



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

### ***State and Local Perspectives on DHS Preparedness Grant Programs***

***April 28, 2021***

The Committee has always prioritized oversight of homeland security grants, and I am glad that the Subcommittee is starting this Congress with such a critical hearing.

The homeland security grant programs, also commonly referred to as preparedness grants, were created nearly twenty years ago after the September 11th terrorist attacks revealed gaps in our nation's emergency preparedness. It was apparent the Federal government needed to do more to provide critical resources directly to our first responders and state and local governments, which is why Congress created the State Homeland Security Program and Urban Area Security Initiative Program, along with other grant programs. These programs have proven to be critical resources over the last two decades.

While state and local governments have made great strides in their preparedness capabilities, we must recognize that the threat landscape is ever-evolving and the threats we now face have expanded considerably to include rising incidents of domestic terrorism to cyber-attacks. As the threats to our nation continue to evolve, so too must the homeland security preparedness grant programs.

Nearly twenty years ago, we focused our grant efforts primarily on combating terrorism from abroad. Now, some of the most dangerous threats we face as a nation are homegrown, lone offenders, and small groups of individuals who commit acts of violence motivated by domestic extremist ideological beliefs. In fact, in recent years, houses of worship and other nonprofits have been targets of violence. This is why I was pleased when my bill, the "American Nonprofit Organizations Against Terrorism Act," was signed into law last year. The law authorizes critical grant funding to nonprofits and faith-based organizations to help secure their facilities against terrorist attacks.

I am glad that former President Trump's proposed cuts to existing preparedness grant funding failed due to bipartisan opposition from Members of Congress. Those cuts, if enacted, would have been devastating for our nation and would have hindered our ability to keep America safe.

I hope to hear from our witnesses today about how DHS grants have aided them as they make their communities safer and how we can ensure the grant programs best secure our states and cities from terrorist threats. I look forward to working with the Biden Administration and my colleagues in continuing to support communities in the fight against all forms of terrorism in our homeland.

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