



COMMITTEE *ON* HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Full Committee Business Meeting Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

February 28, 2023

I take pride in the role I have played in fostering the Committee's bipartisan reputation. That bipartisanship has helped make the Nation more secure, even as the homeland security threat picture has grown more complex and diverse.

In the Committee's earliest days, we were primarily focused on preventing future attacks by al Qaeda and foreign terrorist organizations and maturing the Department of Homeland Security. Since that time, as the Intelligence Community and DHS has identified domestic terrorism as a significant emerging threat, the Committee's oversight plan has evolved too.

In the past two Congresses, with domestic terrorism firmly identified as a priority area for oversight in our bipartisan plan, we held a combined 12 hearings on varying aspects of this homeland security threat. With antisemitism on the rise, we held two hearings last Congress that specifically focused on threats to the American Jewish community. We were fortunate to have the Rabbi from Colleyville, Texas, give his first congressional testimony after the attack on his synagogue. And at a field hearing in New Jersey, we heard from religious leaders and other experts about heightened violent threats against Jews in New Jersey and New York.

Domestic terrorism is an emerging threat that resulted in the deaths of 83 people on U.S. soil between 2015 and 2020—roughly the same number who were killed in attacks directed or inspired by foreign terrorist groups. That is why I plan to offer an amendment to ensure that the Committee continues to give prioritized attention to domestic terrorism. I am proud that my amendment is endorsed by the Anti-Defamation League.

The absence of language prioritizing oversight of domestic terrorism is, in my view, a fatal flaw in this plan, but I am also disappointed that the plan seems to reflect the desire to walk back the Committee's ongoing oversight of how migrants are treated in DHS custody. I sincerely hope that is not the case. And, while I am pleased the plan indicates continued interest in examining the Federal response to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, the plan falls short of committing to examine equity issues in our disaster management system that plagued the response. The Committee has broad oversight jurisdiction under House Rule 10. Notwithstanding what is in this plan, as we commence our work on this Committee, Democrats would welcome support for bipartisan collaboration on homeland security issues important to the communities we serve.

Finally, I am concerned by recent reports that other House committees are beginning to target Federal workers. The authorization and oversight plan as written acknowledges persistent morale problems at DHS and especially within the Transportation Security Administration, so I hope this Committee does not go down the same road as these other committees.

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