

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0533

November 1, 2018

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan,
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-305 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Chairman Frelinghuysen, and Ranking Member Lowey:

On Saturday, we witnessed the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in United States history as a gunman took the lives of 11 individuals at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. This act of terror underscores the urgent need for Congress to implement solutions to combat anti-Semitism and domestic extremism. To begin to do so, I strongly urge you to ensure that at least \$60 million for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) is included in the final Fiscal Year 2019 Homeland Security bill.

The attack at the Tree of Life synagogue is part of a larger trend of rising anti-Semitism and hate crimes in the United States and only one of the multiple mass shootings at houses of worship in recent years. According to the Anti-Defamation League, in 2017, 1,986 anti-Semitic incidents were committed, representing a 57 percent increase over the previous year. Similarly troubling, the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism found that hate crimes increased by 12.5 percent in the ten largest cities in the United States in 2017 and by 10.8 percent in Los Angeles. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has warned that religious and cultural community centers and other soft targets with limited security are vulnerable to terrorist attacks.

The NSGP has been vital to ensuring that at-risk nonprofit institutions have the resources needed to make security improvements to protect their communities. California alone accounts for more than 16 percent of the eligible urban areas eligible for NSGP funds. Further, in my district in Los Angeles, there are more than 50 religious institutions and schools – common targets for hate crimes. That is why I questioned DHS about the reduction in funding to California-based NSGP applicants in Fiscal Year 2016 and why I was pleased that Congress increased funding for the NSGP the following year and DHS increased funding awarded to California applicants.

I strongly support the \$60 million level of funding for the NSGP included in the House Committee on Appropriations report for Homeland Security. I am, however, concerned that the level of funding recommended by Senate appropriators is only \$35 million. It is critical that Congress adopts a funding level of at least \$60 million.

The United States must reckon with why anti-Semitism and hate crimes are on the rise. I believe Congress has an especially important role to play to ensure that an incident like that in Pittsburgh never happens again. Further, as we continue the vital NSGP funding, Congress must act to find other ways, such as passing gun safety legislation, to combat domestic extremism.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ted W. Lieu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress