlying the heightened threat landscape have not significantly changed over the last year, the convergence of the following factors has increased the volatility, unpredictability, and complexity of the threat environment: (1) the proliferation of false or misleading narratives, which sow discord or undermine public trust in U.S. government institutions; (2) continued calls for violence directed at U.S. critical infrastructure; soft targets and mass gatherings; faith-based institutions, such as churches, synagogues, and mosques; institutions of higher education; racial and religious minorities; government facilities and personnel, including law enforcement and the military; the media; and perceived ideological opponents; and (3) calls by foreign terrorist organizations for attacks on the United States based on recent events.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The primary terrorism-related threat to the United States continues to stem from lone offenders or small cells of individuals who are motivated by a range of foreign and/or domestic grievances often cultivated through the consumption of certain online content. The convergence of violent extremist ideologies, false or misleading narratives, and conspiracy theories have and will continue to contribute to a heightened threat of violence in the United States.

Key factors contributing to the current heightened threat environment include:

- (1) *The proliferation of false or misleading narratives, which sow discord or undermine public trust in U.S. government institutions:*
  - For example, there is widespread online proliferation of false or misleading narratives regarding unsubstantiated widespread election fraud and COVID-19. Grievances associated with these themes inspired violent extremist attacks during 2021.
  - Malign foreign powers have and continue to amplify these false or misleading narratives in efforts to damage the United States.
- (2) *Continued calls for violence directed at U.S. critical infrastructure; soft targets and mass gatherings; faith-based institutions, such as churches, synagogues, and mosques; institutions of higher education; racial and religious minorities; government facilities and personnel, including law enforcement and the military; the media; and perceived ideological opponents:*
  - Foreign terrorist organizations and domestic threat actors continue to amplify pre-existing false or misleading narratives online to sow discord and undermine public trust in government institutions. Some of these actors do so to encourage unrest, which could lead to acts of violence against the facilities, individuals, institutions, and organizations cited above.
  - Violent extremists inspired by a range of grievances and ideologies continue to target crowded venues traditionally perceived to be soft targets, such as commercial and publicly accessible facilities, public gatherings, certain government and state facilities, and houses of worship.
  - The recent attack on a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas highlights the continuing threat of violence based upon racial or religious motivations, as well as threats against faith-based organizations.

## RESOURCES TO STAY SAFE

### Stay Informed and Prepared


- [Be prepared](#) for emergency situations and remain aware of circumstances that may place you at risk. Make note of your surroundings and the nearest security personnel.
- Keep yourself [safe online](#) and maintain [digital and media literacy](#) to recognize and build resilience to false or misleading narratives.
- Review [DHS resources](#) for how to better protect [businesses](#), [houses of worship](#), and [schools](#), and ensure the safety of public gatherings.
- Prepare for potential [active shooter](#) incidents, as well as efforts to [prevent](#), [protect against](#), [respond to](#), and [mitigate the risk of explosives](#).
- [Learn more](#) about community-based resources to help prevent individuals from radicalizing to violence.

### Report Potential Threats

- Listen to local authorities and public safety officials.
- [If You See Something, Say Something](#)<sup>®</sup> [Report suspicious activity](#) and threats of violence, including online threats, to local law enforcement, [FBI Field Offices](#), or your local [Fusion Center](#); Call 911 in case of emergency.
- If you know someone who is struggling with mental health issues or may pose a danger to themselves or others, [seek help](#).

**If you See Something, Say Something<sup>®</sup> Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement or call 911.**

The National Terrorism Advisory System provides information on homeland security issues and threats. It is distributed by the Department of Homeland Security. More information is available at: [DHS.gov/advisories](#). To receive mobile updates: [Twitter.com/dhsopv](#). If You See Something, Say Something<sup>®</sup> used with permission of the NY Metropolitan Transportation Authority.



**National Terrorism Advisory System**  
**Bulletin**  
DHS.gov/advisories

February 7, 2022 2:00 PM ET

*This Bulletin will expire on  
June 7, 2022 at 2:00 PM ET*

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- Threats directed at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other colleges and universities, Jewish facilities, and churches cause concern and may inspire extremist threat actors to mobilize to violence.
- As COVID-19 restrictions continue to decrease nationwide, increased access to commercial and government facilities and the rising number of mass gatherings could provide increased opportunities for individuals looking to commit acts of violence to do so, often with little or no warning. Meanwhile, COVID-19 mitigation measures—particularly COVID-19 vaccine and mask mandates—have been used by domestic violent extremists to justify violence since 2020 and could continue to inspire these extremists to target government, healthcare, and academic institutions that they associate with those measures.
- Domestic violent extremists have also viewed attacks against U.S. critical infrastructure as a means to create chaos and advance ideological goals, and have recently aspired to disrupt U.S. [electric](#) and [communications](#) critical infrastructure, including by spreading false or misleading narratives about [5G cellular technology](#).
- Some domestic violent extremists have continued to advocate for violence in response to false or misleading narratives about unsubstantiated election fraud. The months preceding the upcoming 2022 midterm elections could provide additional opportunities for these extremists and other individuals to call for violence directed at democratic institutions, political candidates, party offices, election events, and election workers.
- A small number of threat actors are attempting to use the evacuation and resettlement of Afghan nationals following the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan last year as a means to exacerbate long-standing grievances and justify attacks against immigrants.

**(3) Calls by foreign terrorist organizations for attacks on the United States based on recent events:**

- Foreign terrorist organizations will likely continue to maintain a highly visible online presence to attempt to inspire U.S.-based individuals to engage in violent activity.
- Supporters of foreign terrorist organizations have encouraged copycat attacks following the January 15, 2022 attack on a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas.
- Foreign terrorists remain intent on targeting the United States and U.S. persons, and may seek to capitalize on the evolving security environment overseas to plot attacks. The Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS) or its affiliates may issue public calls for retaliation due to the strike that recently killed ISIS leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi.

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**HOW WE ARE RESPONDING**

- DHS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) continue to share timely and actionable information and intelligence with the broadest audience possible. This includes sharing information and intelligence with our partners across every level of government and in the private sector. We conduct recurring threat briefings with private sector and state, local, tribal, territorial, and campus partners, including to inform security planning efforts. DHS remains committed to working with our partners to identify and [prevent all forms of terrorism and targeted violence](#), and to support law enforcement efforts to keep our communities safe.
- [DHS's Office of Intelligence and Analysis](#) established a new, dedicated domestic terrorism branch to produce the sound, timely intelligence needed to counter related threats. The Department expanded its evaluation of online activity as part of its efforts to assess and prevent acts of violence, while ensuring the protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.
- DHS's [Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships \(CP3\)](#) provides communities with resources and tools to help prevent individuals from radicalizing to violence. In 2021, CP3 awarded about \$20 million in grants through its [Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program](#). CP3 also partners with local communities to raise awareness about how to prevent violence.
- In 2021, DHS designated domestic violent extremism as a "National Priority Area" within its [Homeland Security Grant Program \(HSGP\)](#), resulting in at least \$77 million being spent on preventing, preparing for, protecting against, and responding to related threats.
- In 2021, DHS's [Nonprofit Security Grant Program \(NSGP\)](#) provided \$180 million in funding to support target hardening and other physical security enhancements to non-profit organizations at high risk of terrorist attack.
- DHS is working with public and private sector partners, as well as foreign counterparts, to identify and evaluate MDM, including false or misleading narratives and conspiracy theories spread on social media and other online platforms that endorse or could inspire violence.
- [DHS's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency \(CISA\)](#) works with public and private sector partners – including U.S. critical infrastructure owners and operators – to mitigate risk against our cyber and physical infrastructure and increase nationwide cybersecurity resilience.

If You See Something, Say Something® Report suspicious activity to local law enforcement or call 911.

The National Terrorism Advisory System provides information on homeland security issues and threats. It is distributed by the Department of Homeland Security. More information is available at: [dhs.gov/advisories](https://dhs.gov/advisories). To receive mobile updates: [Twitter.com/dhsops](https://twitter.com/dhsops).  
 If You See Something, Say Something® used with permission of the NY Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Chairwoman SLOTKIN. So, let us just be clear about Colleyville. This was not an isolated incident. The last 5 years have seen a 60 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents Nation-wide, with 2020 marking the third-highest amount since ADL began tracking these incidents in the 1970's. We felt this particularly acutely in the State of Michigan, where I am from, where we saw a 21 percent increase from graffitied swastikas on buildings to Zoom bombings.

In the weeks after Colleyville, it has become clear that this tragedy, like so many before it, has become a rallying point for hate and extremism of all kinds: Al-Qaeda supporters, White supremacists, Holocaust deniers, QAnon conspiracy theorists, Islamophobes. All have seized onto this particularly tragedy for their own twisted ends.

So, this growing threat can be demoralizing, but as our witnesses today will note, we are far from powerless against it. Today, we have the rare ability, particularly for this committee, the rare ability to not only discuss the tools we know are effective in protecting against violent hate, but to hear from someone who can speak to its value better than anyone.

I am truly honored that we are able to have Rabbi Cytron-Walker with us today. Simply put, Rabbi Charlie's actions late last month literally saved lives. As he said, they were made possible by the training and support he received before the incident, including the Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

We have seen the value of these programs across Michigan. I will just say when one of the largest mosques in our State, which is in my district, IAGD, faced a flurry of anti-Islamic harassment and vandalism just after the Christchurch shooting, we brought them together with leaders from the Jewish community, including the rabbi who married me, and worked together to secure this funding to protect their house of worship.

Since 2019, this program has provided nearly 7 million to secure over 70 synagogues, mosques, churches, schools, and community centers across Michigan. Over 500,000 of that was to my district and that includes churches in Brighton and Okemos, a parish in Pinckney, Michigan State's Hillel Program in East Lansing, and, again, the Islamic Association in Rochester Hills.

But we know that there is more that we can do, both in closing the \$200 million funding shortfall we have seen since last year, we have also been advocating with over 170 of our colleagues in bipartisan basis to make this an easier program to access, particularly for smaller communities, which is something the Rabbi and I spoke about.

Today's hearing is focused on some of the most pressing policy issues and threats before our committee, but for me, it is also deeply personal. As it happens, Rabbi Charlie is a native Michigander. He is from the Lansing area, which I represent; his mom still lives there. He actually went to summer camp with my brother. But, as we know, other of our witnesses are wonderful representatives and I want to recognize their work on these issues for the long term.

Then last, I want to recognize the perverseness of having to secure our houses of worship the way my colleagues and I had to harden our facilities when I served in places like Iraq. But while we work to prevent these tragedies from occurring, it is also our

responsibility to ensure that these same cherished institutions and sacred places are not the most vulnerable.

We have seen the contradiction between the spirit of charity and welcoming people into places, like the synagogue in Colleyville, and then the threats that our faith communities are facing. But that openness, which moves a congregation to open up their sanctuary to a stranger in need, that is a strength in our community and we need to do everything we can to secure it.

So, looking forward to discussing how we can continue to protect these houses of worship. With that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

[The statement of Chairwoman Slotkin follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN ELISSA SLOTKIN

FEBRUARY 8, 2022

Since I became Chair of the Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism last year, we've focused on how the threat to our communities has evolved over the last several years—from international terrorism to home-grown and domestic violent extremism.

More and more, we're finding that these extremist ideologies don't exist in isolation—the lines between hate, terror, and conspiracy are increasingly blurring together.

The latest reminder of this truth—and the catalyst for this hearing—is what we saw in Colleyville, TX, last month. Ordinary Americans came face to face with what happens when an anti-Semitic terrorist ideology is mixed with historic conspiracy theories about Jews' influence.

This evolving threat is one that the Department of Homeland Security highlighted just yesterday, in their latest National terrorism bulletin. As the ADL's Jonathan Greenblatt told our committee last week, "anti-Semitism is at the beating heart" of these extremist ideologies.

Let's be clear, this was no isolated incident. The last 5 years have seen a 60 percent increase in anti-Semitic incidents Nation-wide, with 2020 marking the third-highest amount since the ADL began tracking them in the 1970's. We've felt this particularly acutely in Michigan, where we saw a 21 percent increase—from graffitied swastikas to Zoom bombings.

In the weeks after Colleyville, it's become clear that this tragedy, like so many before it, has become a rallying point for hate and extremism of all kinds: Al-Qaeda supporters, White supremacists, Holocaust deniers, QAnon conspiracy theorists, Islamophobes—all have seized onto this tragedy for their own twisted ends.

This growing threat can be demoralizing: But as our witnesses today will note, we are far from powerless against it. Today, we have the rare ability to not only discuss tools we know are effective in protecting against this violent hate, but to hear from someone who can speak to its value better than anyone.

I'm truly honored that we are able to have Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker with us today. Simply put, Rabbi Charlie's actions last month saved lives—and as he has said, they were made possible by the training and support he received, before the incident, including through the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP).

We've seen the value of this program across Michigan. When one of the largest mosques in my district, the Islamic Association of Greater Detroit, faced a flurry of anti-Islamic harassment and vandalism just after the Christchurch shooting, we brought them together with leaders from the Detroit Jewish community—and worked together to secure NSGP funding to protect their house of worship.

Since 2019, this program has provided nearly \$7 million to secure over 70 synagogues, mosques, churches, schools, and community centers across Michigan—over \$500,000 just to those in my district, including churches in Brighton and Okemos, a parish in Pinckney, Michigan State's Hillel in East Lansing, and, again, the Islamic Association in Rochester Hills.

But we know there's still more we can do: Both in closing the \$200 million funding shortfall we saw last year, which I've advocated for along with over 170 of my colleagues, and in making the NSGP easier to access for our smaller communities.

Today's hearing is focused on some of the most pressing policy issues and threats before our committee. But for me, it's also deeply personal. As it happens, Rabbi Charlie is a native Michigander, with his mom still in Lansing—he actually went to summer camp with my brother.

But, as Rabbi Konikov has said, this could have been any of our synagogues, or churches, or mosques, or gurudwaras—Tree of Life, Christchurch, Sutherland Springs, Oak Creek.

I want to recognize the perverseness of the fact that we need to be here talking about how to harden our houses of worship against attack, in the way my colleagues hardened facilities when I was overseas alongside our military.

But while we work to prevent tragedies like these from occurring, it's also our responsibility to ensure that our most cherished and sacred places are not our most vulnerable.

Many have highlighted the seeming contradiction between the spirit of charity with which the attacker in Colleyville was welcomed into the congregation, and the threats facing our faith communities.

But that openness, which moves a congregation to open their sanctuary to a stranger in need? That's our strength as a community.

Today, I'm looking forward to discussing how we can protect it.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. Thank you, Chairwoman Slotkin. The Chair now recognizes the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Pfluger, for an opening statement.

Mr. PFLUGER. Thank you, Chairwoman Demings, Chairwoman Slotkin, Ranking Member Cammack. It is very important today and I really appreciate the effort that we are going through here to hold this important joint subcommittee hearing and to thank our witnesses for your time and for joining a discussion on an issue that threatens the safety and security of Americans across the country and, unfortunately, is pervasive throughout the world.

The Jewish community is targeted more often than any other religious group in the United States. Since the FBI began collecting crime data in the 1990's, the number of hate crimes against the Jewish community have ranged from 600 to 1,200 incidents each year. Quite frankly, that data being voluntarily, it could probably also be very under-representative of the true facts. In 2020, the most recent year that the FBI has published data, Jewish Americans were the target of nearly 60 percent of all religiously-motivated hate crimes, despite accounting for less than 2 percent of the total U.S. population.

It is imperative that we get a better understanding of the threat that Jewish Americans face every day and how Federal and local law enforcement can better work together to protect not just this demographic, but also against any sort of hate crime because it is completely unacceptable.

I am especially grateful to have Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker here today as a witness. First off, sir, you are a hero and we are grateful for the bravery and the courage that you showed in a very trying time. Barely a month ago, a British citizen, Malik Faisal Akram, took the rabbi and 3 other members of Congregation Beth Israel hostage on a Saturday in Colleyville, Texas. Akram's goal was allegedly to secure the release of Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani terrorist who is serving an 86-year term in a Fort Worth prison for the attempted murder of U.S. officers in Afghanistan. But in the face of danger, Rabbi Cytron-Walker waited for an opportune moment and acted.

We are absolutely grateful, Rabbi, for your quick thinking, your heroic actions, your courage, and really the fact that you were prepared. It is unfortunate, and I agree with Chairwoman Slotkin, that it is unfortunate that we have to be thinking like that, you

know. But I very much appreciate your courage and that we didn't have an incident that could have been worse.

We owe it to all the houses of worship across America, and especially to our synagogues, to bolster safety and security from any sort of religiously-motivated hate crime or threat of terrorism. At the Federal level we must make improvements to our information-sharing agreements, with our Visa Waiver Program partner countries to ensure that others like Akram with violent criminal histories are known to DHS and to the agency partners before they are allowed to enter the United States, to move freely and threaten any American citizen.

We must also ensure that communications and information sharing between the Federal and local law enforcement levels continues to be strong, that it continues to move between these agencies to detect threats, so that we can prevent situations like Colleyville from happening. What brings us here today, we must continue our support of faith-based communities through the Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

I am very interested to hear from our witnesses today as to how they are working to protect Jewish synagogues, schools, and recreational facilities. I would like to learn more about the threat that we face, that they face, and the partnerships that we see, the reporting capabilities and how the information sharing is really working. I am interested in those details, so that we can protect our houses of worship, so that we can continue to have that freedom that our framers and that our Constitution allows and that really, quite frankly, makes this country the greatest country in the world.

Protecting our houses of worship, it is essential to our safety and our security, but it is essential to being an American. An attack on the Jewish members of our community is an attack on the very pillars of the religious freedoms that our country was founded upon.

So, in closing, I would like to thank our witnesses and I would like to thank Chairwoman Demings, Chairwoman Slotkin, and Ranking Member Cammack for holding this very important meeting, and I yield back.

[The statement of Ranking Member Pfluger follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER AUGUST PFLUGER

Thank you, Chairwoman Slotkin and Chairwoman Demings, for holding this important joint subcommittee hearing today, and thank you to our witnesses for joining us to discuss an issue that threatens the safety and security of Americans across the country and is pervasive throughout the world.

The Jewish community is targeted more often than any other religious group in the United States. Since the FBI started collecting crime data in the 1990's, the number of hate crimes against the Jewish community has ranged from 600 to 1,200 incidents every year. And, since the FBI's data is based on voluntary reporting by local law enforcement, these statistics are frequently either underreported or not reported at all. In 2020, the most recent year the FBI has published data on, Jewish Americans were the target of nearly 60 percent of the religiously-motivated hate crimes, despite accounting for less than 2 percent of the U.S. population. I am very interested in getting a better understanding of the threat Jewish Americans face every day and how Federal and local law enforcement can work to better protect them, as well as other at-risk religious groups.

I am especially grateful to have Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker as a witness today. Barely a month ago, British citizen Malik Faisal Akram took the Rabbi, along with three other members of Congregation Beth Israel, hostage during their Saturday service in Colleyville, Texas. Akram's goal was to secure the release of Aafia



Siddiqui, a Pakistani terrorist serving an 86-year sentence in a Fort Worth prison for the attempted murder of U.S. officers in Afghanistan. In the face of danger, Rabbi Cytron-Walker waited for an opportune moment and acted. We are incredibly thankful, Rabbi, for your quick thinking and heroic actions that day, leading to the safe escape of you and your congregants.

We owe it to all houses of worship in America, and especially to our synagogues, to bolster their safety and security from all religiously-motivated hate crimes and threats of terrorism. At the Federal level, we must make improvements to our information-sharing agreements with our Visa Waiver Program partner countries to ensure that others like Akram with violent criminal histories are known to DHS and their agency partners before they are allowed to move freely about the United States. We must also ensure communication and information sharing between Federal and local law enforcement to guarantee responsiveness and prevention capabilities for situations like Colleyville. And, what brings us here today, we must continue our support of faith-based communities through the Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

I am very interested to hear from our witnesses today as to how they are working to protect Jewish synagogues, schools, and recreational facilities around the country. I would like to learn more about the threat Jewish Americans face, partnerships they have with law enforcement, their reporting capabilities to threats of violence as well as attacks, and how Congress can help improve the current security measures they have in place. Protecting our houses of worship is essential to the safety and security of all Americans. An attack on the Jewish members of our communities is an attack on the very pillars of religious freedom our country was founded upon. Thank you again to all our witnesses for joining us today, and I look forward to a robust conversation.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The Chairwoman thanks the Ranking Member. It is now my honor to recognize the Chair of the full committee, the gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Thompson, for an opening statement.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you, Chairwoman Demings, Chairwoman Slotkin, Ranking Member Cammack, and Ranking Member Pfluger, for holding this timely hearing.

In the early 2020, in the wake of anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish communities in New York and New Jersey, including a deadly invasion of a rabbi's home during Hanukkah, the committee held a series of hearings on the topic. At the time, we received testimony from a diverse group of Jewish leaders about what the Federal Government should be doing to respond to the rise of anti-Semitic terrorism and violence.

They issued an urgent call for the increased funding for the Non-profit Security Grant Program, which Congress answered. Funding was doubled to \$180 million. Earlier this Congress, the House passed the Build Back Better Act, which would add \$100 million to the program.

Last week, we received compelling testimony from Jonathan Greenblatt, the head of the Anti-Defamation League, about how the Jewish community is a primary target for violent extremists from across the ideological spectrum. Certainly, last month's attack on Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas, illustrates that fact, as the perpetrator was cheered by both violent White supremacists and Islamist terrorists.

