



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

A Review of the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request for the Department of Homeland Security

April 16, 2024

I want to begin by thanking Secretary Mayorkas for being here today. Your testimony before the Committee – despite the unfounded extreme MAGA attacks against you – speaks to your character, integrity, and commitment to the Department of Homeland Security, its mission, and its people.

In what seems like a split-screen day, this morning the Committee is holding its annual hearing on the Department of Homeland Security's budget request. Then this afternoon, Republican Members will deliver to the Senate their baseless articles of impeachment – in perhaps the most politicized, partisan stunt this Committee has ever engaged in.

From the moment the Secretary took office in February 2021, Members on the other side of the aisle have unfairly targeted him for their own political gain. Chairman Green promised donors at a campaign event that he would bring an impeachment case against Secretary Mayorkas. He told his contributors to “get the popcorn” and promised “it’s going to be fun.”

According to an internal Republican memo, Republicans had already scheduled a committee vote to impeach the Secretary prior to holding a hearing. This entire thing was a sham from the start.

After two hastily thrown-together so-called “impeachment hearings” that provided not even a shred of evidence of an impeachable offense, Republicans short-circuited their own markup and refused to let Democrats offer amendments in their rush to the House Floor.

In advance of the vote, the Secretary, who is Jewish and whose mother survived the Holocaust, was referred to using language the American Jewish Committee has included in its glossary of antisemitic terms. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to insert in the record an article describing this incident. The impeachment vote failed, in another embarrassing miscalculation for House Republican leadership. On a second try, Republicans limped their sham impeachment articles across the finish line.

Over two months later, Republicans are transmitting the impeachment articles to the Senate, having waited until they thought the timing was politically advantageous. So much for their claims of urgency about the border. They wanted to have a dog-and-pony show marching to the Senate, showing yet again what deeply unserious people they are.

The Senate should dismiss the baseless impeachment articles without delay.

To make matters worse, in their zeal to impeach Secretary Mayorkas, Republicans have shirked their responsibility to conduct meaningful oversight of DHS and advance its many critical missions. Republicans have not held a single full Committee oversight hearing on cybersecurity, domestic terrorism, aviation security, disaster preparedness and response, or election security this Congress.

Shocking for a Committee borne out the 9/11 attacks, which once had a reputation for rising above partisan politics to help secure the homeland on behalf of the American people.

The Committee's legislative work has suffered too. By this time last Congress, the Committee had reported 49 measures—and that was during a global pandemic. This Congress, by contrast, the full Committee has reported fewer than half that number.

This is what happens when Republicans make someone who espouses political violence, pushes antisemitic tropes, and wants to defund the FBI the de facto leader of their party. This is what happens when Republicans prioritize the whims of extreme MAGA members over policies that serve the American people. It is chaos and dysfunction by design.

If Republicans are looking for someone to hold accountable, they should start by looking in the mirror.

Through it all, Secretary Mayorkas has remained steadfast. He continues to do his job across the Department's many critical homeland security missions, including border security and immigration enforcement. He has used the full range of authorities at his disposal and stretched the resources provided by Congress to secure the border.

Under his leadership, the Department has removed record levels of migrants, detained more people than Congress has provided funding for, and prevented unprecedented amounts of fentanyl from entering our communities.

Republicans talk a lot about supporting border security, but talk is cheap. If Republicans were serious about improving conditions along the border, they would provide the Department the funding necessary to do so.

Instead, the majority of Committee Republicans – a dozen, in fact, including the Chairman – voted no on providing DHS the funds it needs to secure the border. Republicans have also refused to consider the border security supplemental funding the Department requested months ago, starving DHS and its frontline personnel of the money they need to carry out their duties.

Americans aren't fooled by these Republican political games. They understand that where you invest your resources speaks to what you really value. And if Republicans valued border security like they claim, they would pay for it.

I want to hear from Secretary Mayorkas today about the administration's budget request for the Department of Homeland Security. I want to ask you how we can support the Department, its mission, and its 260,000 dedicated personnel. That is our responsibility, and it is one I know our Democratic members take seriously.

Mr. Chairman, this Committee *can* do better. It *has* done better, under leadership from Chairmen of both parties. I look forward to returning to better days on this Committee.

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