



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Markup Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Markup of: H.R. 1833, 1850, 1870, 1871, 1877, 1893 and 1895

March 18, 2021

I am pleased that we are here to consider seven bipartisan homeland security measures. A few of the bills were passed out of the House in prior Congresses while the rest are new and very timely. It has been a little over a year since COVID-19 became a global pandemic. COVID has fundamentally changed the way people live, learn, congregate, and work.

Over the past year, as business has moved from offices into Zoom rooms, commercial aviation was significantly impacted. However, we are starting to see Americans feel more comfortable about traveling, as the U.S. leads the world in the number people fully vaccinated and better COVID-19 therapeutics are developed.

In fact, according to TSA, in just the last week, the rate of people screened at TSA checkpoints has steadily ramped up to over a million people per day. For their part, airlines are reporting increased bookings and a stabler operational picture as more shots go into arms.

While everyone is eager for a return to normalcy this summer, the CDC is still recommending against non-essential travel and warning that we could see additional spikes in cases if we do not stay vigilant in containing this virus. Further, with over 7,000 positive cases within the TSA workforce, we know that more must be done to ensure TSA is fully prepared to keep its frontline employees safe during this pandemic and in future outbreaks.

I am pleased that we are considering three bills originating from the Transportation and Maritime Security Subcommittee to focused on protecting TSA's frontline workforce and the traveling public now and long after the coronavirus pandemic has abated.

They are:

- H.R. 1893, the "Transportation Security Preparedness Act of 2021, as introduced by Subcommittee Chairwoman Watson Coleman;
- H.R. 1877, the "Security Screening During COVID-19 Act," as introduced by Representative Cleaver; and
- H.R. 1895, the "Transportation Security Public Threat Preparedness Act, as introduced by Ranking Member Gimenez.

Additionally, I am pleased that we are considering timely measures to bolster support to State and local law enforcement as they work to address a complex range of threats—not the least of which is domestic terrorism. One bill, sponsored by Border Security Chairwoman Barragán would bolster information sharing about threats to high-risk surface transportation systems and the other, sponsored by Rep. Rice, would ensure that DHS continues to carry out critical research and development of protective equipment and other technology needed by first responders.

We are also considering H.R. 1833, as introduced by the Ranking Member Mr. Katko, which is focused on improving CISA's ability to detect and mitigate cyber threats and vulnerabilities to industrial control systems and H.R. 1871, as introduced by Mr. Bishop, that seeks to improve transparency in TSA policymaking.

At this time, my understanding is that there is broad bipartisan support for the notice measures and that the amendments that were circulated yesterday. I thank the Ranking Member and his staff for working with me and my staff in a cooperative way ahead of today's markup.

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