Today, we are fortunate to have a hero in our midst. Rabbi Cytron-Walker, thank you for joining us and being so willing to share your story. I understand you relied on knowledge gained from security training to bring the incident being to a peaceful conclusion. Your steadiness and courage were undoubtedly important factors.

On the subject of the Colleyville attack, I would note that the committee is conducting aggressive oversight into this incident and met just last week with the FBI and other officials. While the attacker appears to have been motivated by the desire to force the release of an Islamist terrorist, the approach he took was predicated on the belief in historic and dangerous anti-Semitic tropes about so-called “Jewish power.” Such tropes are a prominent feature of a number of conspiracies espoused by QAnon and others and put real people in danger. It falls to all of us to speak out loudly against them.

As someone with a long history with the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, I am pleased that we are holding this hearing today to get testimony on the record about the importance of the program and why its funding should be significantly increased.

With that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

[The statement of Chairman Thompson follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN BENNIE G. THOMPSON

FEBRUARY 8, 2022

In early 2020, in the wake of anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish communities in New York and New Jersey, including a deadly invasion of a rabbi’s home during Chanukah, the committee held a series of hearings on the topic. At the time, we received testimony from a diverse group of Jewish leaders about what the Federal Government should be doing to respond to the rise in anti-Semitic terrorism and violence.

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As someone with a long history with the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, I am pleased that we are holding this hearing today to get testimony on the record about the importance of the program and why its funding should be significantly increased.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members are reminded that the committees will operate according to the guidelines laid out by the Chairman and Ranking Member in their February 3 colloquy regarding remote procedures. Without objection, Members not on the subcommittees shall be permitted to sit and question the witnesses. Additional Member statements may be submitted for the record.

[The statement of Honorable Jackson Lee follows:]

## STATEMENT OF HONORABLE SHEILA JACKSON LEE

FEBRUARY 8, 2022

Thank you, Chairwoman Demings and Ranking Member Cammack, for convening the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery to hear witnesses at today's hearing entitled, "The Nonprofit Security Grant Program and Protecting Houses of Worship: A View from the American Jewish Community."

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses:

- Charlie Cytron-Walker, Rabbi, Congregation Beth Israel, Colleyville, Texas;
- Yosef Konikov, Rabbi, Chabad of South Orlando;
- Eric Fingerhut, president & CEO, Jewish Federations of North America (Minority Witness); and
- Michael Masters, national director & CEO, Secure Community Network.

The purpose of the hearing is to receive testimony from leaders in the American Jewish Community about the heightened violence and threats against their houses of worship and community members.

This hearing will highlight the importance of the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP), which plays a critical role in helping at-risk nonprofit organizations and religious communities bolster security.

I am eager to hear directly from members of diverse segments of the American Jewish community and the Jewish Federation of North America (JFNA) on what improvements are needed to help secure places of worship against attacks.

Recent attacks against synagogues in the United States include:

- Pittsburgh synagogue shooting (2018)
- Poway synagogue shooting (2019)
- Colleyville synagogue hostage crisis (2022).

Prior to September 11, 2001, the Federal Government had a wide range of law enforcement, National security, and crime investigative agencies that collected information, but jealously guarded this information from other agencies.

More than 20 years after the 9/11 attacks, the terrorism landscape is complex, diffused, and dynamic.

The 9/11 Commission Report allowed an in-depth assessment of the failures that led to the horrific terrorist attacks against the United States that cost the lives of nearly 3,000 people.

The House Committee on Homeland Security was created to implement the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Report and ensure that resources were provided to support the mission of homeland security.

The most significant task of the committee was guiding the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security and making sure that it had all that it would need to carry out its mission to keep all Americans safe from the threat of terrorism.

I, along with other Members who have served on this committee since its inception, made a commitment that a terrorist attack of the magnitude that occurred on September 11, 2001, would never happen again.

An essential component of our ability to keep this commitment was the establishment of stronger ties among local, State, and Federal law enforcement and building collaborations with private-sector partners.

Since the founding of DHS its mission remains the same—to defend the homeland from terrorist attacks and to help victims recover from disasters that are natural and man-made.

Although terrorist actors espousing violent Islamist ideologies continue to pose a threat, the greatest terrorism threat to the homeland today is posed by domestic violent extremists, particularly from those who promote a violent White supremacy ideology.

Further complicating counter-terrorism efforts is the convergence of violent ideologies where violent White supremacy (including anti-Semitism) often combines with other violent ideologies to drive an attack.

The face and threats posed by terrorism is now sourced from domestic threats that have been present within this Nation for a very long time but have found voice to reemerge in recent years.

This domestic threat to Americans has been most acutely felt by African American, Jewish, Asian, and Hispanic Americans.

Some of the tragedies include:

- Hundreds of Black Americans horrifically massacred in Tulsa, Oklahoma (1921);
- Attack at the Federal building in Oklahoma City killed 168 people, including 19 children (1995);

- Sikh Temple of Wisconsin where 6 persons were killed during worship services (2012);
- White supremacist kills 9 worshipers at the Mathe Mother Emanuel Church Charleston South Carolina (2015);
- In 2017, 4 people were seriously injured at a Congressional baseball practice (2017);
- Tree of Life Synagogue were tragically killed during Shabbat morning services (2018);
- Poway synagogue shooting (2019);
- El Paso mass shooting attacker targeting Hispanics killed 22 (2019);
- January 6 attack on the Capitol following historic high turnout of minority voters in Georgia and Arizona impacting the outcome of the Presidential and Senate elections (2021); and
- Colleyville synagogue hostage crisis (2022).

Since 2018, there have been 3 violence attacks targeting the American Jewish community and hundreds of incidents of centered on hate.

In 2018, ADL recorded 1,879 anti-Semitic incidents, the third-highest number of recorded incidents in the past 4 decades.

In 2020, Jewish institutions reported 327 anti-Semitic incidents, an increase of 40 percent from 234 in 2019.

Additionally, in 2020, Jewish institutions further highlighted that of the 327 reported anti-Semitic incidents, “264 were incidents of harassment, 61 were incidents of vandalism and 3 were incidents of assault.”

As a result of COVID-19 many religious observances are moving to virtual platforms and Jewish organizations report having their videoconferences disturbed or hijacked by interlopers who express anti-Semitic sentiments.

In 2020 alone, the ADL reported 196 cases of anti-Semitic “Zoom bombing” attacks in the United States, including 114 against Jewish institutions.

Members of the Jewish faith may be able to fully understand the threat posed by these acts of violence because of a history that spans millenniums with stories of violence carried out against members of the Jewish faith—just because of how they worship God.

This history did not turn the community of believers inward—but the opposite.

The power of the collective Jewish communities’ compassionate loving reaction to terrible acts of violence was witnessed by human and civil rights leaders from the earliest efforts to end slavery, Jim Crow, and today’s fight for equity within the United States.

This is the bond that connects the Civil Rights movement to the Jewish Faith, which includes joining in marches, sit-ins, voter registration drives in the deep South—none of which were safe things to do—but they were the right things to do for the Nation.

An embodiment of this joint struggle were the deaths of Goodman, Schwerner, and Chaney—names that will forever be linked.

On February 1, 2022, the first day of Black History month bomb threats targeting Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) is both disturbing and tragic.

Many HBCUs welcomed Jewish intellectuals fleeing Europe during the rise of Nazism in the early 1930’s.

During this period more than two-thirds of the faculty hired at many HBCUs from 1933 to 1945 had come to the United States to escape Nazi Germany.

HBCUs believed the Jewish professors were valuable faculty that would help strengthen their institutions’ credibility.

HBCUs had a firm belief in diversity and giving opportunity no matter the race, religion, or country of origin.

HBCUs were open to Jews because of their ideas of equal learning spaces, which demonstrated that an environment where all people felt welcome to study, including women could prosper.

In this environment the leaders of the modern civil rights movement were educated.

The history of the civil rights movement and HBCUs is inextricable linked.

HBCUs are where early civil rights leaders and church leaders were forged.

The list of prominent leaders and the HBCUs they attended:

- Kamala Harris (Howard University)
- Martin Luther King (Morehouse)
- Rosa Parks (Alabama State)
- Medgar Evers (Alcorn State University)
- Thurgood Marshall (Lincoln University and Howard University)
- Jesse Jackson (North Carolina A&T)
- Ralph Abernathy (Alabama State University)

- Lonnie Johnson (Tuskegee State University)
- Langston Hughes (Lincoln University)
- Harry and Harriette Moore (Bethune Cookman College)
- Clementa Carlos Pinckney (Allen University)
- Toni Morrison (Howard University)
- Booker T. Washington (Hampton University)
- Alice Walker (Spelman)
- Katherine Johnson (West Virginia State University)
- John Lewis (Fisk University)
- W.E.B. Dubois (Fisk University)
- Ida B. Wells (Fisk University).

Targeting African Americans for working for all Americans to have equal access to housing, employment, and opportunities is best illustrated by the history of Birmingham Alabama, which earned the bloody name of “Bombingham” because of the number of bomb attacks in that city between 1947 and 1965, the year the Voting Rights Act passed.

The first martyrs of the civil rights movement were Henry and Henrietta Moore, two voting and civil rights activists who won battles for voting rights and equal pay in the State of Florida.

At the time of their murder Florida had the highest number of registered Black voters in all of the South.

In 1951, they were both killed by a bomb placed under their bed on Christmas Eve, the date of their anniversary.

The struggle to make the United States in word and deed live up to the words of the Constitution continues, but we must be prepared to weather the storms caused by those who want to drag the Nation back into a dark place in its history.

It is important to note that the violence targeting African Americans dropped drastically with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Because of the real threat of violence faced by vulnerable groups the DHS security grants program is a necessary and important tool that must be available to assist places of worship in increasing security.

Members of this committee recognize that the terror landscape has changed: Violent extremists today pick and choose individual elements of violent ideologies that fit their world view.

Groups from ISIS to domestic White supremacist are united in their violent anti-Semitism—leaving the American Jewish Community particularly vulnerable.

Nonprofits, including those within the American Jewish community, have no choice but to invest in protection against the threat from these violent ideologies, and rely on NSGP funding to do so.

Democrats recognize that we must support these at-risk nonprofits and ensure that houses of worship have the resources they need to bolster their security in the face of these terror threats.

I want to make it very clear—that this is not just a burden for Jewish places of worship to carry—but the responsibility of the United States to protect against terrorist attacks no matter the target or the place attacked—it is vitally important that all members of our Nation feel and know that they are not alone when they face a threat.

An attack against one place of worship is an attack against all places of worship.

As I learn of the incident that brought violence to a place of worship, it always touches me deeply because of the place my faith experiences have in my life—I am shaped by my experiences in the place where my worshiped.

Places of worship are and must remain places of peace, contemplation, introspection, connections to our present, past, and future.

Democrats have doubled funding for Nonprofit Security Grant Program from \$90 million in fiscal year 2020 to \$180 million in fiscal year 2021, but it is still not enough to meet the real and pressing need.

As a Member of the House Budget Committee, I join other Members of this committee in calling for significant increases to funding in fiscal year 2022 appropriations bill and the “Build Back Better Act” would have added \$100 million in additional funding.

In addition to more funding, the infrastructure of the Nonprofit Security Grant Program both within FEMA and among the States needs to mature to help ensure that eligible at-risk non-profits can easily apply and access the resources they desperately need to ensure community members can worship and congregate safely.

I look forward to today’s testimony and the work of this committee to continue in its efforts to strengthen and improve the Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Thank you.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. I now welcome again our panel of witnesses. I will recognize the gentlewoman from Michigan, Ms. Slotkin, to introduce our first witness.

Chairwoman SLOTKIN. Great. Thank you, Madam Chair. It is my honor to introduce Rabbi Cytron-Walker to our committee. Over the past month, Americans have come to know him for his heroic actions last month, which undoubtedly saved lives. But Rabbi Charlie has been the rabbi at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, in Texas, since 2006. He graduated from the University of Michigan, which we won't hold against him, in 1998. He received his rabbinical ordination from Hebrew Union College in 2006.

Along the way he worked with the homeless population in Ann Arbor and a civil rights organization in Detroit, and has been recognized for his leadership on a whole range of issues, all emblematic of the warm spirit which he brings to his ministry.

Of course, as I mentioned earlier, we are proud to call him a proud Michigander and native of Lansing, Michigan, which I represent.

On the day of the attack, I found myself talking to his sister and, through the family rabbi, to his mother as the events unfolded, just making sure to pass along the great information or the important information that I was getting from the Department of Homeland Security. We ended up becoming quickly connected, as did the entirety of the Detroit Jewish community on that day. No family should ever have to go through what that family went through watching the rabbi.

After speaking with Rabbi Charlie in the days since, I have been really moved by his courage, of course, but also his exceptional presence of mind during those incidents, which I know from serving 3 tours in Iraq, when your adrenaline is going and you are under threat, it is very hard to have presence of mind. Frankly, his perspective on events and using this awful experience to advocate for the protection of other communities in need.

When we spoke on the phone, we spoke about post-traumatic stress, about leadership and how important leadership is in these moments, and about these moments in our lives that really give us purpose and give us mission.

So, Rabbi Charlie, it is our privilege to have you with us here today, to give you the opportunity to share your story with Congress, with the world. We feel really proud to host you at this event. I am very glad for the opportunity as a fellow Jewish Michigander to welcome you to the committee.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. Our second witness is Rabbi Yosef Konikov. He is the rabbi of Chabad South Orlando. In 1999, Rabbi Konikov and his wife founded the Chabad Center in South Orlando, which includes a Hebrew school, preschool, a popular summer camp, and several other educational programs and activities. In 2009, he also founded a private Jewish elementary school. Again, welcome, Rabbi.

Our third witness is the Honorable Eric D. Fingerhut. Congressman Fingerhut is the president and CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America. Congressman Fingerhut has had a distinguished career in public service, including representing Ohio's 19th Con-

gressional District from 1993 to 1995. Welcome back to the House of Representatives, Congressman Fingerhut.

Our fourth and final witness is Michael Masters. Mr. Masters is the national director and CEO at the Secure Community Network. Previously, Mr. Masters served as senior vice president of the Soufan Group and as the executive director of the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management for Cook County, Illinois, where he coordinated the Homeland Security and Emergency Management System.

We are so looking forward to hearing from our witnesses today. Without objection, the witness' full statements will be inserted in the record.

I now ask that each witness will summarize their statement for 5 minutes, beginning with Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker.

**STATEMENT OF RABBI CHARLIE CYTRON-WALKER, RABBI,  
CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL**

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER. Chairwoman Demings, Chairwoman Slotkin, Ranking Member Cammack, Ranking Member Pfluger, Chairman Thompson, thank you so much for the opportunity to share some thoughts with you this morning. This is the first time I have appeared before a Congressional committee and it is great to see that there are so many fellow Texans and Michiganders on the subcommittees.

I would like to take a moment before turning to the substance of my remarks to publicly thank Chairwoman Slotkin for her kind introduction and even more for her thoughtful outreach to my family during and after that traumatic day. I know it was a source of great comfort.

I believe and often teach that Judaism is filled with contradictions because life is filled with contradictions. Today I am filled with mixed and even contradictory emotions. On the one hand, I am truly horrified that in our society today religious leaders must devote themselves to security training. How to harden our facilities is both a necessary conversation and anathema to religious ideals of hospitality and loving the stranger.

At the same time, I am filled with gratitude. I am grateful to be here. To be honest, I am grateful to be anywhere.

I am so grateful that 6 years ago almost to the day I attended the faith-based Security Summit that was hosted by the FBI, Homeland Security, and our region's U.S. Attorney's Office. It was my first education related to active shooters and the first time I was introduced to the concept of a security committee. Since then, I have participated in about a half-dozen different security workshops offered by the FBI, the ADL, Colleyville Police, and the Secure Communities Network. Those sessions helped me to stay alert, look for an opportunity, and gave me the courage to act when I needed to.

I am so grateful that just a few months after the Security Summit our congregation formed our first security subcommittee. Their work was responsible for numerous physical security enhancements, educational sessions, and the development of our security action plan. They built a strong relationship between the Colleyville PD and Congregation Beth Israel. The police officers

who were at CBI that day knew our building and knew us. All of their work made a dramatic difference.

I am so grateful for the financial support of our members, Tarrant County's Jewish Federation, and the Nonprofit Security Grant Program that made our security plans possible. That included upgrading our security cameras, which was critical to law enforcement. Matthew DeSarno, special agent in charge of the FBI's Dallas field office, has said that the video coverage gave the decision makers, the negotiators, and others general situational awareness.

As grateful as I am for the support and funding under the Non-profit Security Grant Act, my understanding is that the funding is not at a level where it can meet the urgent needs of the communities it was created to protect. Every congregation needs to be prepared, yet the gap between the need and funding is profound.

In 2021, fewer than half the Nonprofit Security Grant Program applications were approved. Further complicating the situation, it is also my understanding that if an institution does not receive much-needed security grants, there is no indication of where their application fell short. Without feedback, it is impossible to improve the application for the future.

That is disheartening at a time when religious institutions need reassurance and support. Perhaps FEMA or the appropriate agency could be required to provide some type of response to a grant application. I know that would impose an additional burden, which would need to be alleviated by additional funding.

In small congregations we face special challenges in dealing with Government grants. We have two paid staff: A part-time administrative assistant and myself. Almost all the work of running our congregation is done by our members as volunteers. Perhaps just as the IRS provides short forms for small organizations, FEMA and other agencies could do the same here or find another way to lower the barriers for smaller congregations.

On the morning of January 15, when the gunman arrived, there was me and one volunteer in the building. I was running late. I was finishing my preparations for the Torah reading, organizing the on-line setup, checking sound. In the midst of trying to do a million different things I had a stranger come to the door.

I have, of course, thought about that moment a great deal. I welcomed a terrorist into my congregation. I live with that responsibility. It is important for you to understand that this was not a matter of me opening the door just because I value hospitality. I do value hospitality. The Torah scroll that we read from each week was gifted to our congregation thanks to hospitality. I strive to live that value every day. Like so many congregations of all backgrounds, CBI strives to be a house of prayer for all people.

At the same time, I also value security. In a small congregation I am rabbi and tech support and gatekeeper. When our member asked if I knew the person at the door, I was distracted, but I still did a visual inspection. After a brief word, he appeared to be who he said he was: A guy who spent a night outside in sub-40-degree weather. But that was just the first analysis, yes.

I served him tea. I also spoke with him throughout the process to learn his story. Who was he? How did he get to CBI? Such con-



versation is welcoming and it gave me an opportunity to see if he was acting nervous or if his story added up. Security and hospitality can go hand-in-hand.

I was running late, but I spent time to see if there were any red flags, and I didn't see any. Of course, I was wrong.

I share this because despite all the plans and funding and courses, I still opened the door. But because of all the plans and funding and courses, and literally dozens of small things that just happened to go our way, we were able to escape.

Right now there are far too many houses of worship that are just beginning the process we started 6 years ago. Right now there are far too many houses of worship that have developed plans and are counting on the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to put them in place and help them feel more secure in their spiritual home. Right now there are far too many houses of worship that won't get the support they need, especially small congregations.

Tragically, we live in a world where all houses of worship need protection. All of us need protection. I believe that both Democrats and Republicans desperately want to change that reality.

Changing our reality all at once is too much. That is why Rabbi Tarfon reminds us in "Pirkei Avot" that we aren't obligated to complete the work, but we cannot neglect it. I am not asking to fix everything, but increasing funding for and making appropriate adjustments to the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, the kinds of recommendations that Mr. Fingerhut will be testifying to just a little bit later on, that would be an incredibly positive step in the right direction.

It is an honor for me to speak with you today. Thank you for the opportunity.

[The prepared statement of Rabbi Cytron-Walker follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RABBI CHARLIE CYTRON-WALKER

FEBRUARY 8, 2022

Chairwoman Demings, Chairwoman Slotkin, Ranking Member Cammack, Ranking Member Pfluger, thank you for the opportunity to share some thoughts with you this morning.

This is the first time I have appeared before a Congressional committee, and it's great to see so many fellow Texans on the subcommittees. I would like to take a moment, before turning to the substance of my remarks, to publicly thank Chairwoman Slotkin for her kind introduction and, even more, for her thoughtful outreach to my family during and after that traumatic day. I know it was a source of great comfort.

I believe, and often teach, that Judaism is filled with contradictions because life is filled with contradictions. And today I am filled with mixed and even contradictory emotions.

On the one hand, I am devastated about what brings me before you today. It's horrific that my congregants and I were held hostage in our sacred home. It feels so wrong to have those words come out of my mouth. We spent over 10 hours with a terrorist pointing a gun at us in our sanctuary. We were concerned for ourselves and for one another. We were terrified.

And what happened at Tree of Life in Pittsburgh and Chabad of Poway a few years ago was so much worse. Reform, Conservative, or Orthodox—those who hate Jews do not distinguish among us. Anti-Semitic attacks and incidents in every form have increased throughout the country. There's a lot of concern in the Jewish community. We're struggling. And we're not alone.

There have been terrible moments of harassment and violence and bloodshed at churches and mosques, and basically every religion has experienced challenging moments or tragedy. The murder of 6 worshippers at the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek (WI) in 2012 was devastating. The murder of 9 worshippers, all Black, at Mother

Emanuel AME Church in Charleston (SC) in 2015 was terrifying for all of us, especially for so many in the Black community. It was another blow, shattering the perception of safety in religious spaces.

