

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 15, 2016

The Honorable Jeh C. Johnson
Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Johnson:

We write you today as our state grieves the loss of 49 victims in a horrendous, premeditated and coordinated terrorist attack in the heart of Orlando. Many questions still remain about this specific tragedy and investigations are ongoing. As federal, state and local agencies analyze source data, determine motivation and the effectiveness of response to better understand the chain of events that led to the carnage on June 12, we also must look forward and do what we can to prevent future attacks.

Specifically, as Florida's Senators, we share concerns that federal security and anti-terrorism resources have not adequately focused on Central Florida. Orlando, and its surrounding communities, welcome more daily visitors than any other area in the United States, over 66 million annually. Its theme parks are known around the world and many of them are synonymous with the American way of life. At a time when terrorists have increasingly shifted their strategy to "soft targets" susceptible to mass casualty events, Federal, state and local authorities must maintain a heightened level of vigilance and dedicate adequate resources to protect the people of the Orlando area and the many visitors they so graciously welcome.

We are also aware that, even before the recent tragedy, the Central Florida area has been affected by multiple terrorist plots. Both the Boston bombing terrorists and the 9/11 perpetrators had ties to Central Florida. The area has also received multiple bomb threats to a variety of locations.

One federal program, the Urban Area Security Initiative, provides important support to help certain high-threat urban areas to prevent, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks. For the last several years, Orlando has not qualified for funding under this initiative, despite its obvious global-profile and vulnerability. In light of the recent tragedy, previous history with terrorist investigations, and emerging terrorist threats, we respectfully suggest you reevaluate the Relative Risk Score and Threat Level your Department applies to the Orlando area under this program with heavily weighted consideration of the Joint Terrorism Task Force input.

Thank you for your consideration,



Senator Marco Rubio



Senator Bill Nelson