



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

25 Years Later: Evolutions in Federal, State, and Local Counterterrorism Efforts Since 9/11

September 16, 2026

This month marks 25 years since the deadliest terrorist attacks in our Nation's history. In some ways, September 11, 2001, seems like it was just yesterday.

We remember the horror of hijacked planes flying into the World Trade Center, smoke billowing from the Pentagon, and debris strewn across a field in Pennsylvania. We recall the heroism of first responders who ran into burning buildings, the pleas of family members looking for lost loved ones, and the grief of mourners following the attacks.

But a third of Americans have been born since 9/11, and millions more were too young to have any memory of the attacks. With the passage of time, even those who lived through that tragic day may have forgotten some of the lessons it taught us.

As a Member of this Committee since its creation, I believe the most crucial of these lessons is that we have a shared responsibility to keep our homeland safe while protecting our rights and freedoms as Americans.

Unfortunately, the President has forgotten that lesson — or maybe he never learned it.

Recently, after being told that he could not speak at the 25th anniversary ceremony in New York, he attended the Pentagon observance, where he dozed off in a chair as the names of the victims were read. Even worse, as President, Trump has dismantled national security programs stood up in the wake of 9/11 and weaponized the Department of Homeland Security against the American people.

He has also politicized counterterrorism grants to communities, withholding them from blue states to punish them for opposing his policies. His administration tried to slash — by 86 percent — Homeland Security Grant Program funding for New York — which remains the biggest terrorist target today. Federal courts stepped in to restore that money, but DHS still owes New York \$87 million meant to fund critical counterterrorism efforts.

Last week, New York's Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services wrote to FEMA, which administers the grants, asking when the money will be restored, saying: "This prolonged uncertainty impedes New York's ability to plan and allocate resources for critical counterterrorism efforts."

Governor Hochul also weighed in on the safety threat, saying the President continuing to withhold the funds amounts to "defunding the police" since the NYPD is slated to receive the lion's share of New York's allocation. On that, I agree with Governor Hochul.

Without these funds, New York is more vulnerable to another terrorist attack. President Trump is playing politics not just with New York's money, but with the security of our country.

As the committee established after 9/11 to prevent another large-scale attack on our country, we have a unique responsibility to ensure that Americans "Never Forget." That includes all Americans, even the President.

Make no mistake, Democrats will hold the administration accountable for its actions, which dishonor the 9/11 victims and distract from current threats facing the homeland.

This morning, we are honored to have with us leaders who were on duty the day of the attacks, as well as those currently in those roles. I hope to discuss with them the counterterrorism efforts of the last 25 years, as well as what first responders need to prevent, prepare for, and respond to persistent security threats.

Please know that we stand with you, the brave men and women you represent, and your colleagues across the country. Thank you again for being here and for what you do every day to help our communities and protect the homeland.

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