And for those of us from Texas, we remember the horrific bloodshed at the Sutherland Springs church—where 26 people were murdered in the deadliest mass shooting in Texas history and the deadliest shooting in a place of worship in the United States. No one should fear gathering to pray or celebrate or mourn or connect in their spiritual home.

All of us need to feel safe in our sacred space and our communities—and too many people, of every background, don't always feel safe. And that's heartbreaking. And that's our reality. Even though the chances are so remote that violence will be visited upon any one congregation—our recent past has shown that tragedy and trauma can happen. That's our harsh reality and it's been our harsh reality. We can't ignore that reality. We have to confront it.

That means we all have to be prepared. Preparation does not mean we expect calamity or live in fear of disaster. Preparation means that we will have the resources and policies and training to reduce the chances of a tragic event and increase the chances of surviving the worst.

This is why my emotions are mixed this morning. I am truly horrified that in our society today religious leaders must devote themselves to security training. How to “harden” our facilities is both a necessary conversation and anathema to religious ideals of hospitality and loving the stranger. And yet I am also grateful. I am grateful to be here. To be honest, I'm grateful to be anywhere.

So many things went right even as we were confronted by such violence. And Government support has been invaluable. That's why I appreciate this opportunity to be with you this morning to thank you and your colleagues for the support and funding you have provided to help secure our congregations. It has been, literally, life-saving. At the same time, it is tragically clear the need is far greater than the current funding can address, and slight alterations will make a world of difference.

I am so grateful that 6 years ago, almost to the day, I attended the Faith-Based Security Summit that was hosted by the FBI, Homeland Security, and our region's U.S. Attorney's Office. It was my first education related to active shooters and the first time I was introduced to the concept of a security committee. Since then, I have participated in about a half-dozen different security workshops offered by the FBI, the ADL, Colleyville Police, and the Secure Communities Network (SCN). Those sessions helped me to stay alert, look for an opportunity, and gave me the courage to act.

I am so grateful that just a few months after the Security Summit, Mike Finfer, our current congregational president, formed our first security subcommittee. Their work was responsible for numerous physical security enhancements, educational sessions, and the development of our Security Action Plan. They built a strong relationship between the Colleyville PD and Congregation Beth Israel. The police officers who were at CBI that day knew our building and knew us. All of their work made a dramatic difference.

I am so grateful that Colleyville Mayor, Richard Newton, formed a Ministerial Alliance that I started attending in 2017. Through those meetings I was able to develop a strong relationship with city leadership, the fire chief, and the police chief. I never would have guessed how important the relationship with Police Chief Miller and having his cell phone and email at my fingertips would be.

I am so grateful for the financial support of our members, Tarrant County's Jewish Federation, and the Nonprofit Security Grant Program that made our security plans possible. That included upgrading our security cameras, which was critical to law enforcement. Matthew DeSarno, special agent in charge of the FBI's Dallas Field Office has said that the video coverage “gave the decision makers, the negotiators and others general situational awareness.”<sup>1</sup>

As grateful as I am for the support and funding under the Nonprofit Security Grant Act, my understanding is that the funding is not at a level where it can meet the urgent needs of the communities it was created to protect. Every congregation needs to be prepared, yet the gap between the need and funding is profound: In

<sup>1</sup>Nicole Sganga, “Calls for Boosted Security Funding Intensity Among Faith Leaders After Texas Synagogue Hostage Standoff.” *CBS News*, January 22, 2022. Available at <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/calls-boosted-security-funding-intensify-among-faith-leaders-after-texas-synagogue-hostage-standoff/>.

2021 fewer than half of Nonprofit Security Grant Program applications were approved.<sup>2</sup>

Further complicating the situation, it is also my understanding that if an institution does not receive a much-needed security grant, there is no indication of where their application fell short. Without feedback, it's impossible to improve the application for the future. That's disheartening at a time when religious institutions need reassurance and support. Perhaps FEMA or the appropriate agency could be required to provide some type of response to a grant application. I know that would impose an additional burden, which would need to be alleviated by additional funding.

Others who have a better picture of the National situation will speak to you this morning; I want to add a few thoughts from the perspective of a small congregation.

Small congregations—which are most congregations in all faiths across the country—face special challenges in dealing with Government grants. We have 2 paid staff—a part-time administrative assistant and myself. Almost all of the work of running our congregation is done by our members, as volunteers. It typically takes all their efforts to keep the lights on and the synagogue running. Filling out extensive forms and finding the information they require is typically more than they can handle. Many small congregations don't even apply because they see the paperwork requirements and they admit defeat. We were fortunate that we happened to have a very capable volunteer who was able to dedicate an incredible amount of time to our effort to secure a grant. I understand the need for accountability and fraud prevention. Perhaps just as the IRS provides “short forms” for small organizations, FEMA and other agencies could do the same here or find another way to lower the barriers for smaller congregations.

For while small congregations might not have the resources to fill out all of the paperwork, a small congregation is a special place that needs your support and your protection. There's always a gap between our ideal and our reality, and at a small congregation that gap can be quite wide. The ideal would be to have at least one volunteer outside of locked doors to welcome attendees and at least one volunteer inside to let people in. That would be a stretch goal for us when it's not COVID, and during COVID, it just wasn't a possibility. We only had 3 congregants show up in person a few weeks ago.

On the morning of January 15, when the gunman arrived, it was me and one volunteer in the building. I was running a bit late. I was finishing my preparations for the Torah reading and loading the PowerPoint slides with the prayers onto the computer. I needed to turn on projectors and check the sound and start Zoom and Facebook Live. I was rabbi and tech support; not an uncommon situation. And in the midst of trying to do a million different things, I had a stranger come to the door.

I have, of course, thought about that moment a great deal. I welcomed a terrorist into my congregation. Four of us could have died and I would have been responsible. I live with that responsibility. And it's important for you to understand that this was not a matter of me opening the door just because I value hospitality.

I do value hospitality. I have welcomed in people who were Jewish or who were interested in learning about Judaism—all races, all gender identities, all income levels . . . people with accents and piercings and tattoos. The Torah scroll that we read from each week was gifted to our congregation thanks to hospitality. I strive to live that value every day. Like so many congregations—synagogues, churches, and mosques—Congregation Beth Israel strives to be “a house of prayer for all people.”<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, I also value security. When our member asked if I knew the person at the door, I was distracted, but I still did a visual inspection and after a brief word, he appeared to be who he said he was—a guy who spent a night outside in sub 40-degree weather. But that was just the first analysis. Yes, I served him tea. I also spoke with him throughout the process to learn his story. Who was he? How did he get to CBI? Such conversation is welcoming and gave me an opportunity to see if he was acting nervous or if his story added up. Security and hospitality can go hand-in-hand. I was running late, but I spent time to see if there were any red flags and I didn't see any. Of course, I was wrong.

I share this because despite all the plans and funding and courses—I still opened the door. But because of all the plans and funding and courses and literally dozens of small things that just happened to go our way, we were able to escape.

<sup>2</sup>Marc Rod, “Fewer Than Half of NSGP Grant Applications Approved for 2021,” *JewishInsider*, July 28, 2021. Available at <https://jewishinsider.com/2021/07/less-than-half-of-nsgp-grant-applications-approved-for-2021/>.

<sup>3</sup>Isaiah 56:7.

And right now, there are far too many houses of worship that are just beginning the process we started 6 years ago.

Right now, there are far too many houses of worship that have developed plans and are counting on the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to put them into place and help them feel more secure in their spiritual home.

Right now, there are far too many houses of worship who won't get the support they need.

Tragically, we live in a world where those houses of worship need protection. And I believe that both Democrats and Republicans want to change that reality. It's not naiveté—it's intentional societal disobedience. I refuse to accept that any of you are satisfied with the status quo. We all need to work together to solve our problems.

Changing our reality all at once is a bit too much to ask. That's why Rabbi Tarfon<sup>4</sup> that we aren't obligated to complete the work, but we can't neglect it. I'm not asking to fix everything, but increasing funding for and making appropriate adjustments to the Nonprofit Security Grant Program would be an incredibly positive step in the right direction.

It is an honor for me to speak with you today. Thank you for the opportunity.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. Thank you, Rabbi Cytron-Walker, for your testimony. I now recognize Rabbi Konikov to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF RABBI YOSEF KONIKOV, RABBI, CHABAD OF  
SOUTH ORLANDO**

Rabbi KONIKOV. Good morning. Thank you for allowing me to participate in today's hearing. Thanks also to our own very dear House Representative, Chair Val Demings, for inviting me and for all she does for our district and for our great country.

My name is Rabbi Yosef Konikov. I am the senior rabbi at the Chabad Center for Jewish Life, serving the South Orlando community. Twenty-two years ago I arrived here to further the mission of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, who was actually honored by this Congress with its highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal, in 1994. That mission, in which I engaged together with thousands of colleagues across all 50 States, is to share the Torah's message of love for others, unity, kindness, charity, and faith.

Today at our center, people of all ages, from all backgrounds and walks of life, come to find strength, meaning, and encouragement, to study, be inspired, and derive a true sense of community. We are well-known for our nonjudgmental approach and accessibility.

This has been very exciting for me, especially since my own grandfather, also a rabbi, tried to do the same in Soviet Russia years ago, but was restricted, even persecuted, for his mere practice of faith. As anti-Semitism and Communism didn't allow him to practice his religion openly, he fled to these shores and thankfully found a wonderful country, the land of the free and the home of the brave, where we can live in peace and practice our religion freely and with pride, without fear or danger.

But sadly, new realities are echoing the dangers of the last generation, albeit this time not from the Government, but radicals and prejudiced, misguided citizens. These realities are causing many members of our community, and I know many others as well, to suddenly feel uncomfortable and even afraid to visit our center and synagogue and enjoy its many offerings. Well beyond our own centers, I know people in today's climate actually hesitate to openly

<sup>4</sup>Pirkei Avot (Ethics of Our Ancestors), 2:16.

observe our religion, to study with us, or just to come by to get inspired.

Suddenly, we have become occupied with trying to calm people from their immediate fears of physical threats. Each new attack on a place of worship only exacerbates their fears.

When I decided to be a rabbi, I never envisioned that contending with physical threats would be a part of my spiritual mission in the USA. Take, for example, as we just heard from Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker, the recent attack on Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas. The first reaction I heard from our community members was, I am so worried about them. My heart goes out to them.

But the next thing I typically heard was, Rabbi, that could have been us.

Indeed, there has been a disproportionate amount of incidents at facilities led and operated by my colleagues across the United States. Sadly, these events keep people away from synagogue. They make people hesitate before bringing their kids to a place that is in truth the healthiest place for a child. This is so unfortunate.

Too often people call me and say, Rabbi, I just want to check if the guard is there today. Otherwise, I don't think I am going to come.

As for us in Orlando, we not only read about anti-Semitism and hate, we at Chabad of South Orlando are regrettably on the front lines of these incidents with too-often hate crimes, bomb threats, and more. For example, just 2 weeks ago, in Orlando, neo-Nazis displayed flags, Nazi paraphernalia, attacked a motorist, used pepper spray on people, and caused general security alerts.

Just a few months ago, this same group stationed themselves in front of our own Chabad Center for 3 hours, demonstrating with swastikas, other anti-Semitic signs, and hateful speech, yelling and cursing, including making threats on their loudspeakers, all with the sinister intention to intimidate and frighten everyone entering and exiting our Chabad Center, including many small innocent children.

Thankfully, the law enforcement arrived. We would have wished they would send them away, but at least they were present and prevented any harm coming to our community members.

We have here on the screen, and I am holding as well, a flyer that was distributed throughout the Central Florida area related to COVID how the Jews are to blame for the COVID agenda. It is these types of things that really frighten people in the community, especially when people are already hesitating coming back to the Center or Synagogue due to COVID. When they see these conspiracies being shared, it only exacerbates their fears.

ADL's most recent Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents in the United States recorded more than 2,100 acts of assault, vandalism, and harassment, an increase of 12 percent over the previous year. Our Center has been victim to other horrible real on-line threats, including a series of phone threats, which have been swiftly and efficiently dealt with thanks to the sterling work of the FBI.

Just this week, as we were trying to give out free food to families with children, a woman who was volunteering on the car pick-up

drive-through turned to me and said, Rabbi, I don't think this is safe. Anyone can drive through here and cause harm.

Trying to reassure her, I responded, you might be taking this too far. Someone can also do harm on your way home.

She responded, I am not afraid at home. I am afraid here.

The United States must help its citizens be protected, so they can practice their religion freely. Indeed, this is a cornerstone of the founding of this great Nation.

As highly-visible Jewish sites with the largest infrastructure of synagogues and educational and social centers across the United States, over 2,500 centers in all 50 States, more than 200 in the State of Florida alone, the Chabad-Lubavitch movement represents and is regularly responsible for the spiritual welfare of millions, men, women, and children at our sites and programs which impact and enhance communities in cities across our Nation.

We need better security to help us, our congregants, and the wider community, as well as other communities around the country, deter, detect, delay, and even defend ourselves from those who wish to cause us harm.

The NSGP program is an amazing program, but it is a very competitive one and fewer than half of applicant sites were awarded nationally last year in the fiscal year of 2021. We did receive the grant, the 2020, but then COVID hit and red tape has caused delays. Despite the award, we have not been able to implement the grant, sadly.

I agree with many of the statements that Rabbi Cytron-Walker mentioned about ways to cut down the time in order to implement the grant and ways to perhaps advance monies to allow the process to begin, although it is mentioned in the program, perhaps something can be done immediately in order to protect these sites. It can hardly be overemphasized how time is of the essence in this matter and addressing it properly and effectively.

I also feel that perhaps we need more funds in order to allow for everyone that needs to be protected, be protected. Perhaps \$500 million should be appropriated to protect these sites and ensure security for the homeland.

I appreciate that our representatives in Washington, American Friends of Lubavitch (Chabad) maintain close contact with officials at the Department of Homeland Security, SCN, the Conference of Presidents, and other relevant contributors to a strong support for development and implementation of these programs. We across the Nation need the strength now more than ever.

I close by quoting the Rebbe again, who guided world Jewry and the post-Holocaust generation through continued threats of anti-Semitism world-wide and fear of annihilation of Jews in Israel, and always declared that Am Yisrael Chai, the Jewish people will survive and grow ever stronger and our trust in God is to remain steadfast. Standing with the anticipation for a brighter era of world peace, the Biblical promised time of redemption and tranquility, he said, "We must stand proud and strong and continue to be the shining light and moral compass for the world around us."

He repeatedly implored the Government of the United States, built on the principles of faith, trust in God, and justice, to stand

by our side and the side of all its citizens to secure our rights to live in peace and without any fear of those who wished our demise.

I stand here today as a representative of every Jew and shoulder to shoulder with every peace-loving citizen of this great Nation to urge our leaders, our Government, and its agencies to significantly increase its efforts and do everything in its power to secure our safety and our freedom so that we may continue to be a light to the nations in tranquility and in peace. We hope to live in peace, as written in the Bible, Kings 1, a passage quoted by our founding President, George Washington, to the early Jewish community in the United States, "Each shall live under his vine and fig tree and no man shall be afraid."

I eagerly await the fulfillment of the prophecy when, "Nation shall not lift up sword against Nation, and the world will know war no more." A time when there will be no hatred nor jealousy. "And the world will be filled with the knowledge of God," speedily in our days.

Thank you for your time and for allowing me to share my thoughts and suggestions.

[The prepared statement of Rabbi Konikov follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RABBI YOSEF KONIKOV

FEBRUARY 8, 2022

Thank you for allowing me to participate in today's hearing, and thanks also to our own House Representative, Chair Val Demings, for inviting me, and for all she does for our district and our great country.

My name is Rabbi Yosef Konikov, I am the senior rabbi at the Chabad Center for Jewish Life, serving the South Orlando Community.

Twenty-two years ago, I arrived here to further the mission of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, of sacred memory, who was actually honored by this Congress with its highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal, in 1994.

That mission, in which I engage together with thousands of colleagues across all 50 States, is to share the Torah's message of love for others, unity, kindness, charity, and faith.

Today, at our center, people of all ages and from all backgrounds and walks of life, come to find strength, meaning, and encouragement, to study, be inspired, and derive a true sense of community.

We are well-known for our non-judgmental approach and accessibility.

This has been very exciting for me, especially since my own grandfather, also a rabbi, tried to do the same in Soviet Russia years ago, but was restricted, even persecuted, for his mere practice of faith. As anti-Semitism and communism didn't allow him to practice his religion openly, he fled to these shores, and thankfully found a wonderful country, the land of the free and the home of the brave, where we can live in peace, and practice our religion freely and with pride, without fear or danger.

But sadly, new realities are echoing the dangers of the last generation, albeit this time not from the Government, but radicals and prejudiced misguided citizens. And these realities are causing many members of our community, and I know many others as well, to suddenly feel uncomfortable and even afraid to visit our center and enjoy its many offerings. And well beyond our own centers, I know people in today's climate actually hesitate to openly observe our religion, to study with us, or just to come by to get inspired.

Suddenly, we've become occupied with trying to calm people from their immediate fears of physical threats. Each new attack on a place of worship only exacerbates their fears.

When I decided to be a rabbi, I never envisioned that contending with physical threats would be a part of my spiritual mission in the USA!

Take, for example, the recent attack on Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas. The first reaction I heard from our community members was: "I'm so worried about them. My heart goes out to them."

But the next thing I typically heard was: “Rabbi, that could have been us!” Indeed, there has been a disproportionate amount of incidents at facilities led and operated by my colleagues across the United States.

And sadly, these events keep people away from Synagogue. They make people hesitate before bringing their kids to a place that is in truth the healthiest place for a child. This is so unfortunate.

(This is so unfortunate, especially given the Zoom option for so many of the events during the week which we normally have in person, and our struggle to bring people back personally.)

Too often, people call me, and say: “Rabbi, I just want to check if the guard is there today, otherwise, I won’t come.”

As for us in Orlando, we not only read about anti-Semitism and hate, we, at Chabad of S Orlando, are regrettably on the front line of these incidents with too often hate crimes, bomb threats, and more.

For example, just 2 weeks ago, in Orlando, Neo Nazis displayed flags, Nazi paraphernalia, attacked a motorist, used pepper spray on people and caused general security alerts.

Just a few months ago, this same group stationed themselves in front of our own Chabad Center for 3 hours, demonstrating with swastikas, other anti-Semitic signs and hateful speech, yelling and cursing, including making threats on loudspeakers, all with the sinister intention to intimidate and frighten everyone entering and exiting our Chabad Center, including many small innocent children.

Thankfully, law enforcement arrived. We would have wished they would send them away, but at least they were present and prevented any harm coming to our community members.

ADL’s most recent Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents in the United States recorded more than 2,100 acts of assault, vandalism, and harassment, an increase of 12 percent over the previous year.

Our Center has been victim to other horrible real on-line threats, including, a series of phone threats, which have been swiftly and efficiently dealt with thanks to the sterling work of the FBI.

Just this week, as we were trying to give out free food to families with children, a woman who was volunteering on the car pick-up drive-through, turned to me and said: “Rabbi, I don’t think this is safe. Anyone can drive through here and cause harm”. Trying to reassure her, I responded: “You might be taking this too far. Someone can also do harm on your way home.”

She responded: “I’m not afraid at home. I’m afraid here.”

The United States must help its citizens be protected, so they can practice their religion freely. Indeed, this is a cornerstone of the founding of this great Nation.

As highly visible Jewish sites with the largest infrastructure of synagogues and educational and social centers across the United States (over 2,500 centers in all 50 States, more than 200 in the State of Florida alone), the Chabad-Lubavitch movement represents and is regularly responsible for the spiritual welfare of millions, of men, women, and children at our sites and programs which impact and enhance communities in cities across our Nation.

We need better security, to help us, our congregants, and the wider community, as well as other communities around the country deter, detect, delay, and even defend ourselves from those who wish to cause us harm.

The NSGP grant is an amazing program, but it is a very competitive grant, and fewer than half of applicant sites were awarded nationally last year, in fiscal year 2021.

We did receive the grant in fiscal year 2020, then COVID hit, and red tape has caused delays. Despite the award, we have not been able to implement the grant. In any event, one cycle/award is not enough to install all the physical items we need, even basically, or to cover the cost of licensed armed security officers. We have a great team helping us process the grant, FDEM—(The FL Dept of Emergency Management) has been very helpful but there are too many delays from FEMA and we remain unprotected and vulnerable as we were before the grant was awarded, a grant for which we remain grateful.

So, to help improve this situation Nation-wide, and for all communities, we recommend Congress consider initial partial advances of funds to kickstart implementation of measures by approved parties. Although it is officially a reimbursement grant, advances (as are offered in Section E of the grant agreement) should be offered and allowed in order to accelerate the process.

It can hardly be overemphasized how time is of the essence in this matter and addressing it properly and effectively.

There should be solid time restrictions and scrutiny of FEMA and FDEM response times.



And a 36-month period of performance could be shortened if advances are not allowed.

At present, there is too much back-and-forth between FEMA and FDEM, and not enough consistency in requirements or clarity on documentation or format.

As the threat to houses of worship and other qualified venues increases, so too should the funding to keep our cities and communities safe: \$180 million appropriated fiscal year 2021 by Congress was met by \$400 million in applications.

Perhaps \$500 million should be appropriated to protect these sites and ensure security for the homeland.

Additionally, it is important for local law enforcement to know there will be resources available to them should an incident require more response than they are prepared for under regular circumstances. Too often, it is understood from colleagues that there has been underwhelming response locally due to limited resources. And the perpetrators sense the soft response, which fails to discourage them as much as it should.

An emphasis by the Government about willingness to make resources available to change that, complete with oversight about its implementation, could go a long way.

