

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 14, 2026

Dear Majority Leader Thune and Minority Leader Schumer:

As Senators committed to safeguarding Americans' fundamental freedom to worship without fear, we write to express deep concern about the rising tide of violence, intimidation, and vandalism targeting faith-based institutions across our country. As we begin the new year, threats to churches, synagogues, mosques, gurdwaras, temples, and schools have not abated. That is why we believe Congress must act swiftly to protect houses of worship, faith-based schools, and the communities they serve.

Multiple incidents last year and even within the first few weeks of 2026, underscore the urgency of this moment. On January 10, 2026, the historic Jackson, Mississippi Beth Israel synagogue was burned to the ground by a suspect who confessed to starting the fire because of its "Jewish ties." On September 28, 2025, an assailant attacked a meetinghouse of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Grand Blanc, Michigan, resulting in several deaths and injuries; federal and local authorities continue to investigate the shooting and subsequent fire. On September 19, 2025, a fire at the Chabad of Charlotte County in Punta Gorda, Florida—days before Rosh Hashanah—was extinguished and is being investigated as arson and a hate crime. And on August 27, 2025, a mass shooting during a school-wide Mass at Annunciation Catholic Church in Minneapolis killed two children and wounded dozens, with authorities subsequently revising casualty counts upward as victims were identified and treated. These are only a few examples among many, but they make plain that our faith-based communities remain vulnerable.

Therefore, we urge you to prioritize a bipartisan package that does the following:

1) Strengthen security assistance for houses of worship, religious nonprofits, and faith-based community institutions.

- Robustly fund and, as appropriate, plus-up the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) to meet demonstrated need and ensure rapid obligation of funds and continuity of active grants despite the recent lapse.
- Clarify and streamline eligible uses to include contracted security, hardening measures, emergency communications, cameras, and doors/windows upgrades—particularly for small congregations with limited administrative and financial capacity.
- Direct DHS/FEMA to publish an accelerated application timeline and provide no-cost technical assistance so that at-risk institutions can immediately apply for security support.

- 2) Bolster prevention, threat-sharing, and training.
 - Direct DHS, DOJ, and FBI to expand information-sharing with faith-community security partners, including timely dissemination of threat bulletins and suspicious-activity reporting channels.
 - Fund scalable training for clergy, lay leaders, school administrators, and volunteers on situational awareness, and emergency action planning.
- 3) Pass the Pray Safe Act of 2025 ([H.R.5645/S.2947](#)), which would create a federal database and clearinghouse for security best practices, training materials, and grant opportunities for religious nonprofits. This legislation, introduced with bipartisan support, has the backing of a broad, diverse array of major religious community organizations.
- 4) Increase resources to prosecute violent and property crimes targeting faith communities; enhance coordination with state and local partners; and support efforts to improve data to ensure incidents are reported consistently and rapidly to enable targeted prevention and response.

This package of priorities reflects our shared obligation—rooted in the First Amendment and our national character—to ensure that Americans can pray, learn, celebrate, and mourn in safety. We also recognize that the federal government cannot substitute for local leadership, nor for the resilience and vigilance of faith communities themselves. But Congress can and should ensure that federal resources are timely, accessible, and proportional to risk, and that our national security enterprise treats attacks on houses of worship with the seriousness they warrant. Our staffs are prepared to work with yours immediately to translate the items above into text that can move quickly, and to ensure that any long-lead authorizations are paired with near-term funding and implementation directives.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.



JAMES LANKFORD
United States Senator



JACKY ROSEN
United States Senator