



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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May 7, 2021

The Honorable Chris Murphy
Chair
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Chair
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Capito, Chairwoman Roybal-Allard, and Ranking Member Fleischmann,

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is part of an interfaith coalition that [has called](#) for an increase in appropriations to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) from \$180 million to \$360 million. We write to once again request an appropriation of \$360 million for this program for Fiscal Year 2022 and to emphasize how the experience of the Catholic community over the past year speaks to the importance of this program.

Since May of 2020, there have been [at least 67 attacks or incidents of vandalism](#) at Catholic sites across the country. The incidents vary widely in nature and severity, and their motivation is often unclear. This week, a man was [charged with arson](#) in the July 2020 blaze that destroyed a 249-year-old mission church in California. Other incidents have involved anti-religious graffiti. Many of them involve damage to statues of the Holy Family or the saints. Some have posed threats not only to property but also to life – for example, a convent in Missouri was apparently [targeted by gunfire](#) three separate times during this past Lent.

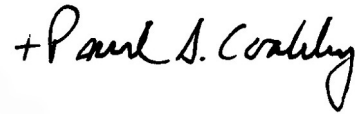
While this pales in comparison to the tragic losses of life that our brethren of other faiths have suffered in recent years, it is nonetheless disturbing. As described by Catholic bishops in the USCCB's [Beauty Heals videos](#), the defaced and decapitated statues are more than humble artwork. They communicate the virtue and sacrifice of our faith's most revered figures, inspiring our faithful to lead holier lives. It is difficult not to regard the destruction of these statues as an attack on our faith.

We are grateful to Congress for establishing the NSGP, and we hope that robust additional investments in the program can continue to represent a bipartisan commitment to the protection of our religious communities against hate and extremism.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature in blue ink: + Tim. Card. Dolan

His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York
Chair, Committee for Religious Liberty

Handwritten signature in black ink: + Paul S. Coakley

Most Reverend Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Chair, Committee on Domestic Justice and
Human Development