I appreciate that our representatives in Washington, American Friends of Lubavitch (Chabad) maintain close contact with officials at the Department of Homeland Security, SCN, the Conference of Presidents, and other relevant contributors to a strong support for development and implementation of these programs. And we, across the Nation, need this strength now more than ever.

To quote The Rebbe again, who guided world Jewry and the post Holocaust generation through continued threats of anti-Semitism world-wide and fear of annihilation of Jews in Israel, and always declared that Am Yisrael Chai, the Jewish people will survive and grow ever stronger and our trust in G-d is to remain steadfast:

Standing with the anticipation for a brighter era of world peace, the Biblical promised time of redemption and tranquility, he said, we must stand proud and strong and continue to be the shining light and moral compass for the world around us.

And he repeatedly implored the Government of the United States, built on the principles of faith, trust in G-d and justice, to stand by our side and the side of all its citizens to secure our rights to live in peace and without any fear of those who wish for our demise.

I stand here today as a representative of every Jew and shoulder to shoulder with every peace-loving citizen of this great Nation to urge our leaders, our Government and its agencies to significantly increase its efforts and do everything in its power to secure our safety and our freedom so that we may continue to be a light to the nations in tranquility and in peace.

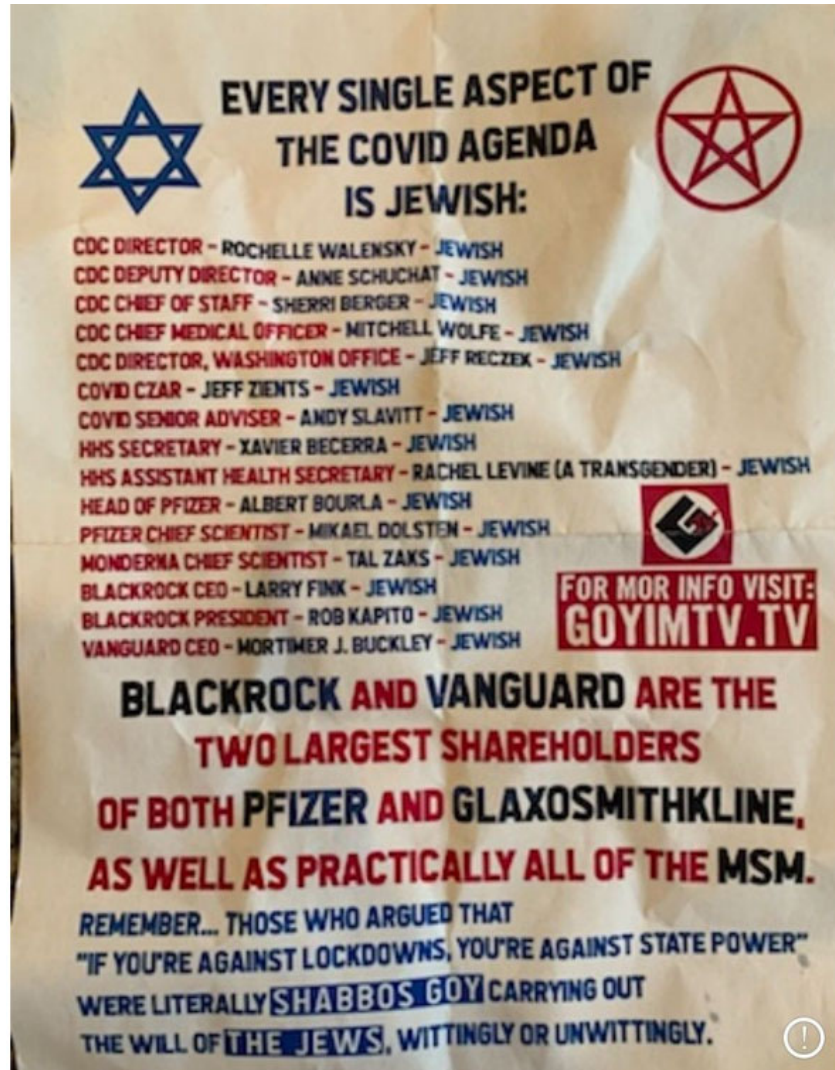
We hope to live in peace, as written in the Bible (Kings 1, 5:5), a passage quoted by our founding president George Washington to the early Jewish community in the United States, "Each shall live under his vine and fig tree and no man shall be afraid".

I eagerly await the fulfillment of the prophecy when "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and the world will know war no more." A time when there will be no hatred nor jealousy. "And the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d", speedily in our days.

Thank you for your time, and for allowing me to share my thoughts and suggestions.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. Thank you so much, Rabbi Konikov, for your testimony. Without objection, the flyer that you presented will be entered into the record.

[The information follows:]



Chairwoman DEMINGS. I now recognize Congressman Fingerhut to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF ERIC FINGERHUT, PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE  
JEWISH FEDERATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA AND FORMER  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS**

Mr. FINGERHUT. Thank you. Chair Demings, Ranking Member Cammack, Chair Slotkin, Ranking Member Pfluger, Members of the esteemed subcommittees, full Chair Chairman Thompson, and all the distinguished Members, it is indeed a privilege to be back in the U.S. House of Representatives. Thank you for convening this morning's hearings.

As Chair Demings mentioned, I am a former Member of Congress. I also served 10 years in the Ohio Senate. I also had the privilege of serving as chancellor of Ohio's Public University System. I mention that because I had the responsibility of chairing a State-wide task force on campus security after the shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007. I now serve as president and CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America, which is the umbrella organization for 146 Jewish Federations and over 300 smaller networked Jewish communities.

Now, I know that the distinguished Members of this committee are familiar with the work of Jewish Federations and with our volunteer and professional leadership in their respective communities. We thank you for the many ways in which you have supported and enhanced our mission across the full spectrum of communal life.

Security has always been a core concern of our Jewish Federations. The ability and confidence of our community to participate fully in Jewish religious and cultural life depends on feeling safe, as both Rabbi Cytron-Walker and Rabbi Konikov have both beautifully stated.

Now, it is important for me to say that no nation in history has a better record of safety and inclusion for its Jewish community than the United States of America. A fact that we in the Jewish communal leadership never forget, not for a single moment. But nevertheless, we Americans are not immune to the viruses of hate that are dramatically on the rise at this very moment at home and abroad.

The committee Members in your Statements spoke of the increased violent attacks on faith-based institutions. But my dear colleagues, these are not statistics. Let me name some of them: The 2006 deadly attack at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle; the 2009 deadly attack on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; the 2012 deadly attack on the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin; the 2004 deadly attack on the Jewish Community Center in Overland Park, Kansas; the 2015 deadly attack on the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston; the 2018 deadly attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and the 2019 deadly attack on the Chabad Synagogue in Poway, California.

Since the attacks on the Tree of Life Synagogue building in 2018, September, we have experienced the most intense period of violent attacks on Jews in the history of this country, from Pittsburgh to Poway to Monsey to Jersey City to Denver to Boston to Brooklyn, and now to Colleyville.

Esteemed Representatives, this is a moment of crisis, unique crisis, for the Jewish community in America. We respectfully, but urgently, ask you to respond to help and encourage the Congress to respond in full.

Now, it is, of course, the responsibility of Government to keep all its citizens safe in their places of worship and other spaces or gathering. But I want you to know that we in the Jewish Federations have also accepted the collective communal responsibility to ensure that all Jewish organizations are fully protected. We have raised and will continue to raise significant philanthropic funding for security work, but the resources needed are vast and ever-increasing.

Now, we have focused our efforts on two major areas. First, on providing expert professional security guidance to every community throughout our system. As we grow these initiatives, they will also help address the concerns with smaller communities, as Rabbi Cytron-Walker mentioned in his testimony.

Second, we focus on ensuring the physical security of our institutions and enhancing their preparedness posture against future attacks. In 2004, JFNA helped create the Secure Community Network, and you are going to hear from Michael Masters next, and proposed and worked with Congress to create this Federal Non-profit Security Grant Program. Both of these are now crucial pillars of the safety and security of the Jewish community across the United States.

Now, you will hear from my colleague, Michael Masters, the CEO of SCN, so you don't need to hear from me the important role that SCN plays, partnering with Jewish Federations and organizing local community security initiatives. Forty-five of the 146 Jewish communities now have such organized initiatives that have been created in partnership with SCN. Today, JFNA is working with SCN to extend this umbrella over every Jewish community throughout the United States through our LiveSecure campaign, which is one of the largest philanthropic initiatives in our history. Unfortunately, even with this extensive funding, an additional infusion of significant Governmental resources is necessary to achieve the level of security that we desperately need.

Now, as Members of the committee and my fellow witnesses have all mentioned, the FEMA Nonprofit Security Grant Program is that essential public-private partnership. We are so grateful for its resources and for the past support, but it is not without its challenges others have noted. I want to make five quick points and suggestions for improvement.

First, of course, is the funding level, which has been referred to. There are somewhere between 350,000 and 400,000 houses of worship in the United States and about another 1.2 million registered nonprofits, all of them could be potentially eligible for this program. Even if only 1 percent of these organizations know about and apply for the program in a given cycle, the FEMA and the local State authorities would be inundated with something like 15,000 applications, 5 times as many applications as applied in fiscal year 2021. As we have shared with you, based on our experience and best information, we believe that full funding would increase the total, the current total, to \$360 million.

Second, the program lacks sufficient management and administrative support. While the program has quadrupled in size since 2018 and is now the third-largest FEMA preparedness grant program by volume, FEMA and the State Administrative Agencies struggle to keep up with the necessary administrative oversight and infrastructure to carry out their duties. We support Congress allowing the NSGP Program Office to use some of the funds to cover their management and administrative costs.

I understand my time is up. The third quick point is that the program lacks resources to assist nonprofits as they go through the application process. We encourage use of the funds for this purpose as well.

Fourth, we encourage the NSG Program to be waived from the requirement of the Paperwork Requirements Act, so that they can more quickly adapt the program.

Finally, they lack the statutory authority to fully respond to today's increasingly complex, diffuse, and dynamic threat landscape. We urge the Congress to include appropriations language allowing FEMA to include hate and grievance-based crimes based on the ideology, belief, and mission of the applicant.

I thank you for holding this important hearing, for indulging my testimony, and I welcome any questions that you may have.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Fingerhut follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ERIC FINGERHUT

FEBRUARY 8, 2022

Chair Demings, Ranking Member Cammack, Chair Slotkin, Ranking Member Pfluger, and Members of the esteemed Subcommittees on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Recovery and on Intelligence and Counterterrorism, thank you for convening this morning's hearing on protecting faith-based and charitable communities from terrorist and terroristic threats and the Jewish communal response.

My name is Eric Fingerhut. I am a former Member of Congress from Ohio. I now serve as president and CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America, the umbrella organization for 146 Jewish Federations and over 300 smaller "networked" communities. The Jewish Federation system represents and speaks for essentially every organized Jewish community in the United States.

Jewish Federations are the engines that build and sustain flourishing Jewish communities—by helping them remain healthy, safe, caring, welcoming and inclusive, educated and engaged, involved in their broader communities, and connected to Israel and the global Jewish people. To accomplish this sacred work, we raise the necessary funds to support social services, educational and cultural programming of all kinds, and we are proud to partner with our local, State, and Federal representatives to help meet the vital needs of our Jewish communities and their neighbors. Collectively, our system is one of the ten largest philanthropic bodies in the United States.

We are strong and present advocates on the national, State, and local levels. We know that the distinguished Members of this committee are familiar with the work of the Jewish Federations and with our volunteer and professional leadership in your respective States. We thank you for the many ways in which you have supported and enhanced our mission across the full spectrum of communal life.

Security has always been a core concern of Jewish Federations and in the present climate, a central tenet of our work. We know that the ability and confidence of our community to participate fully in Jewish religious and cultural life depends on feeling safe—safe to attend synagogue, safe to drop our children off at the Jewish Community Center for pre-school or day camp, safe to walk down the street wearing visibly Jewish head coverings and clothing, safe to gather in groups to celebrate, to mourn, to support our brothers and sisters in the State of Israel, and to be active in the life of our communities, our campuses, and our civic associations.

The United States of America has historically been the most welcoming nation in history with respect to the protection and safety of the Jewish people. Nevertheless, we Americans are not immune to the viruses of hate that remain in the world, and that are dramatically on the rise at this very moment at home and abroad. We are so grateful that your subcommittees are meeting this morning to assess the complex, diffuse, and dynamic impact of terrorism on the American Jewish community and the lessons we can share to help protect other at-risk communities, and that you are cognizant of the crucial importance of strong and capable Federal support to better secure places of worship and the entire at-risk charitable sector from targeted acts of violence.

At a hearing of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee more than 20 years ago, we first shared our perspectives on how Congress could direct and coordinate Federal resources and expertise to local communities in the wake of 9/11. The September 11 attacks were an abrupt wake-up call for our entire country. We in the Jewish community became acutely and frighteningly aware that our own institutions were vulnerable and at-risk, based on the anti-Semitic rhetoric of those who committed those attacks.

As the recent armed hostage crisis at the Congregation Beth Israel synagogue in Colleyville, Texas underscored, in the 20 years since the 9/11 attacks, the terrorism landscape for faith-based institutions has become significantly more complicated and challenging. We now need to defend ourselves against multiple fronts: Foreign terrorist organizations, home-grown violent extremists, and domestic violent extremists. These actors, while motivated by disparate ideologies of hate, share common cause in their violent anti-Semitism. As you are well aware, extremism of all kinds is spiking across the country, manifesting in bombings and bomb threats, arsons, assaults, intimidation, trespass, and property damage. The consequences are increasingly deadly.

The attack on Colleyville is not just another statistic to us. Rabbi Cytron-Walker will obviously share his harrowing experience. The event is reminiscent, in all the most horrifying ways, of the 2006 deadly attack at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, the 2009 deadly attack on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the 2012 deadly attack on the Sikh Temple of (Oak Creek) Wisconsin, the 2014 deadly attack on the Jewish Community Center and retirement community in Overland Park, Kansas, the 2015 deadly attack on the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, in Charleston, South Carolina, the 2018 deadly attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the 2019 deadly attack on the Congregation Chabad in Poway, California. In recent weeks, HBCUs have been subjected to a series of bomb threats and harassment. And even as law enforcement and counterterrorism agencies strive to identify and respond to incidents before they occur, they know that the next strike could happen anywhere, and often without any advance warning whatsoever.

The significance of the armed stand-off at Congregation Beth Israel reverberated throughout every Jewish community across the country. While attacks on faith institutions are not only the experience of the Jewish community, as I have noted, it is nevertheless the case that, since the attacks on the Tree of Life synagogue building in September 2018, we have experienced the most intense period of violent attacks on Jews in the history of this country—from Pittsburgh to Poway to Monsey to Jersey City to Denver to Boston to Brooklyn and now to Colleyville. This is a crisis moment for our community.

After 9/11, the United States went on the offense against terrorists around the world. But we also built a homeland security infrastructure that has protected us from those who take steps to plan attacks here at home. Similarly, the Jewish community must do two things to respond to this wave of violence. We must fight anti-Semitism in all its forms, wherever it appears. But we must also urgently build the security infrastructure that will prevent those who plan violent attacks from succeeding.

It is, of course, the responsibility of Government to keep all its citizens safe in their places of worship and other spaces for gathering. But we also have accepted the collective communal responsibility to ensure that all Jewish organizations are fully protected. While we have raised and will continue to raise significant philanthropic funding, the resources needed are vast and ever-increasing. We need governmental support to fill the gap. Individual synagogues, JCCs, Hillels, Family Services Agencies, Hebrew Homes, day schools, and pre-schools are all increasingly vulnerable, and their ability to detect, deter, mitigate, and recover from these attacks cannot fall on their shoulders alone.

The Jewish Federations of North America has been a crucial catalyst and coordinating body to bring about a needed shift in the Jewish community's security posture and to offer assistance, advice, and advocacy to other faith and cultural groups who are also at heightened risk of attack. We have focused on two major areas: (1) Providing expert professional security guidance throughout our system, and (2) Ensuring the physical security of our institutions and enhancing their preparedness posture against future attacks. In 2004, JFNA created the Secure Community Network (SCN) and proposed and worked with Congress to create the Federal Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). Both are now crucial pillars of safety and security in the Jewish community.

#### SECURE COMMUNITY NETWORK

SCN serves as the central organization dedicated exclusively to the safety and security of the American Jewish community. It works in tandem with the Jewish Federations in organizing local Community Security Initiatives, led by experienced and trained local Community Security Directors, that are designed to create a comprehensive and best practices-based security plan for each of the synagogues and other Jewish institutions in their communities. SCN also partners with and serves

as the community's formal liaison with Federal law enforcement, as well as with State and local law enforcement partners.

SCN's security experts perform an extensive review of each community's security infrastructure and protocols, pinpoint areas of vulnerability, and offer detailed recommendations for enhancements. SCN also provides on-going, extensive, state-of-the-art training to the growing body of Community Security Directors to make sure that they are well-qualified, that they are working in coordination with local, State, and Federal law enforcement, and they are fully cognizant of new trends and developments that could put a community and its residents in imminent danger.

Today, JFNA is working with SCN to extend an overarching, centralized, coordinated security umbrella over every Jewish community throughout the country through our LiveSecure campaign. It is our contribution to the public-private partnership for protecting communities by raising one of the largest privately-funded initiatives in our history. Unfortunately, even with this extensive fundraising, an additional infusion of significant governmental resources is necessary to achieve the level of security that we desperately need.

Right now, the Jewish community has an umbrella that is filled with holes. Those seeking to do harm to Jews will target those communities that are under-resourced and under-prepared. It is critical that we have the funds to protect all members of the Jewish community, no matter where they live. FEMA's Nonprofit Security Grant Program provides that essential public-private partnership to extend what we are already doing for ourselves and for what we expect will be growing interest in and demand for NSGP resources from other communities that are coping with their own threats.

#### NONPROFIT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM

Administered by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency, the NSGP program supports the acquisition and installation of physical target hardening measures such as access controls, barriers, blast-proofing, monitoring and surveillance capability, and cybersecurity enhancements. It supports preparedness and prevention planning, training, exercises, and contributes toward the needs for contracted security personnel. It also provides a critical foundation for the nonprofit sector to build relationships and partnerships with Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies around the whole community approach to homeland security.

The NSGP program is critically important; however, it is not without its challenges and need for improvement.

*Simply put, the program lacks sufficient annual appropriations.*—In its 17 years, the program has supported more than 6,500 grants, but been unable to fund an additional 11,000 grant requests that were submitted. Congress has appropriated nearly \$600 million in security investments, but that is a fraction of the nearly \$1.5 billion in investments that have been requested. In the most recent fiscal year (2021), FEMA approved only about 45 percent of the more than 3,300 applications it reviewed and was able to fund only \$180 million in security investments out of the nearly \$400 million that were sought.

*Recommendation: Congress must stabilize NSGP funding at appropriate levels on an annual basis. And we have respectfully called on Congress to appropriate \$360 million.*

*The program lacks sufficient management and administrative support.*—While the program has quadrupled in size since 2018 and is now the third-largest FEMA preparedness grant program by volume, FEMA and the State Administrative Agencies struggle to keep up with the necessary administrative oversight and infrastructure to carry out their duties to the program. They are over-extended and under-resourced, which undermines the application review and oversight processes and challenges the capacity of FEMA and the SAAs workforce to coordinate the NSGP program in an efficient and effective way.

*Recommendation: We support Congress allowing the NSGP Program Office located within FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate and the State Administrative Agencies to each withhold up to 5 percent of the NSGP awards to cover their management and administrative costs.*

*The program lacks resources to assist nonprofits as they go through the complicated NSGP application process.*—JFNA has worked for years to help address the challenges nonprofit agencies face in navigating the NSGP application process and partners with SCN to disseminate comprehensive written guidance, tools, and webinars to assist both the Jewish community and other communities with elevated risks. Still, more nonprofits need to learn about the program and have access to good resources and technical assistance to meaningfully participate in and benefit

from the program. If they cannot navigate the process, they are unlikely to be successful in their application, or even apply at all.

*Recommendation: We support Congress allowing the NSGP Program Office located within FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate to withhold up to 5 percent of the NSGP awards to support outreach, education, and technical assist to nonprofits in applying for and implementing the program.*

Additionally, FEMA needs to be able to quickly provide viable application tools to the NSGP nonprofit sub-applicants to ease and streamline the application process. Under current Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) requirements, it can take years for FEMA to receive approval even to make basic changes to the NSGP application template (Investment Justification). This has become a major issue as the program has expanded to thousands of participants annually.

*Recommendation: Congress should provide FEMA with a waiver of the PRA requirements for fiscal year 2022 and future years.*

*The program lacks statutory authority to respond to today's increasingly complex, diffuse, and dynamic threat landscape.* Just after the attack on Congregation Beth Israel synagogue, FBI Director Christopher Wray remarked that the Jewish community faces very real threats from across a complex spectrum of hate that includes home-grown violent extremists (often radicalized by Jihadist movements on-line), foreign terrorist organizations like ISIS and Hezbollah, state-sponsored groups like the government of Iran, and domestic violent extremists such as neo-Nazis and White supremacists. However, the statutes guiding DHS preparedness programs respond to "risk of terrorist attack." This does not include hate- or grievance-based crimes, even as ethnically- and racially-motivated extremism is now surging. In fact, the Colleyville attack may be the first actual terrorist attack against a faith-based institution in the United States, based on what the statutes actually provide. Today's evolving threats require an NSGP program that is a measure against both terrorist and terroristic attacks. While FEMA has to a commendable extent applied flexibility in its interpretation and application of the law to NSGP, today's homeland security laws do not include domestic violent extremism as terrorism. The types of threats extend beyond the recourse of the NSGP program, and this needs to change.

