

November 1, 2023

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Chair Murray, Vice Chair Collins, Chairwoman Granger, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for your stated commitment to passing an emergency supplemental funding package to ensure Israel has the resources it needs to defend itself as the unprovoked war against Hamas escalates.

As representatives of diverse faith and nonprofit communities in the United States, we firmly believe in the right of all people to worship without fear. We join together to urge you to include at least \$200 million for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) in the funding package that provides security assistance to Israel. This will provide much-needed protection of Jewish and other faith based and at-risk communal institutions across the nation.

Our communities have a history of joining together to support NSGP – whether its bomb threats against HBCUs, attacks against Asian Americans, the Muslim American community, or rising antisemitic violence. We appreciate Congress for establishing and funding the NSGP program, which has played a pivotal role in mitigating hate-based attacks and empowering religious institutions and communities of all faiths to secure lives and property. However, the urgent need for additional funding is evident.

The current war between Israel and Hamas has led to an unprecedented wave of antisemitic threats and attacks. Preliminary data from ADL’s Center on Extremism indicates that reported antisemitic harassment, vandalism and assault increased by 388 percent in the United States between October 7-23, compared to the same period last year. There has been a rise in threats against the Muslim and other communities too. In a public service announcement released October 25, 2023, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Homeland Security say they have “seen an increase in reports of threats against Jewish, Muslim, and Arab communities

and institutions” and that “recent events have increased the possibility of potential attacks against individuals and institutions in response to developments in the Middle East.”

Houses of worship strive to foster an open and welcoming environment. But that has become more challenging due to the threat landscape. According to the NCTC, DHS, and FBI, faith-based institutions are more susceptible to attacks by violent extremists “due to their symbolism, perceived lack of security, and accessible locations.”

As you know, the NSGP provides faith-based communities with the resources to harden their spaces against rising physical and cyber threats and allows vulnerable populations to be better prepared for emergencies. The NSGP saves lives and prevents tragedies. Unfortunately, a review of past requests found that less than half of funding applications are accepted and funded. In FY’23, while there was \$305 million available, more than \$600 million in applications were submitted. Now is the time to ensure all American faith communities at risk have the resources to protect themselves from harm.

In addition to the emergency funds, we ask that the supplemental include language to ensure that NSGP funds can be disbursed rapidly and with maximum flexibility to meet the urgent needs of our communities.

We are grateful that Congress has delivered record funding to protect America’s faith institutions. Sadly, the war raging now in the Middle East requires us to do more to keep our communities safe. A key way to ensure that is by including the Nonprofit Security Grant Program in the supplemental funding bill, so at-risk communities can be protected from the rising threat of hate.

Sincerely,

ADL (Anti-Defamation League)
Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America
Jewish Federations of North America
Agudath Israel of America
American Jewish Committee
Christians United for Israel Action Fund
Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America
Hillel International
JCC Association of North America
National Association of Evangelicals
National Council of Jewish Women
National Latino Evangelical Coalition
Rabbinical Assembly
Secure Community Network
Seventh-day Adventist Church – North America
Union for Reform Judaism (URJ)
United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism