



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Statement of Transportation & Maritime Security Subcommittee Ranking Member LaMonica McIver (D-NJ)

From Cartels to Coastlines: An Examination of U.S. Federal Efforts to Confront Illicit Maritime Activities in U.S. Waters

June 10, 2025

Today's hearing provides an opportunity to discuss how President Trump's reckless orders are undermining homeland security and making our communities less safe. Over the weekend, we saw President Trump nationalize the National Guard to respond to protests in Los Angeles and threaten to deploy Marines on U.S. soil. Trump is using every possible excuse to inflame the situation and manufacture unnecessary confrontations.

In January, President Trump and Secretary Noem ordered the Coast Guard to triple its presence at U.S. borders. This surge comes at great cost to the Coast Guard's other critical missions.

At a time when levels of maritime migration are already down due to this administration effectively ending asylum in the United States, the Coast Guard is pulling assets and personnel from around the globe to sit at the U.S. border. Critically, the Coast Guard has redirected deployments from the Indo-Pacific and the Arctic—regions where Congress has invested heavily on a bipartisan basis in the Coast Guard's capacity to counter aggression from China and Russia.

Reducing our activities in the Indo-Pacific and the Arctic undermines our long-term strategic interests and ultimately makes us less safe. Worse yet, the Trump administration is diverting the Coast Guard's limited aviation fleet to assist with deportations. The Coast Guard is flying immigrants internally within the U.S. to relocate them to staging areas for deportation. This is not the Coast Guard's mission.

These flights place major strain on the Coast Guard aviation fleet, which already struggles to meet the service's needs. Many Coast Guard aircraft are from the 80s and 90s and suffer major maintenance and reliability issues. Instead of replacing the oldest planes and helicopters in the fleet, Secretary Noem is looking to acquire a new \$50 million dollar Gulfstream jet to replace one of the two she already has available for her use.

Coast Guard aircraft were already available for the service to use less than 70 percent of the time before accounting for the new demands this administration is making. These planes and helicopters are essential to the Coast Guard's missions, from search and rescue to drug and migrant interdictions. Operating flights in service of other agencies' missions is the last thing the Coast Guard needs.

Of course, the Coast Guard is not the only agency diverting resources to deportations above all else.

The list of agencies reportedly diverting personnel away from their primary mission to support deportations goes on and on:

- Customs and Border Protection

- Homeland Security Investigations
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation
- The U.S. Marshals Service
- The Drug Enforcement Administration
- The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
- The State Department's Diplomatic Security Service
- The Internal Revenue Service.

These agencies are all pulling resources from their missions to help deport immigrants—the vast, vast majority of whom are non-violent, contributing members of our communities. When it comes to undocumented immigrants, it does not matter if they are elderly grandparents, sick children, or Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, or Venezuelans seeking refuge from violence. President Trump's orders are to try to deport them all, no matter the law and no matter the cost.

Is this really what the American people want? I have my doubts. To those watching this hearing, I ask:

Are you hoping the government will find and save you if you are stranded on a roof during hurricane season?

Sorry—under President Trump, the Coast Guard plane that would otherwise help just might be tied up with flying law-abiding immigrants away from their communities.

Are you hoping the government will investigate wealthy tax cheats and make them pay their fair share?

Sorry—under President Trump, many of the agents who are supposed to do that are busy deporting your local farmers, construction workers, cleaners, and cooks.

Are you hoping Federal agents will investigate and stop the worst of the worst drug traffickers, arms smugglers, human traffickers, and child abusers?

Sorry—under President Trump, many of the agents who are supposed to do that are busy deporting your friends and neighbors.

Those are apparently the Federal government's priorities with President Trump and Republicans in charge.

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