

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 21, 2019

The Honorable Kevin McAleenan
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street, SW, Mail Stop 0150
Washington, DC 20528-0150

Dear Acting Secretary McAleenan:

We write to express concern over the rise in domestic non-Foreign Terrorist Organization inspired terrorism over the past few years—as noted in the Trump Administration’s Counterterrorism Strategy and countless non-governmental reports—and request information about what steps the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is taking to prevent and mitigate this threat to ensure public safety.¹

DHS is on the front lines of addressing and protecting the Homeland from foreign and domestic threats. As stated in the Administration’s National Strategy for Counterterrorism, our country “has long faced a persistent security threat from domestic terrorists” who are “motivated by . . . forms of violent extremism, such as racially motivated extremism, animal rights extremism, environmental extremism, sovereign citizen extremism, and militia extremism.”² Domestic terrorism threats in the United States are on the rise.³

While the Administration has prioritized domestic terrorism in its strategy, it is also important for DHS, tasked with combating terrorism in the Homeland, to outline its own goals and methods for protecting Americans from all threats. It is unclear what analysis, training, programs, outreach, grants, or strategies DHS continues to utilize in 2019 that specifically target the rise of domestic terrorism.⁴

¹ See THE WHITE HOUSE, NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR COUNTERTERRORISM (Oct. 2018), available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NSCT.pdf> [hereinafter NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR COUNTERTERRORISM]; Seth G. Jones, *The Rise of Far-Right Extremism in the United States*, CTR. FOR STRATEGIC & INT’L STUDIES (Nov. 2018), available at https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/181119_RightWingTerrorism_layout_FINAL.pdf?MyC9DjLLRftoeUKvq6qxFPsCPFoTkBpH; PETER BERGEN ET AL, TERRORISM IN AMERICA AFTER 9/11: PART IV. WHAT IS THE THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES TODAY?, NEW AMERICA, available at <https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/terrorism-in-america/what-threat-united-states-today/>; Wesley Lowery, Kimberly Kindy, and Andrew Ba Tran, *In the United States, Right-Wing Violence Is on the Rise*, Wash. Post (Nov. 25, 2018), available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/in-the-united-states-right-wing-violence-is-on-the-rise/2018/11/25/61f7f24a-deb4-11e8-85df-7a6b4d25cfbb_story.html?utm_term=.6ce9f1e50d5b.

² NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY, *supra* note 1, at p. 10.

³ *Id.*

⁴ See Frontline, *How DHS Says It’s Responding to Domestic Terrorism*, PBS (Nov. 20, 2018), available at <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/how-dhs-says-its-responding-to-domestic-terrorism/>.

DHS announced on April 19, 2019, that it was establishing an Office for Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention.⁵ In the release announcing this new office, you state, “DHS remains committed to preventing all forms of terrorism, including both international and domestic, as well as preventing acts of targeted violence such as racially motivated violence. This new office supports the direction the President outlined in the National Strategy for Counterterrorism and will enable DHS to more effectively coordinate our resources and capabilities to better serve the needs of states and local communities.”⁶ While the creation of this new policy Office for Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention is a welcome change, we want to ensure that this reorganization is not in name only; rather, it’s imperative that it have adequate staff, funds, and leadership to effectuate its goals.⁷

Public safety is paramount and understanding, preventing, and building resilience to the threat of domestic terrorism is critical to ensure that we keep our nation secure from all threats. With that in mind, please provide answers to the following questions:

1. Does DHS have a 2019 strategy specifically addressing the rise in domestic terrorism (i.e. non-Foreign Terrorist Organization) threats?
 - a. If so, please provide a copy of this strategy.
2. What percentage of the Department’s budget is specifically dedicated to address domestic terrorism? Please provide a breakdown of funding allocated to domestic terrorism in 2019 and for the past 10 years.
3. Are there intelligence analysts at DHS headquarters tasked with the primary responsibility of covering domestic terrorism? If so, how many? Please also provide this number for the previous 10 years.
4. How many policy and program staff do you have Department-wide looking exclusively at domestic terrorism as of May 2019? Please provide an office breakdown. Please also provide this number for the previous 10 years.
5. Has DHS funded any grants for FY20 that would prevent or combat domestic terrorism?
 - a. If so, how many, who are the recipients, and how are funds being used to achieve the goals of combating domestic terrorism?
6. What resources will be dedicated to preventing domestic terrorism under the new Office for Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention, how many staff will cover domestic terrorism in this office, and who will lead the new office?

⁵ See Press Release, Department of Homeland Security, Acting Secretary McAleenan Announces Establishment of DHS Office for Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (Apr. 19, 2019), available at <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2019/04/19/acting-secretary-mcaleenan-announces-establishment-dhs-office-targeted-violence-and>.

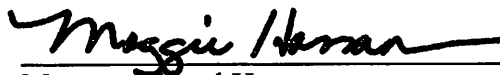
⁶ See *id.*

⁷ See Laura Strickler and Julia Ainsley, *DHS Won’t Answer Questions About Staff, Funding for Office to Fight Domestic Terror*, NBC NEWS (Apr. 29, 2019), available at <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/dhs-won-t-answer-questions-about-staff-funding-office-fight-n997821>.

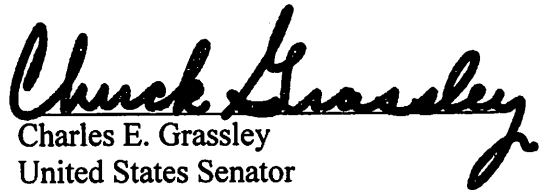
7. How will DHS, through the Office for Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention, empower state and local communities while still assessing the issues on a federal level?
8. Since the start of 2019, what training has DHS provided to law enforcement officers on domestic terrorism?
 - a. If so, what does this training entail?
 - b. How many law enforcement officers enrolled and completed this training in 2019?
9. Given the Department's role in training state and local law enforcement nationwide, and the frequent overlap between incidents of domestic terrorism and hate crimes, how is DHS supporting interagency efforts to increase hate crime reporting?

Thank you for your prompt attention to these matters. We look forward to your answers and the documents requested by June 3, 2019. Should you have questions about this request, please call Harlan Geer for Senator Hassan at 202-224-1497 or Rachel Wright for Senator Grassley at 202-228-0927.

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator