



June 12, 2025

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

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
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 Speaker Johnson, Leader Thune, Leader Schumer, Leader Jeffries, Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As a Catholic bishop, I believe that all people should be able to gather for worship or other religious activities without fear. For this reason, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has long joined with other faith communities to support the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). Since 2005, the NSGP has provided grants to nonprofits and houses of worship to enhance security through improvements to infrastructure, funding for emergency planning and training, upgrading security systems, and some renovation projects. These grants enable vulnerable communities to gather for worship, prayer, and service without fear of being attacked.

The most recent FBI hate crime reports have shown that religious-based incidents have steadily increased in recent years. The Jewish community is especially vulnerable. Over half of the incidents reported by the FBI are anti-Jewish, and stories of antisemitic violence regularly appear in news headlines. And in this time of intense polarization and political extremism, any community could become a target.

I believe that protecting the ability of all Americans to live out their faith is one of the most important duties of the federal government. In her Declaration on Religious Liberty, *Dignitatis humanae*, the Church teaches: “The protection and promotion of the inviolable rights of man ranks among the essential duties of government. Therefore government is to assume the



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safeguard of the religious freedom of all its citizens, in an effective manner, by just laws and by other appropriate means.”

These security grants benefit people of all faiths. The \$454.5 million from FY2024 appropriations, which includes \$180 million from the National Security Supplemental Act for FY2024, has proven to be inadequate, funding fewer than half of the applicants to the program. Therefore, I urge you to increase the level to at least \$500 million for FY2026.

Thank you for your consideration. I stand ready to work with you to safeguard every American's First Amendment right to freedom of religion.

Sincerely,

+ Kevin C. Rhoades

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend
Chairman, Committee for Religious Liberty