



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Securing America's Maritime Border: Challenges and Solutions for U.S. National Security

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America is a shining beacon of hope for people across the globe that come to our shores seeking a better life. Sadly, our broken immigration system has failed to fulfill the promise America has made to “give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

Recently, thousands of migrants from Cuba and Haiti have taken to the sea, driven to desperation due to natural and manmade disasters in their home countries. They have sought help from human smugglers and have loaded onto cramped and unsafe vessels to undertake a dangerous voyage, hoping to reach the American dream.

Instead of fixing our broken system so that we may allow those in need of a safe home to become part of our national community, my Republican colleagues instead want to blame President Biden and his administration for what are actually decades-long enforcement issues and global migration patterns. Rather than falling for this politically motivated rhetoric, we must meet these challenges with smart investments in personnel, technology, and equipment to safeguard our maritime domain.

Democrats are up to the task. Last year, Democrats provided significant funding to the Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, and other Federal partners to invest in border security. Republicans voted against these investments. Further, the Biden Administration has created a new program to provide an orderly pathway for people from Cuba and Haiti, as well as Venezuela and Nicaragua, to come to the U.S. This smart policy is already having a remarkable effect on stemming flows of migrants both at sea and by land.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on how we can best support the Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, and their partners with the resources they need to respond to important needs at our maritime borders, while still fulfilling their other critical missions. I am also eager to hear about how the Coast Guard is working to promote American sovereignty and maritime security across the globe and to address the needs of the service's workforce moving forward.

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