



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

April 9, 2025

This markup demonstrates that Committee Democrats are more than willing to work with Republicans on important Homeland Security issues.

For example, Representatives Magaziner and Pfluger have worked productively to find common ground combatting transnational repression, and we will advance three bipartisan bills to address that threat today.

Representative Titus's bill, which is cosponsored by a member of Republican leadership, Representative Hudson of North Carolina, will authorize the Special Events Program at DHS, which provides support to State, local, Tribal, and territorial officials hosting major events, like Formula 1 races or NCAA basketball championships.

H.R. 820, sponsored by Representative Swalwell, and 19 bipartisan cosponsors—including recent mothers—would require TSA to update its security guidance on breast milk, baby formula, and related items to reduce the risk of contamination and make going through airport security checkpoints easier for parents of babies and young children. Supporting parents should be something that we all get behind.

And Representative Pou's measure would ensure that basic training programs for law enforcement at DHS are properly accredited. The hardworking officers and agents at DHS should have the best training possible to respond to their dynamic work environment—and that need should also rise above politics. This bipartisan measure passed the House in the 117th Congress and advanced through this Committee last Congress. Bipartisan cooperation has also improved a bill Committee Democrats had to oppose last Congress. We will consider today a substitute amendment to the "DHS Restrictions on Confucius Institutes and Chinese Entities of Concern Act", sponsored by Representative Pfluger.

As amended, the bill will contain needed language to give strategic flexibility to the Secretary of Homeland Security and prevent academic programs unrelated to national security concerns from preventing universities from receiving needed DHS funds, like those required after disasters.

This kind of bipartisan cooperation, though, stands in the shadow of very dangerous circumstances for our Nation: Failed, 19th-century economic thinking has been brought back from the dead to tank our stock markets and erase trillions and trillions of dollars from our constituents' retirement accounts.

To make matters worse, those same outdated ideas are going to drive the cost of living higher for folks back home. Meanwhile, DHS is rounding up innocent people who are in our country legally and sending them to foreign prisons without so much as double checking the paperwork.

When courts require DHS to return these individuals to the United States, they ignore lawful orders and say mistakes are going to happen. Meanwhile, the Trump administration is gutting the Department stood up after 9/11 to keep Americans safe.

Hundreds of dedicated DHS employees from CISA, FEMA, TSA, and Headquarters have been indiscriminately fired, jeopardizing the Department's ability to do its job. Grants authorized by this Committee and funded by legislation we voted for on the House floor are not reaching our States and local communities because of unnecessary freezes that courts have determined are unlawful.

And has this Committee done the sort of oversight work needed to push back against the Trump administration's mismanagement?

Of course not. Yesterday, the Republican majority wanted to look in the rearview mirror and talk about President Biden as if he was still in the Oval Office before canceling a hearing on the former administration's policies.

The Republican majority would prefer to trot out its so-called greatest hits instead of dealing with the multiple crises brought on by the current administration. They do not want to face the fact that the Trump administration is driving the country into a ditch. That reluctance to face reality is also why the Secretary of Homeland Security has not come before this Committee. Mr. Chairman, you have not scheduled a budget hearing with the Secretary for this month like you did last year and the year before.

Secretary Mayorkas had been on the job for less than two months when he first appeared before the Committee when I was Chairman in March 2021. I have asked you on numerous occasions when Secretary Noem will appear before this Committee to answer for what has happened at the Department on her watch, but my letters have not received replies. And when I asked you at a previous hearing, you said she might come in the fall. That's just unacceptable.

So, today, the Committee will move the ball downfield on some bipartisan legislation, but it is becoming increasingly hard to work together when Republicans are ignoring how the Trump administration is dismantling our national security and disaster preparedness at the same time.

Mr. Chairman, let's do the job the American people sent us here to do.

Let's do the job of a co-equal branch of government.

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