*Recommendation: Short of an unlikely change in statute, Congress should include appropriations report language allowing FEMA to include hate- and grievance based-crimes based on the ideology, belief, and mission of the applicant.*

Since we first addressed the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee in December 2001 on "The Role Communities Play in Homeland Security," Congress has maintained strong bipartisan support to address the homeland security concerns of faith-based organizations and the charitable sector. This has been especially true of the NSGP program, which has been described as an efficient and effective means to accomplish community-based security enhancement and preparedness through very modest resources. Only this past week, 174 members of the House joined on a bipartisan letter to appropriations leaders, urging them to ensure strong funding to the Nonprofit Security Grant Program in the upcoming fiscal year 2022 Homeland Security appropriations package. That is a remarkable level of support.

For these reasons, we thank you for holding this hearing to discuss the implications of the dynamic terrorism landscape on the American Jewish Community and the importance of strengthening Federal support to make our institutions and the communities they serve more secure. I welcome any questions you may have.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. Thank you so much, Congressman Fingerhut, for your testimony. Now we will recognize Mr. Masters to summarize his statement for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL MASTERS, NATIONAL DIRECTOR  
AND CEO, SECURE COMMUNITY NETWORK**

Mr. MASTERS. Chairwoman Demings, Chairwoman Slotkin, Ranking Member Cammack, Ranking Member Pfluger, Chairman Thompson, and Ranking Member Katko of the full committee, distinguished Members of the subcommittees, while the United States remains one of the safest places in the world for our community, we must make no mistake: America's Jewish community is under attack. Thank you all for taking action to stop it.



I am Michael Masters, CEO and national director of the Secure Community Network, or SCN. It is an honor to appear before you again.

SCN is the official safety and security organization of the Jewish community in North America. We work on behalf of and with the Jewish Federations of North America and my colleague, Eric Fingerhut, under his leadership, and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, collectively representing over 90 percent of the Jewish community across North America.

SCN's the Jewish community's official liaison with Federal law enforcement, notably the FBI and DHS. Every day we are sharing intelligence with law enforcement and community partners, developing best practice safety policies, undertaking facility assessments, conducting life-saving training, and responding to incidents. We have worked with Jewish organizations in each and every one of your home States.

To help us protect Jewish lives and those of all faiths we are counting on all of you to support the funding desperately needed to help protect our community. It is critical for your subcommittees to understand that August 22, 2021, was a day that helped to save lives. That was the day that SCN worked with the Jewish Federation of Fort Worth in Tarrant County to lead a training at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas. SCN worked with Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker and congregants on how to recognize suspicious behavior and what to do during an active threat situation.

Let me just say how honored I am, how moved I am to be participating in this hearing with Rabbi Charlie. We teach people in our trainings to commit to action. This is what the rabbi and other hostages did on that horrendous day.

Thanks to the efforts of law enforcement and the work that we did at SCN with the community, made possible by the Federation and its system, but, most importantly, the actions of the rabbi and other hostages, we are able to talk today about what we know saves lives.

Our job at SCN is to secure our communities so that the Jewish people can pray, celebrate, and gather in safety. SCN is a nonprofit organization. We are not volunteers or private contractors. We are security professionals whose full-time job is to serve the community. I personally served in multiple law enforcement and homeland security roles: A police officer trained in special weapons and tactics and a commissioned officer in the United States Marine Corps.

As a security expert, informed by my personal experience, I can attest without equivocation that FEMA's Nonprofit Security Grant Program, or NSGP, has placed the faith-based community in a better position to stay alive. The NSGP grants that you vote to fund provide bulletproof doors, shatterproof glass, secure entry systems, and so much more, like some of the cameras that were used by law enforcement on January 15.

Thanks to recent changes it is now protecting more communities, places like Charleston and Charlottesville. NSGP funds can now be used to support training, just like the training that SCN provided in Colleyville. As we have heard, the training can literally be the difference between life and death.

All of this means that more Americans of all faiths can worship and gather in peace. We need to expand these efforts and opportunities.

The Jewish liturgy teaches us to welcome the stranger, as Rabbi Charlie noted. We have to ensure that our institutions remain open and welcoming, balancing the diverse needs and diversity of our community, while being safe and secure. Comprehensive best practice approaches to security allow for that.

The NSGP is a vital part of our efforts at SCN and our Federation system, supporting our work and our open, free practice of religion. We know the demand for NSGP funds far outpaces what is available. Any additional fund Congress appropriates will allow us to protect more institutions and communities, and this is critical.

As we have heard, the Jewish community is the No. 1 target of religiously-motivated hate crimes in the United States. The National Terrorism Advisory System bulletin issued yesterday by DHS, referenced by Chairwoman Slotkin, highlights the continued threat environment across our country. It specifically references the on-going calls for violence directed at soft targets, mass gatherings, and faith-based institutions to include churches, synagogues, and mosques.

We see the reality of this in our work at SCN every day. In 2021, SCN's Jewish Security Operations Command Center, or JSOCC, took in over 11,000 incident requests and reports of threats. We referred hundreds of items to law enforcement.

The attack on January 15 in Colleyville was just the latest example of the threat that our community faces and it is a stark reminder, also, of why this hearing is so important. We learned from Talmud we don't rely on miracles. But as Chairwoman Slotkin noted, we are not powerless.

Last year, SCN trained over 17,000 members of the Jewish community. In just the last 4 weeks, we have trained over 12,000.

There is a lesson to be learned from Colleyville. We will not choose the time and place of the next incident, but we can choose our preparations. Thankfully, as Rabbi Charlie noted, Congregation Beth Israel worked long and hard to prepare, but there are too many facilities and too many members of our community who have not yet been reached.

Every Jewish facility in America has to be prepared. Every member of our faith-based community must be trained. Our efforts must be professional, specific, and on-going, just like we do with fire drills. This is what the Jewish community, led by JFNA as Eric Fingerhut and I have outlined, and SCN are working to do.

We are not doing the work alone. Congress plays a critical role by funding the NSGP.

In closing, no one in this country should ever question whether it is safe to walk into a religious institution. I quote Ranking Member Pfluger, an attack on any religious institution is an attack on all of us.

The NSGP has assisted in mitigating the threat, but there is a lot more work to do and we don't have time to lose. Several weeks ago, we saw the impact. Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker and his congregants showed us by example the difference committing to ac-

tion can make. Let us honor them and their efforts by being as committed.

Thank you for inviting me to testify. I am happy to take your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Masters follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL G. MASTERS

TUESDAY, 08 FEBRUARY 2022

OVERVIEW

Chairwoman Demings, Chairwoman Slotkin, Ranking Member Cammack, Ranking Member Pfluger, distinguished Members of the subcommittees: America's Jewish community is under attack. Thank you for taking action to stop it.

I am Michael Masters, CEO and national director of the Secure Community Network, or SCN. It is an honor to appear before you to participate in this hearing.

SCN is the official safety and security organization of the Jewish community in North America. I have spent close to 20 years serving in the military, law enforcement, and homeland security. Today, I dedicate myself to serving and protecting the Jewish community.

It is a community that is under threat.

To help us protect Jewish lives, and those of all faiths, we are counting on you—the Members of these 2 subcommittees—to support the funding desperately needed to prevent further assaults and to train people on what to do in case of an attack.

Without you, the faith-based community would be in even greater danger.

SCN works on behalf of and with The Jewish Federations of North America and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, covering over 50 national non-profit organizations,<sup>1</sup> 146 Jewish Federations, and over 300 independent Jewish communities,<sup>2</sup> collectively representing over 90 percent of the Jewish community across North America. We have addressed threats impacting, worked in, and responded to incidents in many of your Congressional districts, including across Florida, Michigan, and—of course—Texas.

We are the Jewish community's official liaison with Federal law enforcement, particularly the FBI and DHS. Every day, our team is sharing intelligence and information with local, State, and Federal law enforcement and community partners, developing and helping Jewish community institutions implement best practice safety policies, providing assessments of Jewish facilities, consulting on physical security measures, conducting life-saving training and exercises, and—unfortunately—responding to incidents.

It is critical for your subcommittees to understand that August 22, 2021, was a day that helped save lives.

That was the day that SCN worked with the Jewish Federation of Fort Worth & Tarrant County to lead a training exercise at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas. It was attended by Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker and 21 congregants.

SCN worked with the Rabbi and congregants on how to recognize suspicious behavior and activity, as well as what to do during an active threat situation: To "Commit to Action."

While we provided the training, the Rabbi and other members of the congregation did the hard work, particularly on January 15.

Let me just say how honored I am—how moved I am—to be participating in this hearing with Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker. We teach people in our trainings to Commit to Action. This is what the Rabbi and other hostages did throughout that horrendous day, and certainly when he and the other two hostages positioned themselves near a door, and when he threw a chair at the terrorist who had taken them hostage—providing critical moments to escape.

Thanks to the coordinated efforts of law enforcement, the work that we at SCN did with the community, but, most importantly, the actions of Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker and the other hostages—their calm, courageous, and coordinated efforts—we are able to talk today about what we know works. What we know saves lives. This is what SCN is teaching around the country.

<sup>1</sup>"Member Organizations," Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, accessed January 6, 2020, <https://www.conferenceofpresidents.org/about/members>.

<sup>2</sup>"About The Jewish Federations of North America," The Jewish Federations of North America, accessed January 6, 2020, <https://jewishfederations.org/about/jfna>.

Our job is to secure our community so that the Jewish people can pray, celebrate, and gather in safety.

SCN is a nonprofit organization supported by a network of generous private donors and partners. Our team of former intelligence, law enforcement, security, and military personnel are not volunteers or private contractors. We are security professionals whose full-time job is to serve the Jewish community—supporting communities around the country and through our Federation system as well as with National partners.

I have personally served in several law enforcement and homeland security roles: A police officer trained in special weapons and tactics and a commissioned officer in the United States Marine Corps. I previously served as the chief of staff of the Chicago Police Department and as the executive director of the Department of Homeland Security for Cook County, Illinois. I previously served as the co-chair of the Secretary of DHS's Non-disaster Preparedness Grant Review Task Force.

As a security expert informed by my personal experience, I can attest—without equivocation—that FEMA's Nonprofit Security Grant Program, or NSGP, has placed the nonprofit, faith-based community in a better position to stay alive. The NSGP grants that you vote to fund every year provide bulletproof doors, shatterproof glass, secure entry systems, panic buttons, and so much more. You also help make the delivery of our life-saving training programs possible.

This means that more Americans—regardless of faith—can worship and gather in peace.

Security in our houses of worship is critical not just for the physical protection of the faith community but also for the very preservation of religious freedom in this Nation. We all must feel safe to freely exercise our faith.

The Jewish liturgy teaches us to welcome the stranger. We know, given current conditions, that we must do that in a manner which is also safe and secure, balancing the diverse needs—and diversity—of our community. We must ensure that our faith institutions remain open and welcoming, while being safe and secure, from our schools and senior centers to our camps, community centers, and college campuses.

We do not want the United States to become—like too many countries—a location where our faith institutions look like military fortresses. To put it simply, that is not who we are as Americans, nor should we allow it to be.

Comprehensive, best practice approaches to security—like those SCN implements with Jewish Federations and other partners across the country—allow for that. The NSGP is a vital part of our efforts, supporting our work and the open, free practice of religion in this society. We know the demand for NSGP funds far outpaces available funds. Any additional funds Congress decides to appropriate will enable the good work that is already being done to reach more communities.

#### THREAT PICTURE

In coordination with our partners in local, State, and Federal law enforcement, we assess that the threats facing the Jewish community are more complex and dynamic than at any other time in the Nation's history. At their core, they derive from an evil that is thousands of years old: Anti-Semitism.

The Jewish community not only remains the No. 1 target of religiously-motivated hate crimes, but we have seen a rise in these events to near-historic levels, as well as increases in anti-Semitic incidents across the Nation.<sup>3</sup>

The number of U.S. domestic terrorism cases under investigation by the FBI more than doubled in 2021 from the year prior, with the FBI having roughly 2,700 open domestic terrorism investigations. To meet the evolving threat, the FBI has surged resources, increasing personnel working on these issues by 260 percent.<sup>4</sup>

As law enforcement has increased its efforts, in this environment, we must do all we can to ensure that our institutions and communities of faith are protected.

We see that in our work at SCN every day.

During 2021, SCN's Duty Desk, which is staffed by a team of intelligence analysts and is part of our National Jewish Security Operations Command Center, or JSOCC, took in over 11,000 incidents, requests, and reports—ranging from suspicious individuals to threats. We referred hundreds of items to local, State, and Federal law enforcement, to include 79 referrals to the FBI.

<sup>3</sup>“Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents: Year in Review 2018,” The Anti-Defamation League, accessed January 6, 2020, <https://www.adl.org/audit2018>.

<sup>4</sup>Wolfe, Jan, “U.S. domestic terrorism investigations have more than doubled—FBI director,” Reuters.com, <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/us-domestic-terrorism-investigations-have-more-than-doubled-fbi-director-2021-09-21/>.

Just in the last week, our JSOCC identified two individuals who were threatening to attack synagogues, and kill Jews. Both leads were immediately passed to law enforcement. This is going on every hour of every day. SCN is constantly receiving and quickly sharing threat information with our partners in law enforcement for their analysis and action.

The attack on January 15 in Colleyville, Texas was just the latest example of the threat that our community faces. But it was also the latest example that we know how to improve the safety of congregants, and a stark reminder of why this hearing is so important.

#### ADDRESSING THE THREATS

Safety and security are priorities for the Jewish community. To address this, SCN was created to work on behalf of the Jewish community. We are working to build a protective, proactive shield over the North American Jewish community, in coordination with local Federations and our National partners. We ensure that solutions are tailored to each community or partner and rooted in consistent best practices across the community.

We learn from the Talmud, we don't rely on miracles. We hope for them, we pray for them, but we don't rely on them.

We are not powerless.

Last year, SCN trained over 17,000 members of the Jewish community—two of whom were Rabbi Cytron-Walker and one of the other hostages. The training in Colleyville—from its development to our delivery—occurred because we came together—SCN, the Jewish Federation, local law enforcement, and—most importantly—the community, to prepare. We—collectively—committed to action.

Our work did not occur just on one day, either. The training on August 22 was one of a series that SCN provided to organizations in Tarrant County, and part of our efforts that also included assessments of synagogues and consultation on physical security.

There is a lesson to be learned from Colleyville.

While we will not choose the time and place of the next incident, we can choose our preparation.

This is what the members of that community did. It is what the Rabbi and his congregants did, and they are alive today.

Every Jewish facility in America must be trained. Every member of our community must be trained. This is true for the entirety of the faith community in America. But not just any training will do. The training must be professional. It must be detailed. It must be on-going. Just like we do with fire safety in our schools and workplaces.

Thankfully, SCN and others, to include law enforcement, conducted training at Congregation Beth Israel, but there are too many facilities and too many members of our community who have not yet been reached. We want to make our life-saving trainings available to every member of the Jewish community in North America.

This is a priority for our community, and we purposefully work to extend that shield to every community, and to enhance those communities with existing security—most notably through a collaboration led by The Jewish Federations of North America and supported by SCN.

But we are not doing the work alone. In addition to the on-going and committed support that we receive from law enforcement at all levels—with special recognition to the FBI and our public safety partners at DHS—Congress plays a critical role by funding FEMA's Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

We are thankful to each of you for your support of the work we are doing. We need each of you . . . and the multi-faith community needs your support now more than ever.

#### IMPACT OF THE NON-PROFIT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM (NSGP)

When SCN creates a Community Security Initiative in a community, most often in partnership with the Jewish Federation, we implement a comprehensive, strategic security framework. As a result, we see a 400 percent increase in the number of assessments done for our community. These are assessments done by security professionals with backgrounds in law enforcement, and they are supported by our team at SCN.

These assessments are used by the local organizations to inform their application for NSGP funds. Working with the community, SCN's approach has resulted in a 36 percent increase in the number of successful NSGP applicants in the first year of a Community Security Initiative.

NSGP funding has made our community more safe and secure. It has placed electronic locks on exterior doors of Jewish community centers, panic buttons in school classrooms, and cameras on synagogues—to include at least one of the cameras that was operating at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, which provided vital information to law enforcement during the incident.

It also ensures that all of our institutions—from Charlottesville to Colleyville—can avail themselves of security best practices, including verified physical security solutions.

Each week, we work with communities and law enforcement around the country as they deal with suspicious individuals attempting to gain access to facilities, vandals defacing houses of worship with symbols of hate, and bomb threats to community centers.

In each of these cases, equipment like that which is made possible by the NSGP protects our community.

NSGP funding is now protecting more communities in more places. Recent changes to the program allow organizations in non-urban areas to take better advantage of the program. This was critically important, as the threat picture facing our country has changed. We see that from attacks in Overland Park, Kansas and Charlottesville, Virginia, to Charleston, South Carolina, and Colleyville, Texas.

NSGP funds can now be used to support planning, exercises, and training for everyday community members—just like the training SCN provided in Colleyville. Training that can help save lives. For organizations that could not independently support such training this can literally be the difference between life and death.

Every day we are working to build relationships between our community and law enforcement. The NSGP is a component of this, fostering critical cooperation and engagement.

Finally, and importantly, I am deeply appreciative of your efforts to increase funds for this program. We are pleased that Congress increased the funding to \$180 million from \$90 million last year. Yet despite the increase, I understand that requests for NSGP funding from organizations around the country approached \$400 million last year. To meet the need, Congress needs to consider further substantial increases in appropriations.

#### CLOSING

From attacks in Pittsburgh and Poway to Charlottesville and Colleyville, the Jewish way of life in the United States of America is under attack.

In each of these attacks, SCN's team was responding.

What is required is a whole-community response, including professional security assessments, validated best practices, and training. An attack on any religious institution in this country—regardless of size, location, or affiliation—is an attack on all of us.

No one in this country should ever question whether it is safe to walk into a religious institution.

The NSGP and related efforts have assisted in reducing the threat and providing peace of mind. But there is much more work to do, and we do not have time to lose.

Several weeks ago, we saw the impact: We see it here today in Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker's presence. He and his congregants remained calm. They committed to action. They have shown us by example the difference it can make. Let us honor them and their efforts by being as committed.

Thank you for inviting me to testify today, and thank you for your bipartisan recognition of the importance of improving security and preparedness of the Jewish community. I am happy to take your questions.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. I want to thank Mr. Masters for his testimony, and all of our witnesses. I will remind the subcommittees that we will each have 5 minutes for questions from the panel. Also, one of our witnesses has a hard stop at noon, and so we want to be cognizant of that and get to each Member that is on the call.

I will recognize myself for 5 minutes or less.

Rabbi Konikov, recently, as we have already discussed, we have seen the rise in anti-Semitism on display in Florida. We have talked about the demonstration from the neo-Nazis in the place where you and I both call home.

Could you just give me kind-of a quick overview of your views on the current threat environment? We know what we saw. This is 2

weeks ago, but what are your views on the current threat environment?

Rabbi KONIKOV. Well, you know, I will tell you. There are, in my opinion, there are people that, unfortunately, have hateful views. Sometimes some of these groups that come out and make statements and do demonstrations in the streets, it actually brings out or brings to the surface some of those we will call them crazies or hateful people, and that increases the danger.

We happened to see when that group was in front of our Center, they had a sign that said, "If you agree with us, honk your horn." That was very disturbing to me. You know, thank God most people didn't honk their horn. But every once in a while, there was a horn being honked, which was very, very, very disturbing.

So, they want to bring out other people to follow them. I think that each event that occurs in the United States, it increases the danger, unfortunately.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. Again, Rabbi, thank you so much for being with us. I am now going to recognize the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, the gentlewoman from Florida, Mrs. Cammack, for questions.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Thank you, Chairwoman Demings. A couple of questions for Congressman Fingerhut.

You had previously stated that in the wake of the Tree of Life shooting that, "the pace at which you were building up a security network wasn't fast enough." Now, how has that mission changed since 2018 and your comments then? Specifically, has FEMA taken steps to improve the outreach to the faith community? What suggestions can you make specifically to outreach?

Mr. FINGERHUT. Well, thank you, Congresswoman Cammack, for that question. There is no question that the Tree of Life shootings in Pittsburgh were the Jewish community's 9/11. I mean, it is the most horrific incident in the history of this country. We both have to fight—we have to do what the United States did after 9/11, we have to build out a comprehensive system of homeland security that really fundamentally changes the way we protect every single institution of Jewish life.

We were already well under way in building local community security initiatives through every Federation. The Federation works with SCN to develop a security plan for the entire community that includes every institution, every synagogue, every JCC, every human services agency, every day camp, every Hillel, you know, and every Chabad in those communities. Then we work with the Federations to raise the funds necessary to build out that security.

The more professional they are, the more successful they are in applying for Nonprofit Security Grants because these grants require a lot of expertise that are necessary. Together with our partners at SCN, we have helped local communities with that expertise to be able to apply for the grants. We have also been very happy to and have been successful in helping other faiths and communities with that expertise as well.

However, as I mentioned in my written testimony more extensively, and I appreciate the chance to elaborate, the State authorities who administer these grants and FEMA itself lack the resources to themselves provide the help to the nonprofits and faith-

based institutions. As I mentioned in my summary testimony, we are talking about, you know, close to half a million faith-based institutions in this country and well over a million nonprofit institutions. If everybody, as they wake up to this growing, were to apply, the system would be completely overwhelmed.

