

## Views of Congress: DHS Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Grants

### **Appropriators**

- March 7, 2016, SAC and HAC briefing
  - FEMA Deputy Administrator Manning and OCP Director Selim briefed SAC and HAC staff on DHS's plan for the \$50 million funding appropriated in the FY 2016 Omnibus. Both SAC and HAC stated that they have been hearing from some of their members that they would like the \$10 million and \$39 million funding to be flipped (i.e. have the \$39 million be for CVE initiatives and the \$10 million for complex, coordinated terrorist attacks (CCTA)). At the briefing, the following inquiries/statements were made:
  - SAC Majority
    - Whether the CVE \$10 million grant funding could be spent prior to the CCTA \$39 million grant money is spent– so that “lessons learned” from the \$10 million grant funding can be used in determining how to best allocate the \$39 million funding.
    - They intended the CCTA \$39 million funding to be used to bring non-traditional partners to the table.
  - SAC Minority
    - Whether the CCTA \$39 million grant funding could be used to create a CVE Center of Excellence.
  - HAC Majority
    - Whether the \$39 million CCTA funding could be opened up to CVE activities.
    - They intended the CCTA \$39 million funding to be appropriated for non-traditional partners.

### **Senate**

- HSGAC mark up (2.10.16) – 3 CVE-related bills passed unanimously out of mark up.
  - S. 2522 (Carper) – OCP Authorization bill
  - S. 2418 (Booker/Johnson) – CVE Labs bill: leverages existing DHS resources to establish “CVE labs” at academic institutions across the country, where the students will develop and test new solutions to combat extremist propaganda through social media campaigns.
  - S. 2517 (Booker/Johnson) – Combat Terrorist Use of Social Media Act: requires the President to transmit to Congress a report on the U.S. strategy to combat terrorist and terrorist organization's use of social media.
- SAC Budget Hearing (2.24.16)
  - *Chairman Hoeven (R-ND)*: Stated that the threat the U.S. faces from violent extremists is grave and that the American people believe that terrorism is the number one problem facing the U.S.
  - *Ranking Member Shaheen (D-NH)*: “I am very pleased to see the Department's efforts on countering violent extremism. I had the opportunity to watch the University of New Hampshire's Peer2Peer program presentation. It really showed us what young people can do in helping us as we are trying to address this challenge.”
    - Also inquired about how DHS works with the State Department in regard to CVE.
    - Asked why additional CVE funding was requested in FY 2017 if the money has not yet been spent in FY 2016.
- HSGAC Budget Hearing (3.8.16)

- *Chairman Johnson (R-WI)*: Emphasized his views on the importance of DHS's CVE efforts and how critical it is to engage local communities in a positive way.
- *Ranking Member Carper (D-DE)*: Emphasized his views on the importance of DHS's CVE efforts.
- *Senator Booker (D-NJ)*: Reiterated that he would like more funding to be allotted to DHS's CVE initiatives to engage local communities and less funding be allotted for CCTA initiatives.
  - "My concern with this language is that the majority of this money would be spend preparing for a law enforcement response, while CVE is intended to create partnerships for community groups to do work to prevent radicalization before law enforcement gets involved. It seems almost as if this funding is not targeted towards the idea of CVE in the first place ... How can we ensure that we are really bolstering some of the [CVE] efforts that we are already seeing signs that they can be fruitful as opposed to the law enforcement response – that ignores community organizations, universities, educators, tech folk, etc."
- Senator Corey Booker – Dear Colleague Letter to SAC
  - Circulated a letter to SAC arguing that the \$39 million should be focused on providing support for activities by all those opposed to extremism, including community organizations and educational institutions, instead of being used for CCTA.
  - Current cosigners: Senators Schumer, Klobuchar, and Kaine

## House

- 3/23/16 CHS Markup
  - Ch. McCaul introduced "Combat Terrorist Recruitment Act of 2016," scheduled to be marked up on 3.23.16
  - DHS provided technical assistance for the legislation
- Ranking Member Thompson 3.17.16 letter to Chairman McCaul
  - Requesting a hearing for OCP to testify prior to marking up any further CVE-related legislation – specifically, McCaul's "Combatting Terrorist Recruitment Act of 2016."
- HAC Budget Hearing (2.24.16)
  - *Representative Fleischmann (R-TN)*: Asked for more details on DHS's overall strategy for CVE, how DHS plans to use the \$50 million provided in FY 2016 and the \$49 million proposed in FY 2017, and what goals and metrics will DHS use to determine the effectiveness of these programs.
- CHS Budget Hearing (3.16.16)
  - *Chairman McCaul (R-TX)*: "I am pleased that DHS is ramping up efforts to combat domestic radicalization. Your Department takes the issue seriously and has shown some much needed leadership. Overall, I am disappointed the administration is not doing more. Once again, the President is asking Congress to give him billions more for countering climate change than for countering violent extremism."
  - *Ranking Member Thompson (D-MS)*: "I know the Department has long recognized the threat from violent extremists and in 2015 established the Office of Community Partnerships. In its budget, the Department requests \$49 million for countering violent extremism grants for emergent threats from violent extremism and complex coordinated attacks. To date, the Department has provided Congress with little information on how these grants will be distributed. I hope that contained with forthcoming grant guidance

are instructions for some of the funding to be directed at the prevention of right-wing extremist attacks.”

- *Representative Torres (D-CA)*: Asked whether \$10 million is enough money to ensure that these grants are available for all communities across the U.S. And, if not, asked how she can get her community to the front of the line. Expressed her views on the need for more CVE grant funding.
- *Representative Sanchez (D-CA)*: Asked for details on what the grant programs will be like, how OCP will administer the \$10 million CVE grants, and a timeline of when the grant applications will be available – reiterating, that it is only \$10 million and hopes it will be administered efficiently.
- *Representative Keating (D-MA)*: Reiterated that OCP and CVE are very important and asked for an update on DHS CVE initiatives.
- *Representative Walker (R-NC)*: Asked how the \$49 million in CVE funding would impact and help communities prepare for violent extremist attacks.

**See Attached:**

- Chairman McCaul’s, “Combatting Terrorist Recruitment Act of 2016.”
- DHS’s Technical Assistance for Chairman’s McCaul’s, “Combatting Terrorist Recruitment Act of 2016.”
- Ranking Member Thompson’s letter to Chairman McCaul regarding the March 23, 2016, mark up of the, “Combatting Terrorist Recruitment Act of 2016.”
- Senator Booker’s letter to Senate Appropriators regarding CVE grant funding.