

H.R. 1486, THE “SECURING AMERICAN NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AGAINST TERRORISM ACT OF 2017”

FACT SHEET

- Since the beginning of this year, there has been a disturbing uptick in threats made against Jewish centers and institutions. Thus far, 148 bomb threats have been made against Jewish Community Centers and Jewish Day Schools nationwide.¹ Following the fifth wave of bomb threats targeting the Jewish Community, the JCC Association of North America released a statement that urged the President and his cabinet, alongside the U.S. Congress, to take “concerted action” to ensure the safety of JCCs and schools.²
- This wave of threats has prompted all 100 U.S. Senators to sign on to a letter to DHS Secretary Kelly, Attorney General Sessions, and Director Comey urging swift action in response to the anonymous threats.³ The letter called on the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to provide crucial assistance to Jewish Community Centers and Day Schools to improve their security, deter threats, and investigate and prosecute those responsible.
- Secretary Kelly has called the escalating number of threats “unacceptable”⁴ and an “actual harassment directed at faith-based communities around the country.”⁵ In a statement, the DHS Secretary recognized the right to worship and commune within all faith-based communities as “fundamental” to being an American. Subsequently, he directed the Department of Homeland Security to enhance its outreach and support to increase public safety across all communities.
- Congressman Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, has urged the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to review the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NPGP)⁶ to assess the feasibility of making grants available to organizations outside of Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) jurisdictions. The recent wave of threats against the Jewish Community has hit areas both within and outside of UASI areas.

¹ “6th Wave of Bomb Threats Targeting the Jewish Community,” *Anti-Defamation League* (March 7, 2017), <https://www.adl.org/news/article/6th-wave-of-bomb-threats-targeting-the-jewish-community>.

² Press Release, “JCC Association of North America Outraged by New Rash of Bomb Threats,” JCC Association of North America (Feb. 27, 2017), <http://jcca.org/news-and-views/outraged-new-rash-bomb-threats/>.

³ Ted Barrett, “All 100 senators urge swift action to stop threats against Jewish facilities,” *CNN* (March 7, 2017), <http://www.cnn.com/2017/03/07/politics/100-senators-letter-jewish-facilities-threats/>.

⁴ Official Statement by Secretary Kelly, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2017/03/01/statement-secretary-kelly-dhs-support-jewish-community-centers-enhance-their> (March 1, 2017).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Letter from Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson to Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator W. Craig Fugate (Aug. 29, 2016), and Letter from Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson to Federal Emergency Management Agency Interim Administrator Robert Fenton (March 3, 2017).

- Moreover, in recent years, there have been a series of terrorist attacks against non-profit institutions outside of UASI areas; these attacks include the 2015 Charleston church shooting in which nine parishioners were killed⁷ and the 2012 shooting at a Sikh temple in Milwaukee, WI.⁸
- The “Securing American Non-Profit Organizations Against Terrorism Act of 2017,” seeks to authorize a grant program within the Department of Homeland Security that authorizes the awarding of grants to 501(c)(3) and tax-exempt organizations that are at risk of a terrorist attack.
- Under this legislation, organizations outside of UASI jurisdictions would not be left vulnerable and or resource-less in the fight against terrorism. This legislation, if enacted, will ensure that the Department of Homeland Security provides grant funding to assist targeted organizations such as JCCs (among others) with the cost of acquiring and installing security equipment and security training for key personnel to prevent/protect against attacks.

⁷ Jason Horowitz, Nick Corasaniti, and Ashley Southall, “Nine Killed in Shooting at Black Church in Charleston,” *The New York Times* (Jun. 17, 2015), https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/18/us/church-attacked-in-charleston-south-carolina.html?_r=0.

⁸ Steven Yaccino, Michael Schwirtz, and Marc Santora, “Gunman Kills 6 at a Sikh Temple Near Milwaukee,” *The New York Times* (Aug. 5, 2012), <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/06/us/shooting-reported-at-temple-in-wisconsin.html>.

THE “SECURING AMERICAN NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AGAINST TERRORISM ACT OF 2017”

As Introduced By the Honorable Bennie G. Thompson, (D-MS)
on March 9, 2017

Sec. 1. SHORT TITLE. The “Securing American Non-Profit Organizations Against Terrorism Act of 2017.”

Sec. 2. NON-PROFIT SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) *In General.* – Amends Subtitle A of Title XX of the Homeland Security Act, by adding a new section to establish a program within the Department of Homeland Security, entitled the “Non-Profit Security Grant Program.” Under the program, the Secretary of Homeland Security (the Secretary), through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator (the Administrator), is authorized to make grants to eligible non-profit organizations that are at risk of a terrorist attack.

This section requires that grant recipients must be 501(c)(3) and tax-exempt organizations, and determined to be at risk of a terrorist attack by the Secretary. An organization is not to be deemed ineligible solely because it is not located within an Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) jurisdiction.

This section authorizes the non-profit security grants to be used for the following purposes:

- the acquisition or installation of security equipment to prevent or protect against terrorist attacks;
- the funding of training related to the protection of critical infrastructure (both physical security and cybersecurity), target hardening, terrorism awareness, and employee awareness; and
- any other appropriate activities as determined by the Administrator.

Additionally, this section authorizes \$30,000,000 for fiscal years 2018-2022 to carry out this requirement. The Administrator is required to submit to the House Committee on Homeland Security and the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs a report containing information on the expenditure by each grant recipient, annually for each of fiscal years 2018-2022.

(b) *Conforming Amendment.* – Amends §2002(a) of the Homeland Security Act by striking “sections 2003 and 2004,” and inserting “sections 2003, 2004, and 2009.”

(c) *Clerical Amendment.* – Amends the table of contents of the Homeland Security Act to include the new section.