

Representative Tom Malinowski

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Thank you Chairman Yarmuth and Ranking Member Womack. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in front of the House Budget Committee.

I'm here today on behalf of the 7th Congressional District of New Jersey to advocate for a fiscal year 2020 budget that invests in transportation and infrastructure, in particular public transportation.

America's infrastructure, once the envy of the world, is losing its battle against time, growth, weather, and wear. It is suffering from decades of underinvestment. No state suffers more from a lack of attention to infrastructure than New Jersey where twice as many people use public transportation than the national average. To get to and from New York, 200,000 of us a day still depend on just two rail tracks across the Portal Bridge and through the Hudson River Tunnel, two structures that were a marvel when they were built, in 1910, but crumbling today.

If we fail to repair this vital transportation corridor in time, we will be dealing a crippling blow to the economy of our region and country. According to the New Jersey, New York and Connecticut Regional Plan Association, even a partial shutdown of the tunnels would disrupt not just passenger rail, but car and truck traffic up and down the east coast, making commutes virtually impossible for tens of thousands of people, diminishing property values, and driving away businesses in one of the most economically vital areas of our country.

I ask that the Budget Committee fund significant investments in our nation's transportation infrastructure, including the Gateway Project.

I ask for full funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Flood-Risk Management Program. For years homeowners near the Rahway River Basin and Green Brook Sub Basin in my district have lived under the constant threat of flooding that devastates businesses and homes whenever there are heavy rains. The last major flood was in 2011 when Hurricane Irene ravaged the east coast. The town of Cranford was the worst hit with 1,600 homes sustaining damage. Funding would enable urgently needed flood control work to be done in these areas and others in similar situations.

In January, our mayors presented a proposed solution to the Army Corps of Engineers and are now pushing for a feasibility study to be completed. This will get us one step closer to authorizing construction on the Rahway River Basin, so that we never again have to pull people out of second story windows in the communities I represent because of flooding that can be predicted and should be prevented.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we are having a profound debate in this body about the words we speak and the example we set when it comes to bigotry and intolerance. But it's not just what we say as leaders that matters; it's also what we do as legislators.

Anti-Semitic incidents surged by 57 percent in 2017, and overall hate crimes rose by 17 percent. In my district, white nationalist and anti-Semitic propaganda has appeared from community bulletin boards to graffiti in public schools. People whose minds have been poisoned by this extremism have threatened and committed brazen acts of terror, including the deadliest attack on Jewish Americans in our country's history.

Mr. Chairman, we have invested enormous resources to prevent foreign terrorists from conducting attacks on our soil, and we've been remarkably successful. We have devoted vastly fewer resources to preventing attacks by domestic extremists, even though they have claimed roughly as many lives as groups like al Qaeda and ISIS within the United States since [9/11](#). The Trump administration has actually cut funds for countering violent extremism at the Department of Homeland Security.

Let's make sure that our budgets for the Justice Department, including the FBI, and DHS, are adequate to meeting the threat our citizens face from both foreign and domestic extremist groups, and that there is an expectation of greater parity when it comes to which are prioritized. I look forward to working with you to shape our response to this and all the challenges I mentioned.