

Congressman Thomas R. Suozzi

Prepared Remarks:

House Appropriation Homeland Security Subcommittee Member Day

Wednesday, February 26, 2020

Thank you to Chairwoman Roybal Allard, Ranking Member Fleischman, and other members of the Committee. I am here today joining a bipartisan effort to ask you to increase funding for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) for fiscal year 2021. This important program provides funding for nonprofit organizations around the country which are at high risk of a terrorist attack.

Today this program is particularly critical so that we can help protect our houses of Worship. Across America we are facing record levels of hate and intolerance. While overall crime continues to decline, hate crimes continue to rise. In my home state of New York, we have recently witnessed horrific and hateful attacks, particular against the Jewish Community. In Monsey, an intruder stabbed five people as they were gathering to light candles for Hanukkah.

In my own hometown of Glen Cove, Anti-Semitic graffiti was found sprayed not once, but twice at the Holocaust Memorial & Tolerance Center of Nassau County. Why is this happening? Divisive rhetoric at the national level, the misuse of social media, and ignorance are major contributors.

In addition, I believe that our foreign adversaries are using social media to foment hate and civil unrest across our nation. I recently sent a bipartisan letter with my New York colleagues to the head of the CIA, the FBI, Homeland Security and the Department of Justice calling for an investigation of the misuse of social media by our foreign adversaries to insight anti-Semitism and civil unrest. We need to do everything we can do protect our local communities and show perpetrators of hate that an attack against one community is an attack against us all.

Last month, we commemorated the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp Auschwitz and the murder of about 6 million Jews and millions of others as part of the most brutal genocide in history. Here in the House, we recently passed the *Never Again Education Act*, which gives teachers across the United States the resources necessary to teach our children the invaluable lessons of the Holocaust and the horrific consequences of intolerance.

Educating our future generations and combating nefarious use of social media by our foreign adversaries will help in the long term. We must provide immediate protection for our faith-based communities by continuing to support local efforts to enforce our laws and efforts to increase federal funding for law enforcement and security at our synagogues, churches, mosques and other Houses of worship. That is why I am here today, to respectfully ask this committee to increase funding for the UASI NSGP.

Sadly, this program is needed and more important than ever. As a nation, diversity has always been our strength. We must embrace our diversity and come together to make our communities safe for those who live, look, love, or worship differently. Thank you very much.