



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subcommittee Hearing Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Protecting our Preparedness: Assessing the Impact of the Border Crisis on Emergency Management

December 5, 2023

Today's hearing is ostensibly going to cover the impact of increasing migration on emergency management. Unfortunately, however, I am doubtful that this hearing will be anything more than another extreme MAGA Republican attempt to discredit the Biden Administration.

It is disappointing that Republicans have chosen to spend this Congress looking for political wins and issuing press releases rather than working with Democrats to help communities receiving migrants, pass comprehensive immigration reform, or enact meaningful border security legislation. Instead, in May, my Republican colleagues passed H.R. 2, the "Child Deportation Act" — on a party line vote. Their bill would bring back President Trump's cruel and ineffective border policies.

Instead, we need to ensure legal pathways for migrants who are fleeing violence and persecution in search of a better life for themselves and their families. They know the journey is dangerous, but many feel they have no other option. Staying home is more dangerous than leaving. Following our Nation's asylum laws is not only the right thing to do, but it also enriches our communities.

Migrants bring diverse perspectives that lead to innovation in various fields, including science, technology, and the arts. They also stimulate our economy and fill an important role in the workforce. In Mississippi, immigrants have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars annually in taxes. In 2018, immigrant-led households in Mississippi paid \$379.5 million in federal taxes and \$171.1 million in state and local taxes. We need to process migrants in a humane and orderly manner, as well as ensure they can contribute to the communities they settle in while going through the asylum process.

Democrats have provided new resources to build capacity for safely and efficiently processing all travelers, including migrants, in an orderly manner, as well as additional resources to secure the border. My Republican colleagues voted against these resources.

More specifically, Democrats provided funding for more CBP agents and officers to help with the influx of migrants. Republicans voted no. Republicans also voted against providing additional technology between ports of entry and are attempting to prohibit DHS from using technology for screening migrants before they approach a land port of entry.

In contrast, Democrats established and provided record funding for the Shelter and Services Program, which reimburses local governments and groups that provide short-term shelter and some services to newly arrived migrants. Republicans want to terminate this program.

The White House has requested funding to further strengthen border security and help communities respond to arriving migrants. Instead of taking up that legislation that would actually help with the

situation at the border, Republicans prefer to focus on meaningless messaging bills and a sham impeachment.

I genuinely hope this hearing is productive, and I look forward to hearing from first responders and those working with migrants in our cities. We know there is a challenge, and it is past time we got to work on passing real, bipartisan solutions.

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