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Testimony of
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The Jewish Federations of North America
Before the
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S House of Representatives
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Good morning, Chairman Barletta, Ranking Member Johnson, and members of the committee. Thank you for inviting me to participate in today's hearing. It is an honor for me to be here.

My name is William Daroff. I am the Senior Vice President for Public Policy and Director of the Washington Office of The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA). JFNA represents 148 Jewish Federations and 300 Network communities. Collectively, we are among the top 10 charities on the continent. Our mission is to protect and enhance the well-being of Jews at home and abroad through social welfare, social services and education. Jewish Federations touch more Jewish lives than any other organization on the planet.

Historically, the Federation movement is a lifeline for Jewish communities in distress in North America and abroad. Over the last dozen years, this lifeline has expanded to include manmade hazards. Since September 11th, nonprofits, in general, and Jewish communal institutions, in particular, have been targeted by international terrorist organizations and home grown violent extremists from across the ideological spectrum. As a consequence, Jewish communal security, and that of the nonprofit sector more generally, has relevance to the National Preparedness System.

For our community, the genesis of FEMA's Nonprofit Security Grant Program came into being in reaction to nationwide FBI warnings in June 2002 that terrorists using fuel trucks might attempt to attack Jewish Schools or synagogues. Since this existential threat came into focus, we have experienced deadly attacks at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle in 2006, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC in 2009, and the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City in 2014.

In August 2016, the National Counterterrorism Center reported that homegrown violent extremists are increasingly favoring softer civilian targets, such as Jewish houses of worship, and will probably continue to focus on these soft targets (over law-enforcement personnel, military

members, and US Government-associated targets), because they are perceived to have lower levels of security, and because they are being encouraged directly by overseas violent extremists, such as ISIL.

In February, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that the number of hate groups in the United States rose in 2016, from 892 to 917, and that at least 550 of the groups are anti-Semitic. This uptick is particularly troubling, given that the FBI's hate crimes reporting already finds that the number of anti-Jewish bias incidents surpass all other categories of anti-religious hate crimes combined, annually, despite the Jewish community representing just 2% of the US population.

Unfortunately, the threats have escalated to unprecedented levels in recent months. Since January 1st, at least 116 Jewish communal institutions, including community centers, schools, places of worship, and others have received more than 160 bomb threats in 39 states. A growing number of Jewish cemeteries have been desecrated, and dozens upon dozens of incidents of anti-Semitic assaults, vandalism, and graffiti have been reported. Additional occurrences are being reported daily.

This brief threat overview provides a backdrop to our discussion of FEMA's Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). JFNA proposed the creation of a national security program at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2004, to bolster the physical security of at-risk nonprofit institutions deemed by DHS to be at-risk of attack from terrorist organizations and violent homegrown extremists. In response, Congress, with bi-partisan support, created the Nonprofit Security Grant Program in fiscal year 2005.

Administered by the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the NSGP program was designed to support the acquisition and installation of physical target hardening measures to protect against the threats identified as of most concern to at-risk nonprofit institutions. These include protection against explosive device, arson, active shooter, assassination/kidnapping, chemical/biological agents and cyber-attacks.

Prior to the establishment of the NSGP program, there was no committed, coordinated, uniform, centralized program that promoted and ensured that at-risk nonprofit institutions participated in and benefited from meaningful Federal, state and local homeland security efforts. The NSGP program changed this. As described in the Department of Homeland Security's grant guidance for FY 2016:

The intent of the FY 2016 NSGP is to competitively award grant funding to assist non-profit organizations in obtaining the resources required to support the National Preparedness Goal's associated Mission Areas and Core Capabilities. This funding is provided specifically to high-risk nonprofit organizations and the program seeks to integrate nonprofit preparedness activities with broader state and local preparedness efforts. It is also designed to promote coordination and

collaboration in emergency preparedness activities among public and private community representatives, as well as state and local agencies.

More specifically, with grant awards of up to \$75,000, the NSGP program supports the physical target hardening measures necessary to protect nonprofit facilities against threats and to mitigate the effects of an attack, including the installation of access controls, barriers, blast-proofing, monitoring and surveillance capability, and cyber security enhancements. These are similar in nature to the physical security enhancements acquired and installed at Federal government buildings in the post-9/11 environment, such as those protecting the Capitol, House and Senate office buildings, and the Capitol Visitor Center, today.

The program is competitive and risk-based. It involves, first, a state and local review and prioritization, followed by a Federal review of the state submissions and final determinations made by DHS. The program applies the same geographic limitations as FEMA's Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), which, as of FY 2016, included 29 urban areas located in 20 specified states and the District of Columbia (which also included parts of Northern Virginia). These limitations, imposed on DHS by Congress, are intended to restrict funding to urban areas representing up to 85 percent of the cumulative national terrorism risk, based on intelligence data compiled by the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis.

Since its inception, the program has maintained bi-partisan support in both the House and Senate, and is thought of as an efficient and effective means to accomplish a great deal of security enhancement and preparedness through modest resources.

The Nonprofit Security Grant Program has become an essential component of the preparedness grant programs at FEMA. With a continuing and growing record of threats, attempted attacks, and deadly occurrences targeting Jewish communal institutions, as well to other vulnerable populations within the nonprofit sector, we believe there is ample justification for Congress to maintain the Nonprofit Security Grant Program as a singular, stand-alone initiative as a matter of national security, and should consider ways to strengthen the program, not dismantle it.

Conversely, we strongly believe that any effort to replace the NSGP program as part of a consolidation of the larger preparedness grant programs would disenfranchise at-risk nonprofit stakeholders, who could not be expected to meaningfully participate in or effectively compete with larger, more formidable and connected stakeholders for resources in an integrated competitive process. Such a move would dilute the connectivity and continuity between the local stakeholders and the State Administrative Agencies, as well between national stakeholders, such as JFNA, and FEMA.

Rather, in addition to maintaining the integrity of the NSGP program in its current form, we know that the threats to our communal institutions have expanded geographically to smaller and more diffuse communities outside of the UASI areas. As such we believe there is need for Congress to take immediate action to further strengthen the integration of nonprofit preparedness

within state and local preparedness activities, such as within the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (LETPP).

LETPP is funded through a required set aside of 25 percent of the funds appropriated to the states through the State Homeland Security and UASI programs. Among the permissible activities under the program is the increase of physical security of at-risk nonprofit organizations. Yet, to our knowledge, there has never been an LETPP investment in the physical security of an at-risk nonprofit institution. We would ask the Subcommittee to explore this and other opportunities to build nonprofit security capabilities through the National Preparedness System.

At a time of heightened security concerns within the Jewish community, and for the nonprofit sector more generally, I thank you for this opportunity to testify today on the importance of the Nonprofit Security Grant Program as a stand-alone initiative, and the imperative to further integrate nonprofit preparedness within state and local preparedness activities. The Jewish Federations of North America looks forward to working with you to ensure a strong National Preparedness System for the 21st century, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.