

Keeping Statewide Elected Officials Safe: Protecting Loved Ones and Hardening Home Security

The security of statewide elected leaders is essential to maintaining peace, order, and trust in American democracy. This document addresses suggestions for protecting such officials' loved ones and hardening their home security. Other documents in the series include: Reviewing Security Resources and Deploying the Security Team, Office and Staff Security Considerations, Protecting Personal Identifiable Information, Securing Online Activity, and Preparing for Events. Note that elected officials' staff are increasingly the targets of political violence, so some of the below may also prove helpful for them.

Decide whether and which of the official's loved ones will receive security, at what level, and under what circumstances.

This may vary based on context (e.g., if threats are received). Discuss and determine in advance what changed circumstances may necessitate and prompt increased protection for loved ones.

Establish protocols for information sharing between the official's loved ones and the security professionals.

Ensure that the official's loved ones and security professionals know each other, and that they know what to share, when, and how to share it with each other. An official's loved ones can be an important source of security information (e.g., they may receive a threat against the official or see a suspicious car parked outside the home). Likewise, security professionals may have information that affects the official's loved ones (e.g., a threat against the home or an event that loved ones will attend).

Determine a notification system for threats.

The official and their chief deputy should be made aware immediately of any potential threats to the official, their staff, or loved ones, regardless of the perceived seriousness of the threat. Agree upon the communications platform to be used for this communication (e.g., text, calls, Slack, etc.).

Assess and strengthen as needed the official's home security.

A security system that includes cameras with remote monitoring should be in place. Locks, both physical and digital, should be strong and rekeyed or reset if non-residents have a key. Block lines of sight into the home, and light the exterior of the home amply. Consider installing a panic button or silent alarm. To test these measures, security professionals should assess the official's home for security vulnerabilities.

Ensure local law enforcement has special alert triggers for the official's addresses and phone number and for their loved ones' addresses and phone numbers.

If the official or the official's loved ones calls 911, an automatic alert should be immediately triggered for emergency services that an elected official or the official's loved one may be in trouble. Law enforcement should also be aware of the official's home address in the event of calls for service (e.g., a neighbor reporting a break-in).

Determine whether and when to have security professionals provide physical monitoring of the home.

Under some conditions, such as an active threat to the official, periodic physical monitoring of the home maybe warranted by security professionals or in some cases by law enforcement.

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