We strongly urge that—I would strongly urge that as part of the action that this committee recommends and the full Congress would take would be to authorize additional funding within FEMA to be able to assist nonprofits and faith-based institutions in the application process. Certainly Rabbi Cytron-Walker spoke, you know, eloquently about the impact on small synagogues and small communities. That could be done by allowing them to utilize some of the funding, additional funding, that is allocated for this purpose. So, it would be a very beneficial improvement to the program.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Thank you. As a follow-up to that, what, in your opinion, could FEMA be doing specifically with outreach to these faith-based institutions for getting the word out about this? I spoke with several within my own district who were unaware that the program even existed.

Mr. FINGERHUT. Absolutely, Representative. It is an excellent point.

FEMA, again, if they were given the resources, they could be doing much more to communicate directly out into the communities. But as well, I want to suggest that we in the Jewish Federations system, this is what we exist to do. Every community has a Federation that is in touch with every synagogue and every institution. Of course, other faiths have similar networks and umbrella organizations that are in touch with each of their churches, either of their mosques, either of their centers.

We are already working with FEMA and with the State authorities, but we would welcome the opportunity to work more closely, also, of course, with our partners in the Secure Community Network, which is this is part of what they do on our behalf, you know, in the communities to reach out directly to more and more communities. It is an area of public-private partnerships.

Of course, as you know, these faith institutions are connected to each other. We are connected together through our Jewish Federations and through other networks. We would welcome the chance to partner more extensively with FEMA if they have the resources and support to do that.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Excellent. I appreciate your commentary and thank you, again, to all our witnesses. With that, Chairwoman Demings, I yield back.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. Thank you. The Ranking Member yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan, Ms. Slotkin, for questions.

Chairwoman SLOTKIN. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate it. I guess my question is for Rabbi Charlie.

You know, we have talked about the recommendations you have on helping smaller communities write these grants or make the form more streamlined; of sort-of the special problems around getting smaller communities the security that they need. I know the staff are here busy taking notes and I would propose, Madam Chair, that we work on some sort of comprehensive piece of legisla-



tion that does these fixes to these programs which we know are good things, but have things that are sort-of holding our smaller communities back.

Rabbi, tell us some other things that you think we should be paying attention to when it comes to modifying some of these homeland security opportunities for security.

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER. With regard to smaller congregations, I think one of the most important things is to listen, right, to hear what my reality is like on a Shabbat morning; to talk with small churches, small mosques, small temples from throughout the diversity of what exists within our religious landscape, and to really hear just how different it is when you have a smaller number of people showing up, where you don't necessarily have the funds to do everything that you would want. You don't necessarily have the bandwidth to really be intentional about all of the processes when the greatest debate within the synagogue or within the community has to do with, you know, the food being served or how are we going to get enough volunteers to have this celebration? It is a really, really hard thing to have a dedicated group of volunteers focused on security issues that may never happen, but that we all need to be prepared for.

So, understanding some of those realities and for Congress to really be able to seek out that information, I think, would be incredibly valuable, so that the program can be tailored to do what you want it to do. Meet the needs of smaller communities, meet the needs of so many throughout this Nation that want nothing more than to feel a sense of safety and security.

Chairwoman SLOTKIN. Thank you for that. I think we will certainly come back to you as we try to shore up and improve the good programs we already have on the books.

For Congressman Fingerhut and Mr. Masters, you know, I think we are focused on this surge in hate crimes, particularly anti-Semitic incidents, over the past few years. We have seen this surge in conspiracy theories and sort-of deep-seated prejudice come back out.

We have this National bulletin that DHS just put out. Can you speak to the ways in which the convergence of anti-Semitism and extremist ideology and conspiracy theories are sort-of playing out in increasing threats to the Jewish community?

Mr. FINGERHUT. Thank you. I will suggest that Mr. Masters start and then I can add to what he says.

Mr. MASTERS. Thank you and thank you for the question, Chairwoman. This goes back to your opening statement, what we continue to see is the proliferation of what we are referring to more and more as sort-of salad bar terrorism, where these conspiracy theories and on-line tropes, misinformation, disinformation, malinformation are metastasizing in people. So, literally, they are finding this salad bar of ideas that they can go to, and it is having resonance with them.

Our team of intelligence analysts in our JSOCC, this is why we are referring incidents, individuals, and threats to law enforcement, local, State, and Federal, in partnership with our communities every single day. I want to highlight the partnership particu-

larly with the FBI and the strong proactive stance that they have taken under Director Wray.

But it is creating a hodgepodge where literally someone can find anything that appeals to them. That is why we assess with Federal law enforcement that we are in the most complex and dynamic threat environment of any point in the Nation's history. It makes it very, very difficult for you to pinpoint one aspect or one thing.

So, we saw that in the offender in Colleyville where he believed that there was—by going to the Jewish community that there was innate power there that would allow for him to secure the freedom of a convicted terrorist. We saw across his ideology, and we see this quite commonly with other people, whether they are White supremacists, neo-Nazis.

I think one thing that we have to remember, particularly with respect to physical target hardening now, it doesn't matter the ideology that is coming through the door. I mean, it wouldn't have mattered so much. There is an academic discussion on anti-Semitism. We are all trying to confront it. It is, you know, well over 3,000 years old.

But when we are talking about the safety and security of the people who are looking to worship and pray in safety in our country, the ideology of the person that is trying to get in is somewhat irrelevant. We need to make sure that the door is locked and that the members of our community are alive to have that discussion. That is really very important.

If I can go back to your former question very briefly, on a key thing that we see with the NSGP that can help that for smaller congregations specifically, is ensuring that the State administrative agencies deal with this program equitably. So, if I look just at the State of Texas, where Rabbi Charlie is, last year the Notice of Funding Opportunity from DHS was released on 25 February. The State of Texas announced their program on the 14th of January, a full 6 weeks before DHS had even released the updated Funding Opportunity, and the State of Texas closed the Funding Opportunity, their application, less than 4 weeks later. So, people only had 4 weeks to complete the application and that means that for particularly smaller, underserved, unserved, less-funded institutions, it creates an even bigger burden on them that is disparately impactful when you have other States where an institution may have 2 months. That is something that I think we could address right away that would help the security and help our congregations.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The gentlewoman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Pfluger, for 5 minutes.

Mr. PFLUGER. Thank you, Chairwoman. Appreciate, again, the opportunity to talk about this.

I will keep my question really focused because I think it is important not just for this issue, but for so many other issues that we see. It really comes down to information sharing between the local, State, and Federal level. Regardless of the issue that we are facing, I think that really is kind-of the key to making sure that we can identify, detect, and prevent bad things from happening.

In the case of this, Mr. Masters, I will kind-of start with you. I mean, you know, when it comes to the Secure Community Network, let me just hone in and get very specific. I mean, where is it working? Honestly, more importantly, what can we do better and what needs to be done better?

Mr. MASTERS. Well, I think, as my colleague, Congressman Fingerhut, pointed out, we had worked in the Jewish community to take a post-9/11 approach to this with coordinated information sharing. Where we see things working very well, and I mentioned that we take 11,000 incidents and reports into our JSOCC every year, we have incredible connectivity with Federal law enforcement specifically and many State and local law enforcement agencies around the entire country. We need to encourage that intelligence and information sharing.

We need to be able to identify when individuals are on these platforms and refer them effectively to law enforcement. Where we have, as Congressman Fingerhut mentioned, roughly 50 professional security programs in our communities, where we have former members of law enforcement working on behalf of the community, we see a 78 percent increase in incident reporting. They are identifying the threats. They are able to coordinate with law enforcement. They are able to coordinate with the community.

What we need to do and what we are working to do as a community, particularly led by JFNA and SCN, is enhance that security shield over the whole community so that we have professionals that are good partners to law enforcement.

On the law enforcement side, very briefly, we need to make sure that our fusion centers are communicating effectively the threats to State and local law enforcement. They are reporting those up effectively to the National Threat Operations Center at the FBI and to our partners and colleagues at DHS, and make sure that that is seamless.

These bad actors are often—they are moving faster than the intel. We need to close that cycle and make our apparatus move as quickly as they are.

Mr. PFLUGER. Let me just follow up really quickly. I mean, are there areas throughout the United States where you are seeing a lack of support at the local level? When there is information that is being pushed down, where we could be taking action, we could be identifying these threats, and yet we are not seeing that support at the local level?

Mr. MASTERS. I think that we have built phenomenal relationships with law enforcement. You need to make friends before you need them in this business. If you are introducing yourself to one another at a critical incident, you have probably failed. I think that we have done well on that.

One thing that I think is critical that we enhance is the hate crime reporting. To go back to the statistics that Chairwoman Slotkin mentioned, you know, or it may have been Ranking Member Cammack, when we have roughly 1,100 religiously-based hate crimes in this country, we know that is not a reality. When we create a security program at a Federation, we see that incident reporting going up 78 percent.

We need to make sure that we are promoting and pushing law enforcement agencies to identify, report, and then for prosecutorial agencies to prosecute hate crimes. We still have, you know, the vast majority of communities, law enforcement agencies in this country report zero hate crimes. The rabbis, Congressman Fingerhut, and I will tell you from working in the communities that is just not a reality and it needs to be corrected.

Mr. PFLUGER. Well, thank you for that. I think this underscores the need to have prosecutorial action to hold the law that we do have, the laws that are the law of the land as the standard. Hate crimes are unacceptable in any form or fashion. I think this hearing clearly identifies that and clearly brings this issue up, but we must uphold the laws and it is not OK to pick and choose which ones we are going to follow and which ones we are not.

So, I very much appreciate this hearing. With that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The gentleman yields back. I will now recognize Members in order of seniority, alternating between Majority and Minority and alternating between the two subcommittees. The Chair now recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee, for 5 minutes.

Ms. Jackson Lee, are you unmuted? We will come back to you.

Mrs. Miller-Meeks, the gentlewoman from Iowa, for 5 minutes.

The Chair will now recognize the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Payne, for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for holding this very timely hearing.

You know, this has been an issue that has concerned me a great deal prior years on this committee. The Chairman, Chairman Thompson, of the overall committee, has done a tremendous job in continuing the efforts to secure funding around these grant programs. I was honored to travel with him to Pittsburgh after the Tree of Life incident and speak to the rabbi and survivors of that horrible, horrible day. I also had tragedy in my district, in Jersey City, at a store where several people were killed. It is just an intolerable situation around the anti-Semitism that we must curtail. So, I commend you for keeping this in the forefront.

I will just hasten my questions as we have a large group to speak today. This is for anyone that wants to answer.

You know, virulent anti-Semitism content is too easily shared online, often via social media. How has social media been used to target your communities, either individually or via larger conspiracies, that has spread on-line?

Mr. FINGERHUT. Representative Payne, I will start and I think probably my colleague, Mr. Masters, would have best detailed knowledge of the situation. But I want to say that we are deeply aware that what is happening on-line is connecting potential attackers in any place to the information and the incitement and the radicalization that is coming from all over the world. That makes every community a place of risk and every faith-based institution a potential target precisely because of the issue that you are so insightfully raising.

There is no place that is immune to this danger precisely because of the threats on-line. I have to say that you have raised and other

Members of the distinguished committee have raised that the growing threats of anti-Semitism on-line and the wide range of issues that are being conflated together, all of which have anti-Semitism under it, is the reason why we need to be protecting every single institution in every community.

As I have already mentioned, our partnership with SCN is working, the Jewish Federations is working to build out the professional security system in every single Jewish community. Then that will enable us to work more closely with FEMA on the Nonprofit Security Grant Program if they are given sufficient resources, both for the grants and for the administration of the program. We simply must recognize that the point you have raised is the telling point and why every single community could be victim.

Last, I will add, and then, again, maybe Mr. Masters would choose to add to this because he is an expert about what is happening on-line, is that we also need to enable FEMA to use these grants in the broadest range of possible topics, the broadest definition of terrorism, the broadest attack, definition of risk. Currently, the definition is relatively narrow. We strongly encourage the committee to consider including report language or additional legislative language that would enable FEMA to recognize that these threats are coming from every possible subject matter and ideology available.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

Mr. FINGERHUT. Perhaps Mr. Masters has more to add.

Mr. MASTERS. Thank you. I would add, you know, if we look back at the trajectory, right, if you go back to, for instance, the Iranian revolution in the 1970's and 1980's and the use of audiotapes to build support for the Islamist movement; and then we think about al-Qaeda and the publishing of fatwahs and statements from bin Laden, the transition to Anwar al-Aulaqi and videotapes; and then more recently, right, this trajectory where the so-called Islamic State then moved into really slick video programming, right, the advertisements and so on. I think that is a blueprint.

Now they are able to get on social media. Frankly, not enough was done quickly enough or aggressively enough or comprehensively enough to de-platform these individuals. Then when the threat—you know, we have seen it with White supremacists and neo-Nazis, similar issues of removing them off the platforms.

Then the other issue, when you take them off, they often move to an encrypted spaces or harder-to-get-to spaces. So, it becomes a really perplexing problem.

We are seeing the transition now to gaming spaces, gaming platforms, and gaming-adjacent platforms, where people are playing videos as Hamas operatives who are destroying synagogues, blowing up synagogues. That is the video game. Or active-shooter video games where someone is going into a school and pretending to kill nursery school-aged children.

So, this is really a pervasive problem. As fast as we may try to counter it, the reality is that the people, the bad actors are moving quickly, which means we need to really look, in my opinion, at a solution which engages the private sector and is honest. These are not Government spaces. This is not a free speech argument. These are private companies that are making money and we need to take

an aggressive stand to ensure that the way they make money doesn't justify people being victimized, harassed, or justify the killing of individual innocents in this society.

Mr. PAYNE. Well, I agree with you wholeheartedly. We will continue the efforts here on this committee to show the leadership that we need in this Nation to curtail this type of activity.

With that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Higgins, for 5 minutes.

Mr. HIGGINS. I thank my friend and colleague, Chairwomen Demings and Slotkin, and I think the Ranking Members Cammack and Pfluger for holding this hearing today.

Ensuring that our homeland is secure and our Jewish brothers and sisters are safe is vital to our Nation's success and our foreign relations. While the concerns being discussed here today will no doubt require more thoughtful and deliberate discussions, the Non-profit Security Grant Program is a great example of providing both resources and training in case of a physical or impending threat. As a former law enforcement officer, a 12-year SWAT operator, I am very familiar with the fact that every second counts.

Shifting to the attack in Colleyville, it shouldn't have happened in the first place. Despite an extensive record of criminal behavior and a radical history, the suspect was permitted to travel to the United States and freely within our homeland.

So, as a foundational principle and, you know, Biblically, Scripture says that the Nation that stands against Israel stands against itself. May I say that that very simple truth must permeate the Homeland Security policies and procedures and our determination to maintain law and order within our Nation.

We are a Nation of immigrants, yes, legal immigrants. But we are first a Nation of law and order. We just safeguard the homeland and confirm that those who come here are not intending harm to our Nation. Without sovereignty and secure legal entry processes, our communities are at risk and recent attacks prove that.

Historically, this is just a fact. We have to get our head wrapped around that.

I offer a friendly ear to fellow Members on both sides of the aisle to find solutions so our friends and communities, our churches and synagogues and places of worship can be peaceably gathered.

I would like to ask our rabbis, Rabbis Cytron-Walker and Konikov, thank you for your testimony and for spending time with us today. Your service, your faith, your dedication to communities and congregation is noble. Let me say that domestic or international, any act of aggression or violence toward Israel and its citizens must be handled swiftly.

As leaders of your respective communities, ensuring that your place of worship is secure must be a top priority. I would ask you to clarify your relationship with local law enforcement.

Historically, Jewish communities are very close with local law enforcement. The thin blue line of law enforcement professionals across America face a particular persecution in this era in America. I ask for your reassurance that the Jewish community stands solid

with the law enforcement professional, compassionate, strong, and courageous law enforcement across the country.

Would you agree that that is your position?

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER. Well, Representative Higgins, if I may, thank you for those kind words. I was literally texting and emailing with the chief of Colleyville Police during those horrible, horrible hours, so that the relationship between our community and the Colleyville Police Department has been very, very important.

It is also important to note that the deadliest shooting at a house of worship wasn't an overt sense of hatred against Jews or anyone else. It was in Sutherland Springs in Texas, right, which was so horrible.

Mr. HIGGINS. Right.

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER. So horrible. Right? That happened in our State and it was something that, also, another one of those incidents that just touched all of us so, so deeply. That it really does take all of us, I guess that is what I want to say, it really takes all of us on all sides of the aisle to come with that sense of curiosity and come with that sense that our status quo is not OK. Right? That we can't do this as a society where this kind of violence is happening in our religious communities and in our schools and our religious institutions and nonprofits. We need that sense of security. We needed these grants, we need these programs.

We also have to do more to work together to change that overall reality because what we are going through right now, I don't believe it is sustainable. But I appreciate your work on this.

Mr. HIGGINS. Rabbi, I can't imagine that it could have been better stated, the position. Thank you, sir, for your kindness.

Madam Chair, I believe my time has expired.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The gentleman's time has expired. Thank you so much. The Chair now recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee, for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you very much to the Chairs for this important hearing, crucial hearing, and as well to the Ranking Members as well.

Let me take note of Mr. Masters' last comments when he said the Jewish way of life in the United States of America is under attack. Sadly, this hearing further confirms not only that and the rising increase of anti-Semitism, but, again, the rise of racism and racial attitudes, which includes in particular the African-American community. So, we are looking at two of the targets and I am grateful for this hearing.

Let me start, first of all, if it has not been submitted, to submit the DHS-issued National Terrorism Advisory System bulletin issued yesterday into the record. I ask unanimous consent.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. Without objection.\*

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Thank you. Let me start with Rabbi Cytron-Walker.

Our prayers were with you, but prayers needed action. But I think my outrage is that your congregation, a place of peace, a place of worship, something that the Constitution gives us a sense

\*The information was submitted by Chairwoman Slotkin previously in this document.

of comfort that we as a Nation, the oldest democracy, had as the No. 1 provision, the Bill of Rights, the right to freedom of religion. You were violated.

Can you tell me—Rabbi, first of all, I hope those who were held, I hope God is encouraging them and the comfort of this Nation lets them know that we care. As well your congregants, I hope that they are knowing that America cares and we in the U.S. Congress cares.

Can you tell me the one thing that you thought helped to bring you to safety? Did you find in the perpetrator a confusion or pointed focus?

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER. I would say, first of all, that—first of all, thank you for those kind words and thank you for the support. Our congregation has been overwhelmed in the most wonderful of ways by all of the support that we have received, myself and those who were held hostage. We have been working through it and we have really appreciated just the incredible amount of support within and outside of our Nation and our global world community. It has been unbelievable.

In terms of the—

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Perpetrator.

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER [continuing]. Perpetrator, he was very focused on one thing. Right? He was very focused on this idea that Jews controlled the world. Jews could pull the strings, that I could call the chief rabbi of America as far as he was concerned. Rabbi Buchdahl, you know, is absolutely amazing, but we don't have a chief rabbi in America.

He thought that we could do that and he could get this person released, and that was his singular focus. That was his singular understanding. That idea that Jews control the world, the Jews control the media, the Jews control Government, the Jews control everything, that was reality for him.

Like he deeply, in everything he shared, he believed that 100 percent, that America would care more about Jews than anybody else. So there was no confusion about that. That was consistent every step of the way.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. The height of anti-Semitism. Thank you so very much. Our prayers continue to be with you.

Let me read into the record the language of this bulletin, "Continued cause for violence directed at U.S. critical infrastructure, soft targets, and mass gatherings; faith-based institutions such as churches, synagogues, mosques; institutions of higher education; racial and religious minorities; government facilities and personnel, including law environment; and the military, the media, and perceived ideological opponents." The gist of this bulletin says that this language, these acts generate potential violence.

We know that Mr. Greenblatt said in his last testimony before us, "Extremist White supremacist ideology is more than a collection of prejudices. It is a complete world view."

Can I hear from Mr. Singleton—excuse me, Mr. Masters and Mr. Fingerhut, if I could? Could you both respond to the intensity of these actions and words turning into violence and how these grants are so crucial at this time? Mr. Fingerhut and then Mr. Masters. Thank you.



Mr. FINGERHUT. Thank you, Congresswoman Jackson Lee. There is no question that the reason why it is necessary for us as a Jewish community to ensure that every single institution in the Jewish community is protected, both through physical protection and the professional security network that we are building in each community is because of this rise of anti-Semitic speech and incidents. They don't all, obviously, manifest in violence, but they create the environment in which the individuals, such as those who carried out these attacks, are motivated to act.

So, there is a direct correlation between the rise of anti-Semitism that our colleague Jonathan Greenblatt spoke to this Congress about. While there is a full-throated effort to counter that anti-Semitism led by Mr. Greenblatt and our organizations and others, we also simultaneously have to protect and defend every Jewish institution.

You know, I note that after 9/11, America both went on the offense against terrorism around the world, but also protected and built out the homeland security system that we are so familiar with today. That is where we are in the Jewish community today. We have to both counter anti-Semitism wherever it is, but we must recognize that it will nevertheless result in these violent attacks. We will protect every community.

