



COMMITTEE *ON* HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Sham Impeachment "Hearing" #2

January 18, 2024

I'd like to start by thanking all of the witnesses for being here today to share their stories and expertise. Losing a loved one to drugs or violence is devastating, and our hearts go out to you and your families.

I also want to make sure that the record is clear — Secretary Mayorkas informed the majority last week of his scheduling conflict for today, and I am sorry if the majority neglected to share that information with the witnesses.

I also want to make very clear that Democrats are committed to enacting policies that will actually address these issues.

Impeaching Secretary Mayorkas will do nothing to prevent other families from suffering similar tragedies. If only it were that simple.

These problems are not new. They will require serious policymaking, not an impeachment vote will do nothing but undermine our constitutional system.

If my Republican colleagues were serious about addressing these issues, they would be working on legislation, collaborating with our Senate counterparts and the White House.

Right now, Congress has a pending request from President Biden to fund additional Border Patrol Agents, additional law enforcement personnel, and increased fentanyl detection technology. House Republicans have refused to consider this request.

Instead of pursuing solutions to these problems, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are chasing an illegitimate impeachment and using tragedy to score political points.

This entire process has been conducted in bad faith with a predetermined outcome.

It is clear from my earlier parliamentary inquiries that the Chairman has not established any due process or procedure for this sham of an impeachment.

And the majority has refused to work with the Department to find a day and time to hear from Secretary Mayorkas, despite his offer to do so.

Let's not forget that my Republican colleagues forced their border bill, H.R. 2, through this Committee without considering any Democratic input, resulting in a bill full of unworkable provisions that would create chaos on the Southwest border. They know as well as anyone that H.R. 2 never had a chance of becoming law.

Senate Republicans and Democrats are working together, in a bipartisan manner and with the direct involvement of Secretary Mayorkas, to try to fix the issues raised here today. Yet instead of joining that conversation and using the powers of the Congress to create change, House Republicans are pursuing a partisan impeachment effort that will achieve nothing.

Perhaps this is because a bipartisan reform bill would take away a Republican political talking point. As one Republican Member told CNN earlier this month, he has no interest in trying to pass border legislation that might “help Joe Biden’s approval rating.”

And that’s really what this impeachment sham is all about. A political game to make it seem like the do-nothing Republican caucus achieved something while attacking the Biden Administration.

It’s the American people that are paying the price of Republican inaction. This impeachment hearing just distracts from the important work that DHS is doing to secure the border and enforce immigration laws, so let me share some of that work.

- From May to September of 2023, DHS removed or returned at least 360,000 noncitizens from the U.S., more than any other five-month period in the last ten years.
- From April 2022 to September 2023, DHS arrested nearly 17,000 suspected human smugglers and seized nearly \$13 million in currency.
- And in fiscal year 2023 DHS stopped over 43,000 pounds of fentanyl from entering the country, resulting in over 5,600 arrests.

President Biden has requested the necessary funding, but Republicans would rather shut down the entire Federal government than give President Biden another win.

Mr. Chairman, what other conclusion can the American people draw but that House Republicans don’t actually want to fix the problems on our Southern border?

The Constitution gives Congress broad and expansive powers to create laws and shape the policies we want to see. It gives us strong tools to perform oversight over the execution of those policies.

Yet that’s not what we’re seeing here today. Those real levers of power don’t seem to be flashy enough for my Republican colleagues. They don’t want to do the hard work of creating workable laws—of collaborating and compromising.

It’s far easier to demand impeachment. Instead of engaging in a good faith effort to improve homeland security, House Republicans are more interested in giving interviews to FOX News.

As Professor Pearlstein has explained today, there is no constitutional basis for impeaching Secretary Mayorkas.

We heard the same from Professor Bowman last week, and we’ve heard the same from the many other constitutional law experts that have written our committee.

There is a reason they have not brought a constitutional expert to testify in support of this impeachment — there is no constitutional basis for impeachment.

Democrats will continue to keep our focus throughout this sham impeachment on what our obligations are under the Constitution.

As I said last week, Mr. Chairman, when your Members are ready to get to work and to use the actual powers given to us by the Framers to address policy problems, I guarantee you House Democrats will do our best to work with you.

But until then we will continue to call out this do-nothing approach.

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