



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

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

Hearing on the Republican Attack on NGOs and Religious Organizations

July 16, 2025

My Republican colleagues and the Trump administration are waging a war on faith and civil society in the United States. That is the real “inside job.” So, let’s talk about it.

Faith-based service and civic associations bring Americans together in pursuit of the greater good, and that threatens Donald Trump and MAGA Republicans because they believe their political strength lies in driving wedges between people.

In their pursuit of political power, Donald Trump and MAGA Republicans are ripping apart the fabric of what makes America great—our freedom to believe, to practice our faith, and to associate in civic organizations that help us in our pursuit of happiness.

Donald Trump started his second term by attacking religious organizations, and he has not rested since. On his first day in office, Donald Trump paused foreign assistance for the needy, harming the work of faith-based relief agencies. On his second day in office, Donald Trump decided that deportation forces could begin entering houses of worship to arrest migrants. After a week in office, Donald Trump’s OMB attempted to freeze Federal grants, including the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which helps houses of worship protect themselves from violence.

Republicans on this Committee appear to want in on that action. Just read the Republicans’ press releases about their vindictive investigation of American charities and this sham hearing. Republicans falsely accuse Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran, Methodist, Evangelical, Muslim, and secular charities that feed, clothe, and aid the needy of having, “supercharged the business model of cartels.” That is a slanderous accusation and fringe conspiracy theory with no basis in reality.

Republicans sent out two-hundred-fifteen letters falsely accusing organizations of wrongdoing, even though most of the organizations don’t receive Federal dollars or provide direct services to migrants.

This is a scare tactic, plain and simple. Republicans’ so-called investigation and today’s hearing are shameful abuses of congressional power to bully people for how they choose to exercise their religion and help their fellow man. It is an attack on diverse faith-based organizations over their religious practices. And it is a threat to charities that do humanitarian work Republicans do not like.

It **does not** surprise me that the Chairman of this Committee, Mark Green, is absent for his last full Committee hearing before retiring to Guyana. I, too, would be embarrassed if I had signed off on this hearing.

What **does** surprise me is that Michael Guest, a proud Sunday school teacher, is chairing a hearing that attacks Christianity and bullies private citizens over what they choose to do in lawful service to their communities. But that is the damage Donald Trump and MAGA have done to our country and to the Republican Party.

Republicans don't want to investigate **who** is really running things at DHS while Kristi Noem is filming all her commercials. They don't want to investigate **what** Donald Trump is hiding by restricting Congress's access to classified files. They don't want to investigate **why** the Trump administration deported sick American kids. And they don't want to investigate **how** thousands of calls from flood survivors in Texas went unanswered by FEMA.

Instead, Committee Republicans are attacking charities and religious organizations for providing food, clothing, and shelter to people in need.

Let me be clear, Republicans have voted—for years and across multiple presidential administrations—to fund humanitarian programs that provide food, shelter, basic medical care, and transportation for migrants. That includes **TEN** Republican members of this Committee, ***including every single Republican currently running to take over as Chairman.***

Now, suddenly, they have a problem with the programs they supported, and they need a distraction. Well, let me just say, it is ***shameful*** that Republicans on this Committee are scapegoating charities and churches that help the needy just because some of the needy happen to be migrants. It is ***hypocritical*** that my colleagues across the aisle are attacking programs they authorized and funded.

It is ***pitiful*** that Republicans would violate Americans' First Amendment rights to freedom of religion and association just to distract from Kristi Noem's failed natural disaster response, Donald Trump's illegal and cruel treatment of migrants, and this administration's weaponization of DHS.

If Committee Republicans truly wanted to oversee how DHS used the funding they supported to help local governments and charities provide essential services to migrants, they would have invited FEMA to testify, since it administers the Emergency Food and Shelter Program. Republicans would have invited Customs and Border Protection to testify, since CBP worked with FEMA to establish the Shelter and Services Program. Or Republicans would have invited Secretary Noem to testify, since the funding Republicans have questions about flowed through DHS. Somehow Republicans "forgot" to ask Secretary Noem about the spending during her only appearance before us this year.

But Republicans did none of that. Instead, they invited a private panel of witnesses to perpetuate Republican attacks against organizations that are feeding, sheltering, and helping "the least of our brothers and sisters." Many on the other side purport to be Christians, but their actions here today do not square with anything I learned in church. This is a shameful spectacle. And frankly, it's un-American.

In closing, I want to say a word to the organizations being targeted by the other side. I know many of you are watching today and are worried that your work is being disrupted by these baseless attacks and that people are suffering as a result.

Please know that those of us on this side of the aisle support your Constitutional right to live out your faith and act on the courage of your convictions as citizens of this great country. Nothing could be more American than that.

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