



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

*Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

### ***Mass Gathering Events: Assessing Security Coordination and Preparedness***

**May 21, 2025**

While today's hearing is focused on mass gatherings, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) role in supporting first responders cannot be overstated. Unfortunately, the Trump administration is creating a crisis at FEMA. Secretary Kristi Noem appeared before this Committee last week and doubled down on her position that FEMA should be eliminated. She also admitted that she did not have any written plan for addressing catastrophic disasters.

Those statements alone should be cause for concern. But coming just days before hurricane season begins and amid reports that FEMA has lost thousands of employees, they are profoundly irresponsible and dangerous. Unfortunately, the explicit attack on FEMA is not an isolated incident. It's part of a larger pattern under this administration — dismantling preparedness, sidelining career experts, and treating public safety like a partisan game.

Even as this administration undermines FEMA and emergency preparedness, Trump's most loyal Republican allies are still lining up to beg for Federal assistance when their states are hit by disaster. While today's hearing focuses on upcoming large-scale events, local communities across the country already face the challenge of preparing with fewer resources.

That's because the Trump administration froze key Federal preparedness grants, including the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP), and the Securing the Cities (STC) program. These grants fund everything from emergency planning and training to equipment and exercises. Local officials rely on this funding to prepare for mass gatherings. Yet, the Trump administration delayed this money for months, only releasing portions after Federal courts forced them to. Even now, several programs remain in unlawful limbo, leaving cities and states stretched thin on funding and unsure how to plan effectively for events like the World Cup.

At the same time, the Trump administration has weakened our emergency preparedness on multiple fronts: slashing the Federal workforce, stripping DHS of essential staff responsible for threat assessments and emergency coordination, and shutting down training centers for first responders.

The administration's proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget goes even further by eliminating key training programs for first responders through the closure of the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium, a group of seven nationally recognized organizations that provide specialized training to emergency response personnel nationwide. Even more dangerously, the Trump administration has scaled back Federal efforts to address domestic violent extremism—the most lethal terrorist threat facing the homeland.

The administration's proposed FY26 budget continues this retreat by eliminating the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) program—an initiative focused on early intervention and community-based prevention of radicalization and violence.

Defunding this life-saving work sends a dangerous signal: that the Federal government under Donald Trump is willing to abandon its responsibility to confront the threats we know are growing. Together, these actions by the Trump administration represent not just a neglect of duty, but a systematic dismantling of the tools and partnerships that keep Americans safe. Our communities, our responders, and our most vulnerable are the ones paying the price.

I hope that today's hearing will be an honest conversation about the Trump administration's actions and how Congress can better support communities hosting mass gatherings.

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