



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

*Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

***Oversight of the Department of Homeland Security: ICE, CBP, USCIS***

**February 10, 2026**

I hope my Republican colleagues will remember that our job is to conduct oversight, not cover for Donald Trump and his out-of-control administration, which is running roughshod over Americans' rights, killing U.S. citizens, and threatening our very democracy.

The disease rotting the Trump administration from the inside out started at the top and has infected every part of the Executive Branch. Nowhere is it that more evident than at the Department of Homeland Security.

This hearing is just the start of a reckoning for the Trump administration and its weaponization of DHS against American citizens and the principles our country stands for. DHS, led by Secretary Kristi Noem, must be held accountable for its lawless immigration operations.

They are reckless, creating chaos in our communities, terrorizing adults and children alike, and undermining our moral authority as a nation of liberty and rule of law.

Last month, an ICE agent shot and killed Renee Good - a Minneapolis mom - in cold blood, as she drove away from him. After killing her, the agent called her a disgusting name I won't repeat here, and other agents refused to allow a nearby physician to treat her. Democrats called for accountability.

Instead, Secretary Noem blamed the victim, Ms. Good, and attempted to gaslight Americans with false claims that Ms. Good was a "domestic terrorist." Renee Good was nothing of the sort. She was a mom, a wife, a neighbor, and an American citizen who did not deserve to die at the hands of her own government. She should be alive today.

Ever since, the Trump administration has devoted the full resources of the Federal government to blocking a legitimate investigation into Ms. Good's killing. If that isn't a sign of guilt, I don't know what is.

Federal prosecutors had a warrant to collect evidence from Ms. Good's vehicle for a civil rights investigation into ICE's use of force, but FBI Director Kash Patel and other Trump administration officials demanded they drop it. Career prosecutors - duty bound to the rule of law, not the political prerogatives of the White House - resigned in protest. Blocking an investigation into the government's use of force against one of its citizens is the stuff of dictatorships, not democracies. Every American should be outraged.

Democrats tried to get answers in the aftermath of Ms. Good's shooting. We called on Acting ICE Director Todd Lyons to testify at the Committee's hearing three weeks ago. Unfortunately, he turned down the Committee's invitation.

This is part of a pattern of the Trump administration's refusal to comply with regular congressional oversight. Committee Democrats have sent multiple letters to ICE and CBP on critical issues, but most of them – 10 – have gone unanswered. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to include these unanswered letters for the record.

ICE has also blocked Members of Congress from visiting its detention facilities, even after reports of horrific conditions, detainee abuse, and a detainee being murdered in a DHS facility. Mr. Lyons is here today, nearly a month after we invited him — I guess DHS needed time to get its story straight before he came to testify under oath.

Fearing more violence from Federal law enforcement, Democrats have also called on DHS to rein in its immigration agents and their brutal attacks on Americans immediately following Ms. Good's murder. But DHS ignored our pleas.

Instead Greg Bovino, who styles himself in Nazi attire and takes joy in deploying tear gas at Americans, continued to roam around Minneapolis with his masked gang terrorizing people and violating their constitutional rights.

And, tragically, our worst fears were realized. Just days after the hearing Mr. Lyons refused to participate in, CBP personnel shot Alex Pretti, as he was face down on a Minneapolis sidewalk, killing him in broad daylight.

In the video of the incident, a DHS agent can be seen cheering Mr. Pretti's death. Americans watched the video in horror.

Yet, once again, Secretary Noem gaslit the public, made up a demonstrably false story about Mr. Pretti, and blamed the victim for his own death. Mr. Pretti was a law-abiding U.S. citizen and a VA nurse who dedicated his career to caring for our veterans.

Mr. Chairman, at our hearing last month I asked for a moment of silence in memory of Renee Good. Today, with great sadness about another American killed at the hands of DHS, I ask that the Committee observe a moment of silence in honor of Alex Pretti.

The slayings of Ms. Good and Mr. Pretti by DHS are the most tragic examples of what is wrong with Trump's DHS, but far from the only ones.

Last fall, a Border Patrol agent shot Miramar Martinez, a U.S. citizen and preschool teacher from Chicago, five times. The agent bragged in text messages about shooting her, saying "I fired 5 rounds and she had 7 holes. Put that in your book boys." Again, the Trump administration tried to blame Ms. Martinez, the victim, but prosecutors dropped charges against her when it became apparent that the evidence contradicted the Border Patrol's phony account.

Unlike Ms. Good and Mr. Pretti, who can no longer tell their stories, Ms. Martinez has shared her story about what Trump's DHS did to her. I want to play a bit of that video here, because people need to see what ICE and CBP are doing to Americans.

What happened to Ms. Martinez, Ms. Good, and Mr. Pretti is a scourge on this country and shameful chapter in our Nation's history, but tragically there is more. DHS agents recently used a five-year-old Ecuadorian boy, Liam Ramos, as bait to lure his family members outside their home to arrest them. The family had entered the country legally as asylum-seekers and were living in Minnesota while awaiting their immigration proceedings.

DHS sent the little boy and his father to detention in Texas for over a week. Thankfully a judge ordered him released, slamming DHS for its "incompetently-implemented" deportation campaign.

"Incompetently-implemented" deportation campaign is putting it nicely, especially as it relates to small children. More apt is the Bible quote from John 11:35 referenced at the end of the judge's opinion: "Jesus wept."

DHS personnel are now forcing their way into private homes without a judicial warrant, in violation of the 4th Amendment. In one recent incident, ICE dragged a U.S. citizen from his home at gunpoint in his underwear before realizing they had picked up the wrong person. The person ICE was actually looking for was sitting in jail in Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Corrections says that ICE had this information all along.

Bystander videos from Minneapolis and cities around the country show ICE and CBP personnel behaving like unprofessional goons, cursing at bystanders and mooning people from their hotel windows. News reports show a Border Patrol agent was found passed out, drunk and covered in vomit in a vehicle, and ICE personnel apparently stole a child's phone and sold it for cash. It's an embarrassment and DHS's so-called leadership should be ashamed...if only they had any shame.

Secretary Noem's Department of Homeland Security has the blood of Americans on its hands, but she takes no responsibility for anything. To the contrary, Secretary Noem was last seen in this Committee room hiding behind her family in a desperate attempt to distract from her Department's failures and abuses.

Then she ran from our questions, leaving early under the guise of needing to attend a meeting that, it turns out, didn't even exist. Her inexcusable behavior should come as no surprise. She's always been more concerned with photo ops and wardrobe changes than following the law and fulfilling the mission of her Department.

Since being sworn in, Secretary Noem has enriched herself, abused the power of her office, obstructed Congressional oversight, and violated her oath to the Constitution.

Donald Trump and Kristi Noem are doing real damage to this country and to the Department that was stood up 25 years ago in the wake of 9/11 to protect Americans from future attacks. Secretary Noem is a liar with no concern for the lives of Americans killed by the Department she runs. She must go.

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