

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION
FOREIGN RELATIONS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SMALL BUSINESS AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

June 13, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

This weekend, the state of Florida suffered the worst terrorist attack on American soil since September 11, 2001. The terrorist, apparently inspired by a hateful Islamic extremist ideology, took dozens of lives, shattered countless hearts, and inflicted untold damage on our community. He did not, however, change who we are as Americans or who we are as Floridians. We will not be terrorized.

Florida has already begun healing. In a testament to the spirit of our state, individual Floridians lined up for hours to donate blood and water for the victims. Houses of worship filled with prayer, and calls to action.

Government, of course, also has a role. The state and local authorities are on the front lines of responding to this attack. Such a mass casualty event, of course, takes a toll on those resources. It is therefore appropriate for the federal government to play a part as a partner in these responses. The terrorist, inspired by his deranged ideology, specifically targeted Orlando and the gay community in his assault, but his attack was not just an attack on one nightclub in one city, or solely on the LGBT community, it was an attack on all Americans.

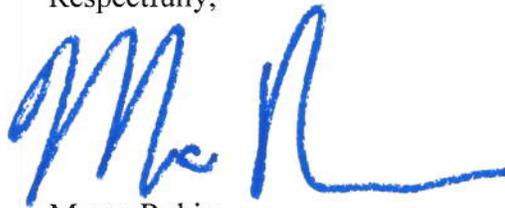
I am encouraged by the work already being done by federal law enforcement, including the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Department of Justice. It is critical to investigate what led to this attack, determine whether anyone else may have been involved with this attack, and to learn lessons that can thwart future attacks. I urge you to intensify our country's efforts to root out and destroy the extremist organizations and eliminate their safe havens overseas from which they continue to inspire these attacks. This cannot become a new normal that the American people are forced to accept because our leaders are unwilling to do what it takes abroad to keep Americans safe here at home.

Response to the immediate public safety needs is, of course, also important. The Governor of Florida has asked for an emergency declaration in connection with the attack under the Stafford Act. I urge your Administration to give this request serious consideration and to award all lawful support commensurate with an attack of this scale.

As we respond to this assault on our homeland, its direct and indirect victims must remain at the front of our minds. All levels of government, as well as civic and religious organizations, must serve those who have lost so much. I encourage the federal government to play its part in this response and suggest you expedite grants under the Anti-Terrorism and Emergency Assistance Program and any other appropriate authority.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and stand ready to work with you to ensure a vigorous and timely federal response to this atrocious attack on America.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MR', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marco Rubio
United States Senator