



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subcommittee Hearing Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Confronting the Rise in Anti-Semitic Domestic Terrorism, Part II

February 26, 2020

Today's hearing, the Subcommittee's second hearing on the issue of anti-Semitic domestic terrorism, presents one more opportunity for all Members of Congress to come together and condemn acts of domestic terrorism and targeted violence motivated by anti-Semitism.

This issue continues to be a top priority for this Committee. Since this Congress began, our oversight efforts have uncovered the dramatic and disturbing rise in acts of right-wing domestic terrorism, including anti-Semitic violence.

Sadly, recent acts of anti-Semitic violence in the New York and New Jersey areas have highlighted the urgent need to ensure the federal government is working with its state and local partners to combat anti-Semitic domestic terrorism. Some of these attacks targeted houses of worship and other religious institutions, a trend we have increasingly seen nationwide.

That is why I introduced H.R. 2476, the American Nonprofit Organizations Against Terrorism Act of 2019, which authorizes the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) for years to come. The program provides grants to nonprofits and faith-based organizations in both urban and rural areas to help secure their facilities against a potential terrorist attack. While I am pleased that the bill was signed into law on January 24, 2020, Congress must continue its work to make sure that all precautions are taken to protect communities targeted by hate and violence.

This includes reevaluating the Grant Program's funding levels and working with community groups and leaders to establish meaningful partnerships to tackle this issue.

On this issue, I would be remiss not to express my disappointment in the Trump Administration's continued efforts to make drastic cuts to DHS preparedness grant programs. In fact, the President's proposed FY 2021 budget requested nearly \$700 million in cuts to these important grant programs that are necessary to support state, local, tribal, and territorial governments in improving their homeland security posture.

However, I am also encouraged by the DHS's first-ever Strategic Framework for Combating Terrorism and Targeted Violence. Earlier this month, the Committee held a productive briefing to discuss this strategy. Two of the witnesses today, Assistant Secretary Neumann and Assistant Director Harrell, were among the briefers.

I look forward to speaking further with the Department representatives today to identify issue areas we can work together. Hearing specific goals and timelines from the Department today will be integral to ensuring that implementation of the Strategy is a priority.

Moreover, I look forward to hearing from Assistant Director Sanborn of the FBI, on how the FBI is working with DHS to combat domestic terrorism – especially anti-Semitic domestic terrorism. Additionally, Ms. Sanborn, it is my understanding that you are the first woman to hold the position of Assistant Director of the Counterterrorism Division at the FBI. I would like to extend my congratulations to you on this significant achievement.

It goes without saying that Congress must continue to advocate for policies that protect the Jewish community and all communities impacted by acts of domestic terror. I look forward to hearing testimony from the witnesses on how we can work together to curb domestic terrorism while respecting and protecting the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans.

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