As you may have heard, Congresswoman Jackson Lee, we are in the middle of a major campaign to extend our professional security initiatives in partnership with SCN, out to every single Jewish community organized through its Federations. Then each place also wish to partner in-depth with local law enforcement, as previously was discussed, and also, of course, with this important FEMA grant program.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The gentlewoman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes the gentlewoman from Iowa, Mrs. Miller-Meeks, for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Thank you, Chair Demings and Chair Slotkin and Ranking Members Cammack and Pfluger, for this important hearing. Certainly our hearts, our sympathies are with all of those in Colleyville for this horrendous attack. I went to school there and know the area very well.

Mr. Masters, according to a report conducted by the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism, in 2020, there were 114 reported instances of Zoom bombing directed at Jewish institutions, such as synagogues, Jewish community centers, and Jewish schools. Have you heard from your members about an increase in this or other types of cyber harassment?

Mr. MASTERS. Certainly. So—and thank you for the question. Particularly at the beginning of the pandemic, as our community moved on-line in many respects, Zoom and Facebook Live, we saw a dramatic increase in Zoom bombings in particular. We worked collaboratively with the ADL and Zoom, as well as other providers, to address safety and security settings. All told, we held national webinars to educate thousands of members of our community on how to implement those security settings to avoid the Zoom bombing.

We also have seen during the pandemic more broadly a 40 percent increase reported into our intelligence center, our Operations

Command Center, of cyber intrusions and activity. We work very closely, as I mentioned, with the FBI and DHS.

We anticipate that this is going to increase. I would note that particularly when we see international events that affect the State of Israel and the Jewish community throughout the world, we see an uptick in cyber activity, what we believe to be both from state and non-state actors, some affiliated with foreign terrorist organizations, others operating on their own potentially. This is very significant.

What I would drive to with the point, and this goes to the physical security as well, and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee's question, it is not just about the security. It is about the feeling of insecurity that is created in the community. Whether it is on Zoom or whether it is the question that Rabbi Konikov identified as someone feeling uncomfortable, if we get to a place in our country and this community where people are uncomfortable walking to synagogues, sending their kids to Jewish day school, or participating in a Zoom, we will do far more damage to ourselves as a faith-based community and as a country than any single or group of terrorists could do.

That is why it is so essential that we have these funds to help us support the physical security, the cybersecurity, to create an empowered, resilient community. We thank you for your support in making that happen.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. To that end, an extension of this is that, and this is for any of the witnesses or either of the rabbis as well, Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas, has regularly live-streamed its service, especially since the start of COVID, to ensure that its entire community would still be able to participate. This practice took a dark turn when Malik Faisal Akram took 4 people hostage and when it allowed an unprecedented number of people to watch the attack in real time.

We know, given the state of culture now, the state of the internet and social media, and getting more likes and attention if you do egregious things, I mean, all of us have seen some of the horrific videos on the internet. Are you all concerned that having had this live-streamed inadvertently would yield to copycat attacks as a result of the extremely public nature of the Colleyville attack?

Mr. MASTERS. Oh, sorry.

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER. No, go ahead, please.

Mr. MASTERS. Yes, I will be very—from a security perspective, the answer is yes. We saw this with the Christchurch, New Zealand, attacker. We saw it with the attacker in Poway who attempted to live stream. We saw the live stream impact in Colleyville.

The short answer is yes, we are very concerned about this and the implication for copycats, and we need to work to address it. I will defer to—

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. It goes to the insecurity you just mentioned in the community and the insecurity to practice your faith.

Mr. MASTERS. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Rabbi.

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER. First of all, I want to say that I appreciate the hyphenated last name. Thank you for the opportunity.

With regards—I mean, it is a very strange thing because not only was this very, very public for us, we also had so much interest, right, and repeated interest on the Facebook platform that we want to be open and honest, and yet we are no longer mentioning the names of everyone who is sick that we are praying for within the congregation. We are trying to be conscious of the sense of privacy in a way that we have never had to think about in our world today.

So, it remains an on-going issue for us in our community and yet we want to be open, we want to be accessible for our—you know, on-line. We want people to be able to pray with us and connect with us. Yet, there is a whole host of new and not necessarily appreciated challenges that has come with this as well. Yet, we remain committed to figuring out solutions. But thank you for the question.

Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS. Thank you and we remain committed with you. I yield back my time, Chairwoman.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The gentlewoman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Green, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and the Ranking Member as well. To my friends who are assembled as witnesses I thank you for your appearance today. It means a lot. I am going to address my question to my friend, Mr. Fingerhut.

Friends, first a bit of preamble, if you will. I and a very dear friend, David Minberg, encountered bigotry many years ago. I was president of the NAACP. He was with the AJC. He was the lead person. He and I took on this challenge. It was a challenge related to the African-American community. But having the allies in the Jewish community made all the difference in the resolution.

It is important for us not to silo our problems, that we should see these problems as a collective. They are our problems. They are not your problems. They are our problems. They are my problems. We have got a duty to help each other in these times of need.

We are not confronting persons who have said some ugly things, we have a duty to bond and let people know that we are friends and that we will stand together. If ever you make a statement or if ever you do something that is inappropriate, you know that you can count on us. We have to count on each other.

Now, having given that as my foundation, my predicate, I believe that we have to treat all bigots the same. We cannot make a distinction between one bigot and another. You can't conclude that if one bigot is beneficial—I have a term that I use now, it is called the “beneficial bigot”—a beneficial bigot has to be treated the same way you treat another bigot. If you make exceptions for beneficial bigots, those exceptions come back to haunt us.

So, I am hopeful that we will, as we move forward together, and we must do it together, that when we encounter these circumstances, we will take them on and we will do it together, understanding that there can be no such thing as a beneficial bigot.

So, to my friend, Mr. Fingerhut, I appreciate your being here. Beneficial bigotry is the topic. How do you respond to my comment that we have to treat all bigots the same? Can't give a beneficial bigot a license to do what you wouldn't give another bigot the opportunity to do.

Mr. FINGERHUT. Representative Green, it is indeed a pleasure to speak with you again, and you have been such a champion on these issues. Thank you, sir.

I, of course, agree with your comment entirely that we must treat all bigotry the same. I want to emphasize that as we grow the professional security systems initiatives that we are building across the entire Jewish community in each of our 146 Jewish Federations, that one of the key roles of those professional community security directors, who, of course, are working with SCN and trained by them, is to build relations with not only local law enforcement, but also with other community representatives of other churches and mosques and other faiths. And that our Federations work, of course, in partnership with the leaders of other faiths and NAACP and Muslim groups and others so that we are sharing information, we are working together in a unified way, and supporting each other as we build out these necessary steps.

You know, both rabbis spoke beautifully, and I know they, in addition to caring for their congregations and doing all the pastoral responsibilities they have, they are also involved in interfaith activities and broadening their work across the community. But they can't do this alone. We have to offer them the sophistication and the professional help that we can through the Jewish Federation system and in partnership with the Government, local law enforcement, and, of course, FEMA in this case on the Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

So, we take your comments seriously and we know we are all in this together and we lock arms. Of course, we have had to, as you and I have discussed, the Jewish community has had to be very aggressive in building out these security programs in every community because we have been a significant disproportionate target of these violent attacks. But we know that we are not alone and we are eager to do it in full concert with all faith communities and all communities that we could reach.

Mr. GREEN. Madam Chair, I thank you for the time. Let me just close with this. Those who tolerate bigotry, perpetuate it. We cannot tolerate it. Again, I thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The gentleman's time has expired. Thank you for yielding back. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Meijer from Michigan for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEIJER. Thank you, Madam Chair, and to the subcommittee for holding this hearing today, and to all of our guests who are joining to share their expertise and their experience.

I just have to follow on what many of my other colleagues have and just, you know, Rabbi Walker, thank you for the example that you set for the just bravery that you showed. I know, you know, in an era where we are all watching things occur and scrolling our Twitter feeds to find updates, you know, our hearts sank when we saw the news and then leaped at, you know, the conclusion. Thanks again to your calmness under pressure.

It was a situation you should have never been in, but one that you handled and your fellow victims kind-of handled in a way that, I think, set a powerful example.

Rabbi Walker, I just want to kind of build on, again, some of the other questions here. You know, you mentioned that you partici-

pated in about a half-dozen other security workshops that have been offered by the FBI, the ADL, Colleyville Police, and the Secure Community Network with Mr. Masters. Do you think your experience is representative of other faith leaders? Has that degree of involvement with the resources that are available, do you feel that that is wide-spread and that there is sufficient awareness of the tools and resources available?

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER. Thank you so much, Representative Meijer. I would say yes and no. That Security Summit that I attended with the FBI, I mean, it was a huge auditorium and there were faith leaders from across every spectrum and background.

When we—we hosted in our community I want to say twice with the Police Department and again with the FBI, I could be remembering those differently. But in our congregation we invited members of our interfaith community, religious leaders, lay leaders, to participate. Our Colleyville Police Department did a session on the development of a security action plan. We had faith leaders from across the community. It just depends on who shows up. Right?

A community has to feel the need and the desire. Right? Unfortunately, a lot more people feel that as it hits closer to home. But let us take—I mean, let us be realistic about this. What happened to us is the most recent horrible thing, but things have been happening for years. It is a matter of when does that wake-up call happen that we need to be prepared?

So that education that—and also, that sense that being prepared doesn't mean you expect it to happen. Right? That is a really, really important point. Just like CPR, just like the fire drills as was mentioned before, you don't count on tornado drills. You are not expecting to get hit by a tornado, you are not expecting a fire to happen in the building. There needs to be a sense of awareness and preparation.

Unfortunately, in far too many schools, right, so many public schools and private schools, they are doing lockdown drills. Not because they expect it to happen, but it just makes sense to have that preparation.

So, it doesn't matter the institution. From Jewish to Muslim, Baha'i, atheists, right, all of us, I mean, everyone from every background, unfortunately, we need that sense of preparation.

Mr. MEIJER. Certainly mentioning that recency, you know. We are holding this hearing in the wake of what happened in Colleyville. You know, it is fresh of mind and I think, you know, it is not at all surprising to see an increased focus on connecting our faith community with the resources that are available. But then also that obligation and the necessity of once more time passes to continue that engagement, to continue to pushing those resources out, so that, you know, we don't let the time that passes, you know, distract us from the underlying mission.

So, again, Rabbi, I really appreciate you joining us here today. I appreciate you sharing those comments. Thank you for the leadership that you showed.

With that, Madam Chair, I yield back.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island, Mr. Langevin, for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Madam Chair. I want to thank our witnesses for their testimony today. I apologize I wasn't able to stay for the entire hearing. I was on another hearing with the Armed Services Committee, but did want to get back here to, again, thank our witnesses and ask a couple questions.

So, if I can start with you, Rabbi Cytron-Walker. So, you spoke in your testimony about the understandable burdens that small congregations like yours face in navigating the paperwork requirements of the Nonprofit Security Grant Program. Are there other challenges with NSGP which are unique to small congregations that you and Rabbi Konikov have experienced or have heard of others experiencing?

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER. I don't know all of the specifics, but I do know that if it were not for one volunteer, who basically made it almost his full-time job for, you know, weeks at a time to try to get this together, I mean, so many hours in the back room going through the grants, making sure it was right, making sure it was accurate, we wouldn't have received the grants. I can't imagine what it was like for my colleague in Florida. Right? I just know that it is really, really challenging.

In terms of that general trend, since I don't know the—I wasn't the one applying for it, you know. But I think that, you know, Mr. Masters might be able to speak to that in a more broader sense, a more global sense. But I can tell you that it is really, really hard for smaller congregations to do it.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

Rabbi KONIKOV. I agree as well, by the way.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Sure.

Rabbi KONIKOV. I agree to that same idea. I mean, it is a very extensive project to do. We actually enlisted the Chabad security in Florida to help us with it. They have told us that those who received or awarded the grant in 2020, most of those that they have been helping have not received the funds yet because between, you know, FEMA and the Florida Department of Emergency Management there has just been a lot of back-and-forth. Many have just not received it because the process has been going very slow.

Mr. LANGEVIN. OK. Thank you for that. Here is a question for all of our witnesses. In cases where nonprofit organizations are needing to make sustained investments in their security, have they run into challenges in securing multiple grants over time from the Nonprofit Security Grant Program? If so, is it clear why some applications from a certain organization were accepted and others were not?

Mr. MASTERS. Sir, I will attempt to first answer that question. For one, there is an ability to receive multiple grants over the years. There is a waiting system that has a preference for first-time applicants.

So, we have seen over the years, in 2006, as my colleague Congressman Fingerhut mentioned when the grant program was first created, as the pool has expanded, as more money has become available, more people have applied, and that is a good thing. That has made it somewhat more competitive, obviously.

There is a possibility for institutions to get multi-year grants. I think as more institutions have applied and certainly as it has ex-

panded to those communities that traditionally could not apply, our non-urban area communities, then we have seen more applications and more first-time individuals getting funded.

I would note when it comes to some of the complications with respect to the grant, there is, as I mentioned earlier in another answer to a question, there is disparity across the State administrative agencies, which can make things complicated. The Authorized Equipment List from which you can purchase items was not really designed for faith-based institutions or laypeople to take advantage of. It is the same Authorized Equipment List if I was running a major gas refinery and I was trying to use equipment to fund from there that I would be using.

I think there are ways to make the process easier for those first-time applicants, as Congressman Fingerhut mentioned, with respect to increased support for first-time applicants. That is, frankly, what we are doing a lot of in the Jewish community through the joint effort of JFNA and SCN to make grant writers available, to do more assessments, et cetera.

But there is a lot of work to do and there is more organizations than we can service. So anything that can be done from your side or the FEMA side to increase their ability to support would be helpful.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Absolutely.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The gentleman's time has expired. The Chair now recognizes the gentlewoman from New Jersey, Mrs. Watson Coleman, for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, for bringing us together today. Thank you to each and every one of our witnesses. The information has been so helpful.

Rabbi Charlie, it is so good to be able to have this conversation with you. God bless you. My blessings to your whole congregation and even those who were there on that day.

I don't have a question. Let me just say this. I heard you. I heard about the difficulty in the application process. I heard about the unpredictability in continuity of the application process. I heard that we need additional resources to be applied. I also heard loud and clear that we recognize that we are all in this together, Black, Jewish, Muslim, atheist, Sikh, whatever. We aren't always considered the other now and we just show this country that we are together. We are together in this message. We are together in our unity and we will stand together for the democracy in this country.

So, I thank you for the opportunity to hear what you had to say today. Madam Chairwoman, thank you so much, and to you, Madam Chairwoman Slotkin, for bringing us together and giving me this opportunity. I yield back.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. Thank you so much. The gentlewoman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Malinowski, for 5 minutes.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you so much, Madam Chairwoman, and thank you, too, to all of our witnesses for your presentations. I am both delighted that we are holding this hearing and incredibly sad that we have to hold this hearing.

So, the Nonprofit Security Grant Program is incredibly important in my home State of New Jersey. We have had our share, arguably

more than our share, of anti-Semitic incidents and other attacks on people based on their faith and race in recent years. I think we are No. 2 in the country in terms of anti-Semitic attacks since 2020.

I have held a number of workshops in my district for faith leaders interested in the grant program and we have helped them take advantage of these resources. But I also totally agree we do not have enough resources and the numbers bear that out.

Fully 45 percent of applications right now are rejected by FEMA and grant applicants often are not informed why they are rejected. That is something we have to fix. Obviously, we need more resources. For that reason, I have been a strong supporter, even since I have been elected, of increasing funding for this program and I will continue to do so.

At the same time, every single time I sign a letter to increase funding, every single time I cosponsor a bill to increase funding, I feel a sense of defeat because, as I am sure all of our witnesses would agree, even though we have to harden our places of worship, the solution to this problem is not at the gate of our places of worship. If we wait until the attacker is at the gate, you know, we have already, in a sense, failed.

So that is really what I want to ask our witnesses about. Why, in your view, is this happening? Why is it—perhaps, Mr. Fingerhut, you mentioned that we are living through the most intense period of attacks on the American Jewish community in the history of this country. Why, from your standpoint, is this happening right now?

Mr. FINGERHUT. Well, Representative Malinowski, thank you for the question. I know that these committees held a hearing just recently on the rise of anti-Semitism and the relationship to all the various political and radical movements that are happening across the spectrum, you know, around the world. In a previous discussion in this hearing, the impact of social media, the impact of the internet to be able to bring these things into every community, into anybody's home, anybody who wants to reach, you know, this hatred.

The key for us is that we just know that it is not going to end. The rise, the wave is still rising, and so we have to be prepared.

If I might just take the moment of your question, there have been so many excellent comments about the challenges the current Nonprofit Security Grant Program faces. There are things that this committee can do, even in legislative language associated with appropriations that could help address them. We need to give FEMA more flexibility and authority quickly and support the Waive the Paperwork Requirement Act. I mentioned a number of these things in my written testimony that has been submitted for the record.

Representative Malinowski, I wish to say—I wish I had a better answer for you on why, but I know that it is real and it is growing and it is not going to end soon. So we have to give our partners in Government all the resources and flexibility needed to act now.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Yes, and we should. On social media, let me put it this way to you, imagine there were a company in America that tracked the on-line behavior of every single person in this country and the world. Every time they found somebody expressing views along the lines of Jews control the world or anything like that, a representative of that company picked up the phone and



called that person to say, hey, couldn't help but notice, you just expressed some really interesting views and we would like to introduce you to 10 other people who share your views. We would like to help you get together with those people and help you explore your interest in combating those horrible Jewish people who are trying to control the world.

Would you think that would be a pretty bad thing?

Mr. FINGERHUT. Absolutely. Perhaps—

Mr. MALINOWSKI. That is what social media companies do, of course.

Mr. FINGERHUT. Absolutely, Mr. Malinowski.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Yes. So, this is something that we are looking very hard at. Obviously, it is not a guy picking up the phone, making a call. It is an automated algorithmic system, but it functions in precisely that way.

Mr. FINGERHUT. If I might add, it is one of the reasons why all of our community security programs through each of our 146 Federations will be connected through the security efforts of the SCN, so that that kind of information on-line, when a threat is identified anywhere in any community, can be immediately broadcast out to all of our security directors in every community because we know that they are doing exactly what you said they are, introducing the radicals to more people and that it will quickly spread. Copycats, similar, they will show up on-line. Through our partnership with SCN, we are able now to get that information out to every community.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The gentleman yields back. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Gottheimer, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, for this timely hearing. The threats against the Jewish community are rising at an alarming rate. As we know, just this week the National Terrorism Advisory System bulletin warned of the role disinformation is playing in motivating domestic extremists, with a stress on the interest in targeting religious and racial minorities; varied reports stating an uptick in calls by extremists to replicate what occurred at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas.

I want to take a moment to highlight the courage, as my colleagues have, of Rabbi Cytron-Walker and the horrific hostage situation in Colleyville. We are very, very thankful for you and for what you did, and helped the other hostages make it out safely.

Rabbi Cytron-Walker, your actions during the hostage crisis have inspired many, of course. You have reminded the people of the real threat faced in the Jewish community. How can DHS and other agencies better support your community and others like it? I know you have answered some of this, if there is anything you think we have not addressed, I would be grateful.

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER. I would say that one thing that hasn't been mentioned to the extent that maybe it needs to is that idea of—I mean, it has been stated, right, we need those relationships before something bad happens. We need the relationships on the National, State, and local level with regard to government. We

need those relationships within our inter-religious communities on a local level.

We need to know one another, which is—we don't have to be experts in one another's religions, but we do need to know each other and see each other and see the humanity within, whether we are talking about, you know, the more progressive religions, the more conservative religions, everybody in between, those without any religion. We need that sense of relationship and to encourage that relationship and to make those possible in addition to all of the many possibilities that this committee can do. Along with, as has also been mentioned, that idea of acknowledging the hatred that exists.

Again, we don't have to agree with everyone, we are not going to agree with everyone. But when we can see the humanity in each other before we choose how to disagree, right, to know that we are all human, we are not enemies, right, regardless of whatever political side of the aisle, regardless of our religious faith, we need to all be on the same team. When we can be on the same team and tone down that rhetoric, right, and that is a responsibility that all of us have, religious leaders, elected officials from every part of government, when we can do that, it makes a big difference. It makes a big difference.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. To that point, you have obviously been a leader in teaching members of society about the roots and solutions to hate. Particularly in light of the disgusting Nazi rally in Orlando and others, this is more important than ever.

I was proud, like many of my colleagues, to support the Never Again Education Act in 2020, expanding U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum education programming. Are there other ways to promote a deeper understanding of the lessons from historic anti-Semitism, other steps you think we should be taking or not?

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER. Was that again to me? Sorry.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. I am so sorry, Rabbi. Yes, Rabbi Cytron-Walker, sorry.

Rabbi CYTRON-WALKER. Yes. OK, no. Thank you again. I think with regard to Holocaust education, I think that, unfortunately, from my understanding of the research, and Congressman Fingerhut could probably—or, you know, like there are others who could probably do better than I, but my understanding is that Holocaust education in this country is actually decreasing instead of increasing.

That is something that—this is one event, you know, one period of time that is so important for us from a historical perspective. Unfortunately, it teaches, you know, the worst experiences of what hate can do, of what dehumanization can do. It is not the only story. Right?

I just had an opportunity to visit the Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, which focuses in not only on the Holocaust, but also human rights across the board. That is an incredible resource to educate, and they do so in the DFW area in an incredible way. That kind of education is helpful across the board to not only better understand the Holocaust, but, once again, to understand how we are all connected as human beings.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Well, you are right, and the Nonprofit Security Grants and other measures that Mr. Fingerhut has spoken about

are so critical to protect synagogues, but also do make sure we are doing everything we can to make sure we have more resources, not less there, and which I think is so important.

Thank you so much. I yield back.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The gentleman yields back. To our witnesses, thank you so much for your patience. Finally, the Chair now recognizes the gentlewoman from New York, Miss Rice, for 5 minutes.

Miss RICE. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. I just want to raise two quick issues that have already been pretty much acknowledged and talked about by some of my colleagues.

I am very grateful for the millions of dollars that New York and specifically my district on Long Island have gotten, but I have heard from Jewish and interfaith organizations that the present funding levels are clearly insufficient to meet the current needs. This year we had 7 incredibly strong applicants from my district who were denied funding. Even those that received grants often find that their award is insufficient to cover the needed security updates.

Now, these rejections are especially frustrating because these organizations aren't told why they have been rejected, only that they have been. So, I appreciate the work that is being done that I think Mr. Masters talked about in terms of help that is given to first-time applicants. But we also need to worry about the applicant who maybe is not the first-time applicant, but gets denied and without any explanation.

So, just to you, Mr. Masters, well, first of all, I think we all agree that we have to put more money into this program across the board. But how can we make it better? I don't know if it is an issue of transparency or maybe giving organizations that are denied their initial application a chance to make changes so that they can receive these grants? Maybe you could just kind-of talk a little bit about ways that we can fix this and give more certainty to the applicants during that process.

Mr. MASTERS. Thank you, Congresswoman. I think you identified perhaps one of the biggest complaints that we hear across the entire Jewish community, but also when we are asked to provide advice or counsel to our partners in other faith-based communities or nonprofit communities: Lack of feedback. So, you submit an application, it goes to the State administrative agency, and then it goes to FEMA. When it is rejected, there is no clarity on whether it was rejected for a material deficiency in the application. Did I not put the correct SAM or DUNS number? Or was my threat section or my investment justification section off?

So, just the very basic—I mean, even if we just provided was it a material deficiency or was it something in your narrative in the objective part of—the subjective part of the application which was problematic would be a huge advantage.

Then if you carry that point—

Miss RICE. Let me just interrupt you for 1 second.

Mr. MASTERS. Yes.

Miss RICE. So, what I would like to know is, you know, are people being rejected just because there is no—they are making the decision that there is no money and that these other organizations

are more deserving at this time than you? But if that is the case, then they should know that, too. It sounds to me like FEMA makes that ultimate determination of why they are rejected, but does not give the reason. I mean, is there a way that we can require a reason to be given?

Mr. MASTERS. Well, so every State gets a specific amount of money and every urban area does, so that the State actually identifies through their process who is getting it from the State level until that pot of money gets to zero. So, very feasibly, you could have someone that has a good application, but because there is not enough money, they don't get awarded.

Then you could have people that have just they had problems with their application itself and they are not getting feedback on those applications. That is something that we as the Federation System have worked to do in looking at many of those applications that were rejected and providing feedback. I think my colleague, Congressman Fingerhut, probably has something to add on that as well.

Mr. FINGERHUT. Yes. I just—thank you so much, Mr. Masters and Representative Rice. I just really do want to point out that we believe that FEMA just simply doesn't have the resources right now to do the—to give the kinds of responses that Mr. Masters and you are speaking of. We strongly urge that some portion of these increased funds be allocated both to FEMA and to the State authorities, so that they can give that necessary feedback.

I also mentioned to Mr. Malinowski, but I want to repeat that they also probably need a waiver of the Paperwork Reduction Act, so they can quickly update and modernize their application forms. Even some additional broader authority on language as to what the risks, the threats are that are being covered because these threats are just multiplying faster than the legislative authority language they have, you know, has enabled.

I believe, I certainly am out of date as to the functioning of this committee from my time there, but certainly as much of this that can be done, either report language or legislative language around the appropriations, even before maybe some changes are made to the authorizing language would—the authorizing bill would really be timely and responsive together with the funding increase.

Miss RICE. Thank you, Congressman. Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. The gentlewoman yields back. I ask unanimous consent to enter a statement from the Anti-Defamation League into the record. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

STATEMENT OF JONATHAN GREENBLATT, CEO & NATIONAL DIRECTOR, ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE

10 A.M.

INTRODUCTION TO ADL

Since 1913, the mission of ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) has been to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” For decades, one of the most important ways in which ADL has fought against bigotry and anti-Semitism has been by investigating extremist threats across the ideological spectrum, including White supremacists and other far-right violent extrem-

ists, producing research to inform the public of the scope of the threat, and working with law enforcement, educators, the tech industry and elected leaders to promote best practices that can effectively address and counter these threats.

Domestic violent extremism has been on the rise in recent years. The Jewish community continues to be a primary target of extremists, regardless of ideology. Our hearts are with the Colleyville, Texas community that was recently shaken by the trauma of being targeted by a terrorist who took hostages at a local synagogue, one that thankfully had security-related equipment and training—resources that many faith-based communities Nation-wide do not have access to.

Without a doubt, right-wing extremist violence is currently the greatest domestic terrorism threat to everyone in this country. From Charleston to Charlottesville to Pittsburgh, to Poway and El Paso, we have seen the deadly consequences of White supremacist extremism play out all over this country. Moreover, at ADL we are tracking the mainstreaming, normalizing, and localizing of the hate, disinformation, and toxic conspiracy theories that animate this extremism. We cannot afford to minimize this threat. We need a bipartisan “whole-of-Government approach”—indeed, a “whole-of-society” approach—to counter it, and the work must start today.

#### CURRENT TRENDS

##### *Colleyville and Anti-Semitic Violence*

Anti-Semitism is an on-going threat to the American Jewish community. According to the FBI’s annual data on hate crimes, defined as criminal offenses which are motivated by bias, crimes targeting the Jewish community consistently constitute over half of all religion-based crimes. The number of hate crimes against Jews has ranged between 600 and 1,200 each year since the FBI began collecting data in the 1990’s. There were 683 hate crimes against Jews in 2020, 963 in 2019 and 847 in 2018. The FBI’s data is based on voluntary reporting by local law enforcement and appropriate characterization of crimes as also being hate crimes. For a variety of reasons, dozens of large cities either underreport or do not report hate crime data at all. For that reason, experts, including at ADL, know that the real figure for crimes targeting Jews, as well as other minorities, is even higher than the FBI reporting indicates.

A violent attack against the Jewish community occurred just recently, on January 15, when a gunman entered Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas, during services, taking 3 congregants and the rabbi as hostages. Though the standoff ended with all hostages freed and physically unharmed, the violent act reinforced the need to forcefully address the threat of anti-Semitic violence—experienced by the Colleyville community and far too many others. The fact that the Colleyville attacker travelled from the United Kingdom underscores that there can be foreign influences on domestic terrorism, either through incitement, coordination, or direct participation.

##### *Rising Anti-Semitism*

ADL has recorded a 60 percent increase of anti-Semitic incidents over the past 5 years. While anti-Semitism has commonalities with racism, anti-Muslim bias, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, and other forms of hate and discrimination, it also has certain unique characteristics as a specific set of ideologies about Jews that has migrated across discourses—and across centuries. In almost every part of our society, this hatred has been conjured and adjusted to suit the values, beliefs, and fears of specific demographics and contexts. The underlying conspiracy theories employing Jew-hatred morph to fit the anxieties and upheavals of the time—for example, that Jews were responsible for the Black Death in medieval times and for “inventing,” spreading, or profiting from COVID in the 21st Century. Or that Jews exercise extraordinary power over governments, media, and finance—from the charges of a conspiracy to achieve world domination set forth in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and used by the Nazis, to thinly-veiled anti-Semitism blaming “globalism” and “cosmopolitan” elites for all the ills of the world and for planning a “new world order.”

We cannot fight anti-Semitism without understanding how it is both intertwined with other forms of prejudice and how it is unique.

Each year, ADL’s Center on Extremism tracks incidents of anti-Semitic harassment, vandalism, and assault in the United States. Since 1979, we have published this information in an annual Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents. In 2020, ADL tabulated 2,024 reported anti-Semitic incidents throughout the United States. This is a 4 percent decrease from the 2,107 incidents recorded in 2019 but is still the third-highest year on record since ADL began tracking anti-Semitic incidents in 1979.

Known extremist groups or individuals inspired by extremist ideology were responsible for 331 incidents in 2020, up from 270 incidents in 2019. This represents 16 percent of the total number of incidents in 2020.

More recently, analysis from ADL's Center on Extremism reveals that anti-Semitic incidents in the United States more than doubled during the May 2021 military conflict between Israel and Hamas and its immediate aftermath compared to the same time period in 2020. After peaking during that period, incident levels gradually returned to a baseline level.

#### *Threats to HBCUs*

Over the last several weeks, America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were targeted by wide-spread and repeated bomb threats. While the cases are still under investigation, law enforcement authorities reportedly believe the threats were racially motivated. It is no coincidence that HBCUs, a long-standing symbol of Black resilience and excellence, were targeted at the start of Black History Month and during a time of wide-spread and "equal opportunity" hate, which has affected minority communities Nation-wide.

It is notable that threats targeting the Black community come at a time when anti-Semitic incidents are high, and the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community continues to experience alarming levels of hate crimes directed toward them. Hateful movements do not limit themselves to attacking only one group or demographic.

#### *Murder and Extremism: By the Numbers*

In 2021, based on ADL's preliminary research, domestic extremists killed at least 29 people in the United States, in 19 separate incidents. This represents a modest increase from the 23 extremist-related murders documented in 2020 but is far lower than the number of murders committed in any of the 5 years prior (which ranged from 45 to 78). While this could be cause for optimism, more likely it is the result of COVID lockdowns reducing mass gatherings and the increased attention of law enforcement following the January 6, 2021 insurrection.

Most of the murders (26 of 29) were committed by right-wing extremists, which for more than a decade in this country has been the case.

#### *White Supremacist Propaganda*

ADL's Center on Extremism (COE) tracked a near-doubling of White supremacist propaganda efforts in 2020, which included the distribution of racist, anti-Semitic, and anti-LGBTQ+ fliers, stickers, banners, and posters. The 2020 data shows a huge increase of incidents from the previous year, with a total of 5,125 cases reported to ADL (averaging more than 14 incidents per day), compared to 2,724 in 2019. This is the highest number of White supremacist propaganda incidents ADL has ever recorded. The number of propaganda incidents on college campuses dropped by more than half, perhaps due to COVID restrictions.

Propaganda gives White supremacists the ability to maximize media and on-line attention, while limiting the risk of individual exposure, negative media coverage, arrests, and public backlash that often accompanies more public events. The barrage of propaganda, which overwhelmingly features veiled White supremacist language with a "patriotic" slant, is an effort to normalize White supremacists' message and bolster recruitment efforts while targeting marginalized communities including Jews, Black people, Muslims, non-White immigrants, and LGBTQ+ people.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *Addressing Modern Terrorist Threats*

We need a whole-of-Government approach to address the extremist threat that the Jewish community, and many others, are facing and will continue to face in the years to come. The framework that ADL has created—the PROTECT plan—is a comprehensive, 7-part plan to mitigate the threat posed by domestic extremism and domestic terrorism while protecting civil rights and civil liberties. Together, focusing on these 7 categories can have an immediate and deeply significant impact in preventing and countering domestic terrorism—more so than any one action, policy, or law—and can do so while protecting civil rights and liberties and ensuring that Government overreach does not harm the same vulnerable people and communities that these extremists target.

- *Prioritize Preventing and Countering Domestic Terrorism.*—We urge Congress to adopt a whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach to preventing and countering domestic terrorism.
- *Resource According to the Threat.*—We must ensure that the authorities and resources the Government uses to address violent threats are proportionate to the

risk of the lethality of those threats. In other words, allocation of resources must never be politicized but rather based on transparent and objective security concerns.

- *Oppose Extremists in Government Service.*—It is essential that we recognize the potential for harm when extremists gain positions of power, including in Government, law enforcement, and the military.
- *Take Domestic Terrorism Prevention Measures.*—We must not wait until after someone has become an extremist or a terrorist attack has happened to act. Effective and promising prevention measures exist, which should be scaled.
- *End the Complicity of Social Media in Facilitating Extremism.*—Congress must prioritize countering on-line extremism and ensuring that perpetrators who engage in unlawful activity on-line can be held accountable. On-line platforms often lack adequate policies to mitigate extremism and hate equitably and at scale. Federal and State laws and policies require significant updating to hold on-line platforms and individual perpetrators accountable for enabling hate, racism, and extremist violence across the internet. In March 2021, ADL announced the REPAIR Plan, which offers a comprehensive framework for platforms and policy makers to take meaningful action to decrease on-line hate and extremism.
- *Create an Independent Clearinghouse for On-line Extremist Content.*—Congress should work with the Biden-Harris administration to create a publicly-funded, independent nonprofit center to track on-line extremist threat information in real-time and make referrals to social media companies and law enforcement agencies when appropriate.
- *Target Foreign White Supremacist Terrorist Groups.*—Congress must recognize that White supremacist extremism is a major global threat of our era and mobilize with that mindset.

#### *Nonprofit Security Grant Program*

The Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) is an essential tool in protecting nonprofits, including houses of worship and other faith-based organizations. The program can be used for training and equipment to secure facilities, such as synagogues like the one in Colleyville, Texas, whose leadership took advantage of the program. Far too many houses of worship do not. And those that do apply have a frustratingly low likelihood of receiving financial relief from the program for securing themselves. For houses of worship, community needs should be more front of mind than providing for their own security or raising funds for security precautions.

In the last grant cycle, 3,361 applicants requested \$399,763,916 in NSGP grants, according to FEMA. Congress had only funded the program at \$180 million, providing for a maximum of only 45 percent of security costs that nonprofits had assessed were necessary for their community's security. That funding gap represents almost \$220 million in unfunded liabilities for nonprofit organizations in an era of high and rising threats from domestic violent extremists. While the synagogue in Colleyville had fortunately been aware of this opportunity—and received some benefits from it—try to imagine all of the synagogues, churches, gurdwaras, and other community pillars lacking resources, and further, those that lack even the awareness of the program at all. While it might be fair to say that not all applications for funding are the highest caliber, it would also be fair to note that these are community institutions—not professional Government contractors—navigating complex bureaucratic requirements when they should be focused on their communities. In this era of extreme threats to houses of worship, our communities deserve more.

#### *Recommendations for Reforming the Nonprofit Security Grant Program*

NSGP poses a significant opportunity to help secure our communities. Even modest reforms can provide significant support. ADL recommends that Congress take on the following reforms:

- *Significantly increase the pool of available funding for NSGP.*—Funding NSGP at \$360 million last year would have ensured that 90 percent of applicants received funding. For many grant programs, funding a small percentage of applications is a signal of the competitiveness of the program; however, NSGP does not fund nonprofits performing Government services, it funds nonprofits who need Government support—it should not be competitive, it should be helpful. We should expect even more applications in the future, as more organizations should be made aware of the program, and the threat trends show an increase in risk. As such, \$360 million is the minimum amount that community organizations need to secure themselves in this era of severe risk.
- *Scale outreach and engagement to increase the applicant pool.*—Not enough States avail themselves of the program, and many community organizations are

not aware of it. Following the Colleyville tragedy, ADL heard from many community partners that they were not aware of the funding available. While ADL can make partners aware of the opportunity—and urge State governments to increase their efforts within their States—DHS must step up. DHS should significantly increase engagement with communities and with State governments to broaden the number of applicants seeking support from the program.

- *Scale outreach and engagement to guide applicants.*—Nonprofits like houses of worship are not Government contractors; the burdensome bureaucratic requirements of Federal funding applications may be familiar to organizations with direct experience applying for Federal grants, but for most NSGP applicants, applying is a new and unusual process. As such, DHS should increase its guidance to potential applicants on how to be successful when applying for funds. Applying for NSGP grants should not be a competition, pitting congregation against congregation. It should be a way to support all communities under threat.
- *Broaden the spectrum of eligible grantee expenses.*—NSGP funds can be used for security training and equipment to guard against threats that are “terroristic.” “Terroristic” is not a term many applicants may be familiar with. Moreover, it should be interpreted as broadly as possible, such as including threats from domestic extremist organizations based on the tactics those organizations use. As such, safeguarding against cyber crimes, such as hacking a website, and other targeted harassment that bears the hallmarks of the behavior of hate-based movements that sometimes use terrorism should be allowable expenses. The interpretation of guidance on expenses should track the guidance on threats provided by DHS and other law enforcement and intelligence entities, which note that domestic terrorism represents the top terrorist risks to Americans domestically. The full scope of domestic terrorist tactics should be considered when making programmatic decisions.
- *Provide full support to DHS to faithfully execute a scaled program.*—Grant management is a technical skill, and oversight is incredibly important for large funds. DHS should not be expected to adapt to the heightened threat environment without further resources to ensure funding is spent effectively and to provide necessary outreach. DHS should receive additional staff and other resources to administer the program, as well as new funding streams for additional outreach to potential applicants.
- *Ensure transparency and oversight in the administration of the program.*—While DHS must be empowered to help community members secure themselves, it cannot be allowed to operate without careful oversight. We must acknowledge that some communities may feel less empowered, not more, when seeing DHS increase its resources. The program should be reviewed through a civil rights and civil liberties lens. Further, it is difficult for the public to determine how funding has been dispersed: DHS should release a public, annual report on the program, and Congress should ensure that the resources provided to DHS for this objective are being used proportionate to the evidence of terroristic threats.

Chairwoman DEMINGS. With that, I thank the witnesses for their valuable testimony and the Members for their questions. The Members of the subcommittee may have additional questions for the witnesses and we ask that you respond expeditiously in writing to those questions. The Chair reminds Members that the committee’s record will remain open for 10 business days.

Without objection, the subcommittee stands adjourned. Thank you all so much.

[Whereupon, at 12:23 p.m., the subcommittees were adjourned.]



## APPENDIX

LETTER FROM YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

*February 8, 2022.*

The Honorable VAL DEMINGS,  
*Chairwoman, House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, & Recovery.*

The Honorable KAT CAMMACK,  
*Ranking Member, House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, & Recovery.*

The Honorable ELISSA SLOTKIN,  
*Chairwoman, House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee on Intelligence & Counterterrorism.*

The Honorable AUGUST PFLUGER,  
*Ranking Member, House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee on Intelligence & Counterterrorism.*

DEAR CHAIRWOMEN DEMINGS AND SLOTKIN AND RANKING MEMBERS CAMMACK AND PFLUGER: Yeshiva University is the world's premier Jewish institution for higher education. Rooted in Jewish thought and tradition, it sits at the educational, spiritual and intellectual epicenter of a robust global movement that is dedicated to advancing the moral and material betterment of the Jewish community and broader society, in the service of G-d.

Our students study at our four campuses: Wilf Campus (500 West 185th Street), Israel Henry Beren Campus (245 Lexington Avenue) and Brookdale Center (55 Fifth Avenue) in Manhattan, and the Jack and Pearl Resnick Campus in the Bronx (Eastchester Road and Morris Park Avenue). The undergraduate schools offer a unique dual curriculum comprising Jewish studies and liberal arts and sciences courses, and our graduate and affiliate schools offer tremendous opportunities for graduate and professional studies. While part of a multifaceted University community, each school retains the intimate character of a smaller institution.

Our schools include Undergraduate Studies at the Stern College for Women, Sy Syms School of Business, Yeshiva College and Yeshiva University Summer Classes. For Graduate Studies our schools and affiliate schools include the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology, The Katz School, Sy Syms School of Business Graduate Studies, the Wurzweiler School of Social Work, and Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS).

For students who choose to begin their YU education in Israel, the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program is the formal arrangement between Yeshiva University and yeshivot and seminaries in Israel. This program provides structure, support, and guidance for the more than 600 young men and women who study in Israel each year. We also have two affiliate high schools Samuel H. Wang Yeshiva University High School for Girls, The Marsha Stern Talmudical Academy—Yeshiva University High School for Boys. Some of the world's leading minds make their home in Yeshiva University's classrooms. Beyond a commitment to research and writing, YU faculty members engage and inspire their students, drawing them into a continuing pursuit of knowledge and wisdom. They value close interactions with their students and the opportunity to engage with students outside the classroom setting, whether it's meeting informally to continue a discussion started in the classroom or collaborating in the laboratory on new research.

YU alumni have gone on to become distinguished rabbinic leaders, world political leaders, business giants, and philanthropists. Alumni have achieved immense success and made significant contributions to society and the Jewish community both

nationally and worldwide. They serve, lead, and inspire by example: A testament to the University's greatest resources—our students and faculty.

Situated in one of the most vibrant cities of the world with unparalleled diversity, Yeshiva University is actively involved in its surrounding community, both at the uptown campus (Wilf) and the midtown campus (Beren).

The heinous acts directed at the Jewish community occurring across this great nation is a reminder that even in this day and age, anti-Semitism still has the power to poison minds. It is a reminder that we do not have the luxury of ignoring this most ancient of hatreds. And together we must battle not just the evils of anti-Semitism but all racism and bigotry as they rear their ugly heads in this generation.

While all must continue to fight against this evil, our government should provide the requisite level of resources to help protect defenseless institutions.

Yeshiva University offers its strong support for increasing the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). As Majority Leader Chuck Schumer noted at a recent speech at the Young Israel of Woodmere on Long Island, New York, less than half of New York-based applicants received funding under the program. An increase in program funding would greatly benefit not only the Jewish community, but help protect the vulnerable. Sadly, recent events underscore the vital importance of ensuring that this program is funded at a robust level.

Thank you for holding this important hearing.

Sincerely,

ARI BERMAN.

