



May 20, 2019

His Excellency Governor Charlie Baker  
Massachusetts State House  
Office of the Governor  
24 Beacon Street, Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker:

While celebrating the end of Passover, the celebration of the Jewish people's liberation, we were confronted yet again with the horror of another murderous attack on a Jewish synagogue in Poway, California, six months to the day of the massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. The sanctity of our houses of worship has been pierced by the horror of antisemitism and our sense of security is in peril.

While we are grateful to our partners in government for denouncing violence, hatred, and antisemitism and offering comfort and offering healing in our time of need, our communities require more. Across the country, threats and acts of violence have escalated against synagogues, black churches, mosques, cultural centers and other religious institutions. Seemingly every week, we join with clergy and leaders from every walk of life, decrying the bloodshed and pleading for sanity, and a restoration to calm. But antisemitism is on the rise, even here. A recent ADL audit found that "people across Massachusetts continue to experience antisemitism at historically high rates" as we record the fourth highest number of incidents (following California, New York and New Jersey), highlighting the awareness that this tide of hatred toward Jews isn't dissipating anytime soon.

Several states reacted swiftly, by partnering with at-risk institutions to develop security enhancements and protocols, including: **The State of New York offered \$10 million** in grants to vulnerable non-public schools and cultural centers, including religious-based institutions; **New Jersey released \$11.3 million** in funds; **Maryland released \$5 million**; and recently the Governor of **California announced \$15 million** in grants. Massachusetts, however only has a pilot program of \$150,000, with no funds yet allocated for the next year. We need to do better.

We respectfully ask our leadership in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to step-up and fulfill its basic obligation by **fully funding the non-profit security grant program** to provide these critical resources to ensure that our communities and our congregations are safe and secure. As faith communities meet our responsibility to welcome and embrace all who enter our doors, we need our government to realize its responsibility to offer the protection to make "freedom of religion" a reality in the Commonwealth. Massachusetts basks in its well-deserved reputation as a shining beacon, a model across the nation of freedom, equality and justice. In this moment of crisis for our community, we are called once again to lead and not follow.

Sincerely,

*Jeremy Burton, Executive Director, Jewish Community Relations Council, Boston*  
*Rabbi Marc Baker, President & CEO, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Boston*  
*Dara Kaufman, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, Pittsfield*  
*Judy Usow, President & Board Chair, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, Pittsfield*  
*Steven Schimmel, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of Central MA, Worcester*  
*Amir Cohen, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford, New Bedford*  
*Laurie Tishler Mindlin, Executive Director, Merrimack Valley Jewish Federation, Andover*  
*Stewart Bromberg, CEO, Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts, Springfield*  
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*Rabbi Allison Berry, Temple Shalom, Newton*  
*Rabbi Laura Abrasley, Temple Shalom, Newton*  
*Rabbi Eric Gurvis, Temple Shalom, Newton*  
*Rabbi Shoshana Friedman, Temple Sinai, Brookline*  
*Rabbi Andrew Vogel, Temple Sinai, Brookline*  
*Nora Abrahamer, President, Temple Sinai,*  
*Rabbi Audrey Marcus Berkman, Temple Ohabei Shalom, Brookline*  
*Shari Churwin, Education Director, Temple Ohabei Shalom, Brookline*  
*Rabbi Barbara Penzner, Temple Hillel B'nai Torah, West Roxbury*  
*Rabbi Benjamin Samuels, Congregation Shaarei Tefillah, Newton*  
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*Rabbi Elaine Zecher, Senior Rabbi, Temple Israel, Boston*  
*Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman, Senior Scholar, Temple Israel, Boston*  
*Rabbi Matthew Soffer, Senior Associate Rabbi, Temple Israel Boston*  
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*Susan Altman, Executive Director, Temple Shir Tikva, Wayland*  
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*Rabbi David J. Meyer, Temple Emanu-El, Marblehead*  
*Rabbi David Lerner, Temple Emunah, Lexington*  
*Shelley Rossman, Director, Pre-School of Temple Emunah, Lexington*  
*Rabbi David Weiner, Knesset Israel, Pittsfield*  
*Rabbi Eliana Jacobowitz, Temple B'nai Brith, Somerville*  
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*Laura Blumberg, President, Congregation Or Atid, Wayland*  
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Secretary Daniel Bennett, Executive Office of Public Safety & Security  
Senator Michael Rodrigues, Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means.