



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Case closed: Republicans only care about impeaching Secretary Mayorkas, Part 2

July 19, 2023

In the nearly two decades I have served on this panel – a panel created in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks – I have seen this Committee come together to address some of the most important homeland security issues facing our Nation. From supporting the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security in its early days, to implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, and more recently enacting significant cybersecurity legislation, this panel has built a record of bipartisanship in service to homeland security.

But over the past seven months, the character of the Homeland Security Committee has fundamentally changed from a bipartisan, solutions-focused Committee to a platform for the most extreme MAGA schemes. To be honest, I am *embarrassed* for the Republican Majority — wasting the Committee’s time on this so-called “investigation.” This entire endeavor is nothing more than a political stunt — hatched in back rooms — so extreme MAGA Republicans can exert power over their Speaker.

Today’s hearing is yet another stunt to appease that crowd, who are demanding the impeachment of someone – anyone at all. The same goes for the sham quote-unquote “report” we’re hearing from the press that Republicans plan to release today. We have been given no time to review this document, much less offer any input. But if it’s anything like the “report” Republicans released immediately before their last hearing, this one will be rife with errors and full of extreme MAGA rhetoric masquerading as fact.

Meanwhile, the Republican Majority is squandering the Homeland Security Committee’s time and opportunity to do the real work of our Committee. In the seven months since we took our oaths for the 118th Congress, the Republican Majority has proven itself to be uninterested in legislating and incapable of serious oversight. Instead of holding oversight hearings that would strengthen our Nation’s security and improve the Department of Homeland Security’s authorities to carry out its complex mission, the Majority is stuck in a Southwest-Border Groundhog Day.

The Majority has held a variation on this hearing *9 times*. But repeating the same hearing over and over again until extreme MAGA Members get their way is not oversight. Dragging Border Patrol Chiefs away from their jobs for politicized interviews is not oversight. Don’t get me wrong—addressing problems at America’s borders is a serious task, but oversight is about following the facts, not going on a fishing expedition when the facts don’t fit an extreme MAGA narrative.

The fact is that the Administration’s plans to address the challenges at our Southwest Border are working. Under Secretary Mayorkas’ leadership, unlawful entries between ports of entry along the Southwest Border have plummeted since Title 42 was terminated on May 11. The number of border encounters overall has also plunged in that time. And between May 12 and June 2, DHS repatriated more than 38,400 noncitizens to more than 80 countries.

The Biden Administration has also taken unprecedented steps to combat the fentanyl crisis through a whole-of-government strategy focusing on disrupting the illicit fentanyl trade and traffickers' financial activities and addressing substance use here at home.

Operation Sentinel, which Secretary Mayorkas stood up in April, has disrupted criminal networks and frozen TCOs' financial assets.

Operation Blue Lotus, established at ICE in June, has surged resources to ports of entry and interior facilities to combat fentanyl smuggling and break the fentanyl supply chain.

Operation Artemis is leveraging intelligence to target precursor chemicals, pill presses, and the movement of illicit fentanyl.

And Operation Rolling Wave has surged inbound inspections at the Southwest Border, covering every sector.

As recently named Border Patrol Chief Jason Owens said in a transcribed interview on May 5, "...we have a very robust targeted enforcement effort where we work hand in hand with our investigative partners to actually disrupt, degrade, and dismantle those networks and those pipelines that are the smugglers." He went on to say, "Because we have gotten more detection capability, because we have . . . more on the way, we've got the additional processing coordinators, we are in a better situation than we were in years past."

President Biden's and Secretary Mayorkas's leadership and hard work has paid off. Our borders are not open, and those arriving outside lawful pathways are being sent home.

The facts do not support the Republicans' case.

You don't impeach the President or a Cabinet Secretary because you do not like their policies. And you surely do not impeach any officer of the United States just to placate the most extreme wing of a political party. It is time to move on from this sham impeachment effort and do your duty as overseers and legislators. President Biden is fulfilling his duties. Secretary Mayorkas is doing his job.

If the Republican Majority doesn't like what they are doing or how they are doing it, they should get off their soapboxes and work with Democrats to pass bipartisan border security and immigration legislation.

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