



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Worldwide Threats to the Homeland

December 11, 2025

Today's hearing is supposed to be one of the most important exercises of this Committee's oversight jurisdiction. Each year, we hear from the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation—who is nowhere to be seen today.

Maybe Director Patel is too busy spending taxpayer dollars flying to his girlfriend's concerts on the FBI's jet to answer questions from Congress. Maybe the FBI Director isn't here because he is afraid of scrutiny from Democrats who want to know what the FBI is doing to keep America safe. Or maybe Director Patel knows that the Trump administration itself is a threat to homeland security and wants to hide from public accountability.

On the other hand, Director Kent is here, which is good because we have questions for him about NCTC's work, as well as his comments about the January 6 insurrectionists he called, and I quote, "political prisoners", unquote, who deserved to be pardoned. Some of the people he defended are back in jail for crimes like plotting to murder FBI agents and possession of child pornography. It's scary that these unserious people are in charge of keeping America safe from terrorism.

But what's even scarier is that they work for an unserious and unhinged President who spends his days designing monuments to himself and finding new ways to hide the Epstein files. All of this puts American lives at risk every day.

Now, Secretary Noem, everyone knows you love the spotlight. We've seen your commercials. But what you haven't provided to the Committee, despite our requests, are the questionable contracts you've awarded to your friends to film you out on the 2028 campaign trail. Unfortunately, this is nothing new.

In their One Big Ugly Bill, congressional Republicans gave you a blank check, Secretary Noem, and you have wasted no time spending it on yourself. Instead of deploying homeland security grants to protect churches and synagogues from terrorism, you handed your friends a \$220 million contract so they could follow you around the country with a camera. Instead of fully funding the DHS agency that protects our hospitals, schools, and electrical systems from cyber attacks, you spent \$200 million to buy yourself new private jets. And instead of paying your way like the rest of us, you are living rent-free in a taxpayer-owned property that is supposed to be reserved for military leaders.

Every penny that you spend on yourself represents the blood, sweat, and tears of hardworking Americans who expect their tax dollars to be spent on homeland security, not promoting you and your interests. Apparently, you haven't noticed that regular people are suffering under President Trump's affordability crisis, or maybe you, like him, think it's a hoax and just don't care. Either way, such corrupt behavior hurts homeland security.

But it's not just the corrupt behavior, Secretary Noem, that hurts homeland security – it's also your blatant disregard for the law. You cut programs and withheld congressionally appropriated money to prevent terrorist attacks and prepare for natural disasters. You eviscerated the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, which was supposed to keep DHS from violating Americans' constitutional rights. Within your own Department, you illegally fired employees and retaliated against whistleblowers who reported wrongdoing at DHS.

And during a shutdown when frontline employees were working without a paycheck, your press shop never stopped using its social media accounts to push out racist and xenophobic posts. Throughout your tenure, you have diverted resources from critical homeland security agencies and programs to carry out an extreme immigration agenda.

You illegally ordered people deported to El Salvador, despite a Federal court order and Department of Justice counsel instructing you not to do so. You illegally ignored a Federal court's order and shipped people off to South Sudan without due process. You are illegally blocking Members of Congress from conducting oversight of ICE detention facilities, even though Federal law demands that we have access.

In the process of carrying out this extreme agenda, at your direction DHS has terrorized, beaten, and detained hundreds if not thousands of American citizens. At your direction, DHS has illegally detained and deported American citizens, including U.S. citizen children with cancer. At your direction, DHS has illegally gassed, pepper sprayed, and put their knees on the necks of Americans, including military veterans and clergy. At your direction, DHS has illegally tackled, beat up, and humiliated United States citizens, including senior citizens. At your direction, DHS has illegally tased, maced, punched, and even shot Americans.

Black and Brown Americans, in particular, have been racially profiled, detained, and locked up, sometimes with tragic consequences. In just one awful incident, a pregnant U.S. citizen was reportedly thrown to the ground, kicked, and left in handcuffs for hours after immigration officers did not believe that she was American. She later lost her baby.

You cannot enforce the law by breaking the law, Secretary Noem. That's not how our justice system is supposed to work. It's not right, and it's un-American. And when Congress tries to carry out its constitutional oversight responsibilities, to question you about your Department's actions, you hide – often with the help of congressional Republicans.

Never in the history of the Committee has a Secretary of Homeland Security hidden from congressional oversight like you and your Department have, Secretary Noem. Our oversight letters to you go unanswered. You owe us – and by extension the millions of Americans who sent us to Congress as their representatives – responses to over a dozen letters.

Your predecessors came before this Committee regularly under administrations of both parties, but under President Trump, you and other Department officials have rarely shown their faces at Committee hearings. In the first year of President Biden's term, his administration made 28 appearances before this Committee – twenty-eight. Under President Trump, DHS officials have appeared at only three hearings before the Committee – just three!

You, Secretary Noem, have appeared before this Committee just twice. That's fewer appearances than your predecessor, Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, who Republicans lambasted for not coming before the Committee more often. It's interesting how quiet my colleagues on the other side are now.

Secretary Noem, I will give you one thing—you showed up today rather than throwing a civil servant under the bus like Director Patel did. But you have systematically dismantled the Department of Homeland Security, put your own interests above the Department, and violated the law. You are making America less safe.

So, rather than you sitting here and wasting your time and ours with more corruption, lies, and lawlessness, I call on you to resign. Do a real service to your country and just resign. That is, unless President Trump fires you first.

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