



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

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

Markup of: H.R. 5302, H.R. 7404, H.R. 7433, H.R. 7443, H.R. 7439, and H.R. 7832

April 10, 2024

Today, we will consider six bipartisan measures in stark contrast from the last time the Committee met to mark up legislation.

Today, the Committee will advance two commonsense border security measures and another bill that honors a Customs and Border Protection agent tragically killed in the line of duty. Also, Members of the Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee came together in a bipartisan way to advance three additional bills addressing the important topic of transnational repression.

The Committee's last markup in January was on baseless articles of impeachment in perhaps the most politicized, partisan stunt this Committee has ever engaged in. And it has been a stunt all along. Indeed, the articles have not even been transmitted to the Senate, despite extreme MAGA Republican claims that impeaching Secretary Mayorkas was of grave importance. They have waited to transmit their sham impeachment to maximize its political impact.

Today's markup shows what we can do when we work together. The polarizing show that awaits across the Capitol shows what happens when politics are put over people. How many more bills could this Committee have reported to the full House if we had spent more time this Congress on policy rather than partisanship?

By this time in the last Congress, the Committee had reported 49 measures—and that was during a global pandemic that profoundly affected our operations. By this time in the 116th Congress, under the same circumstances of divided government as today, the Committee had reported 66 measures.

This Congress, by contrast, the full Committee has reported merely 15 measures. Just 15. And that includes the sham articles of impeachment that the Senate will no doubt promptly dismiss.

Mr. Chairman, this Committee *can* do better. It *has* done better. And once the meritless, extreme MAGA Republican impeachment stunt is finally over, I hope the Committee *will* do better. And on that note, I will turn back to today's bills.

First, the Committee will honor the heroic sacrifice of Michel O. Maceda, a Customs and Border Protection Marine Interdiction agent who was killed in the line of duty during a drug interdiction boarding operation off the coast of Puerto Rico in 2022. H.R. 5302 would name a CBP Air and Marine Operations Unit after Agent Maceda, and I will have more to say about this bill during debate on it.

The Committee will also take up Border Security and Enforcement Subcommittee Ranking Member Lou Correa's "Emerging Innovative Border Technologies Act." H.R. 7832, cosponsored by Representative Luttrell, would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit a plan to Congress to identify, integrate, and deploy innovative technologies, such as artificial intelligence, for border security and

management. The bill also authorizes the formation of one or more CBP Innovation Teams to research and adapt commercial technologies to enhance border security operations and meet mission needs. Effective border security requires 21st century technology, and H.R. 7832 helps move the Department in the right direction.

H.R. 7439, introduced by Representative Magaziner, the ranking member of the Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee, requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a transnational repression threat training program for State, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement. The “Strengthening State and Local Efforts to Counter Transnational Repression Act,” would aid State and local law enforcement’s efforts to identify and counter the threat of transnational repression in their communities.

Congressman Magaziner’s subcommittee heard testimony from targets of transnational repression earlier this year, and his legislation, along with two other measures offered by Representatives Pfluger and D’Esposito, directly respond to the threat of foreign adversaries attempting to threaten the rights of those on American soil. Representative Pfluger’s bill would establish a Transnational Repression Task Force within DHS to analyze and monitor transnational repression threats in the U.S. and review information from State, local, Tribal, and territorial partners as well as the National Network of Fusion Centers to inform the task force’s own threat assessments. Those assessments will be sent to Congress.

Representative D’Esposito’s bill would require the Homeland Security Secretary to direct the Office of Partnership and Engagement to conduct a public service announcement campaign educating the public on the issue of transnational repression and offer resources to targets of it.

And finally, the Committee will also take up H.R. 7404, Representative Crane’s “Subterranean Border Defense Act,” which requires CBP to release annual reports on efforts to counter illicit cross-border tunnels. This measure amends a law advanced by Representative Pfluger last Congress.

I encourage all Members to join me in supporting these commonsense, bipartisan measures.

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Media contact: Adam Comis at 202-225-9978