



# COMMITTEE *ON* HOMELAND SECURITY

*Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

### ***Full Committee Markup***

**June 24, 2026**

Today—for the first time in nearly 300 days—the Committee on Homeland Security will be marking up legislation. That is more than nine months.

In other words, human life is easier to bring into the world than bipartisan Homeland Security legislation. That is a pity. But it is totally avoidable, if only Republicans would get out of their own way. For more than nine months, House Republicans decided to play politics with Department of Homeland Security funding rather than engage in bipartisan reform of ICE and CBP. As a result, this Committee’s legislative work has ground to a halt.

For the first time ever, this Committee surrendered its authority to mark up reconciliation funding legislation. And in the process, House Republicans rubber-stamped a \$70 billion slush fund for ICE and CBP, even as the \$140 billion approved for the Department last year—over and above the normal appropriations funding process—has been wasted on private jets and self-serving ad campaigns benefiting Trump administration insiders.

Congress has a duty to conduct meaningful oversight—particularly after DHS agents and officers have killed American citizens. And Congress must use its power of the purse to make sure the Executive Branch does not tear up the Constitution and deny God-given rights to our constituents. While today’s markup may be a departure from the partisan conflict that has undermined this Committee for the last three years, House Democrats will never back down from demanding justice for Renee Good, Alex Pretti, or the many others who have died in DHS custody. Our fight continues.

Turning to this markup, we will be advancing 19 bills. Committee Democrats will offer eight measures to improve how DHS prepares for threats, shares intelligence, and runs its own programs. When extreme cold descends on communities across the northern United States, it doesn’t just create hardship. It strains power grids, disrupts water systems, overwhelms emergency responders, and potentially degrades the very coordination capacity that a terrorism response would depend on.

Representative Kennedy’s “WINTER Act” requires DHS to prepare for what happens when a deliberate attack is layered on top of the strain of extreme cold weather, and to build a coordinated Federal response framework before that scenario becomes reality.

Representative Pou’s bill on the National Terrorism Advisory System, or NTAS, asks whether the public warning system we rely on to communicate terrorism threats reaches people in a way they can act on. Before DHS modernizes NTAS, her bill requires the Department to consult law enforcement, emergency responders, and the public itself.

Representative Goldman’s “SAFE VISITS Act” directs DHS Intelligence and Analysis to systematically analyze threats posed by foreign nationals seeking access to State and local officials and facilities, if those jurisdictions request help, and to deliver that intelligence to the jurisdictions most at risk.

The analysis I&A produces is only as good as the analysts who produce it, which is why Representative Magaziner’s I&A Training Act matters — there is currently no standardized, mandatory training curriculum for I&A hires. His bill creates one, with civil rights and civil liberties protections built in from Day One.

Representative Carter has two bills at this markup. The “TWICE Act” addresses the fact that individuals who have served their time and are legally eligible to work in maritime ports often cannot navigate TSA’s Transportation Worker Identification Credential, or TWIC, program — but not because they do not qualify. Those re-entering the workforce should be able to obtain TWIC cards and find good-paying jobs.

Representative Carter’s Urban Area Security Initiative bill will require FEMA to report on how cities and regions that have lost—or recently gained—important funding to build homeland security capacity are managing.

Representative Kennedy’s “NEXUS for Families Act” requires Customs and Border Protection to link every member of a family applying for trusted traveler status. His bill lets families apply together, interview together, and — for children under 14 — skip the interview requirement entirely.

Finally, Representative Walkinshaw’s “Measuring Illicit Fentanyl Trafficking Act” requires DHS to improve information and data sharing across its components involved in combating fentanyl trafficking, and to identify any barriers to information sharing within the Department. His bill also requires DHS to establish metrics to measure the Department’s effectiveness.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting these important measures. Before I yield back, Mr. Chairman, I want to note that we have just about 190 days left in the 119th Congress. Only a quarter of those are currently scheduled to be session days. So, we must make them count. I encourage you to bring up H.R. 2086, the “Rights for the TSA Workforce Act” as soon as possible.

As the avoidable Trump-Republican DHS shutdowns proved, TSA employees bear the biggest burden during a lapse in funding. It is well past time for them to be given the same protections as other Federal workers under title 5 of the U.S. Code. I had requested to have H.R. 2086 considered during this markup, and I am disappointed that my request was summarily dismissed by the Republican Majority without even a discussion.

I am proud that you have been a longtime cosponsor of my legislation, and I hope we can use some of our precious remaining time this Congress to get this important bill across the finish line. I will also note that I continue to have reservations about H.R. 8770, the “SAFEGUARDS Act of 2026.” I agree with the bill’s sense of Congress that the 9/11 passenger security fee should not be diverted for purposes other than commercial aviation security. Unfortunately, however, H.R. 8770 does not advance that goal, as the bill does not immediately stop the fee diversion.

Instead, the bill mandates \$750 million in annual technology investments—a large, unpaid increase in TSA technology funding. I am concerned that paying for this increase would require cuts to funding for

TSA workforce salaries and benefits if TSA's overall budget does not increase. I appreciate that this bill would not take effect until Fiscal Year 2028, when the diversion of security fees is scheduled to end.

However — and this is extremely important — bringing those fees back to TSA does not mean the agency's top line budget will increase, since the fees are treated as offsetting collections by law. A great deal more work remains to not only end the fee diversion but also increase TSA's budget accordingly.

We will have to continue our conversations to come up with a solution that ensures increases to TSA technology funding do not negatively impact the TSA workforce we rely on to keep our skies safe and secure.

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[Media contact](#)