



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

America on the Global Stage: Examining Efforts to Secure and Improve the U.S. Travel System and Prepare for Significant International Events

April 8, 2025

The outlook for the World Cup, the Olympics, and other major events set to be hosted in the United States over the next few years is dire.

In just a couple short months in office, Donald Trump and his Republican lackeys have done tremendous damage to U.S. travel and tourism. People visiting the United States can no longer be confident they will be treated fairly by our government.

Just last week, a renowned mixed martial arts fighter and coach trying to visit the U.S. for a seminar was detained upon entry, sent to a Federal detention facility, and ultimately sent back to Australia—all with little explanation. If this is how we treat foreign athletes and coaches visiting the United States, one can only imagine how the World Cup and Olympics will go.

This is just one of many instances of the Trump Administration inflicting unnecessary trauma upon foreign visitors. The cruelty is the point.

Donald Trump apparently does not want foreign travelers to visit the United States, even though travel represented \$2.8 trillion of U.S. economic output in 2023. The impact of Trump's chaotic and undefined detention and deportation policies is already apparent.

Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Belgium, and the Netherlands have all updated travel guidance for people visiting the United States to warn of the potential for detention or discrimination. Airline bookings from Canada—which provides the most visitors to the United States by far—are already down 70%.

The impacts of this loss of international travelers will be devastating to local economies. In 2023, more than \$1.3 trillion in travel spending contributed \$89 billion in tax revenues in states and communities across the country. More than 15 million American workers are either directly employed or heavily supported by the travel industry. Some of those workers are also facing more direct assaults from the Trump Administration.

Last month, Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem issued a memo to strip TSA employees of their union rights and rescind their existing collective bargaining agreement. Transportation Security Officers screen millions of passengers every day to protect air travel. For many years, the TSA workforce was plagued by low morale and high attrition.

In 2022, President Biden signed into law an omnibus spending bill providing pay raises and funding an expanded collective bargaining framework for TSOs. Those measures have had a dramatic impact on

TSA's ability to carry out its security mission, as attrition has dropped in half. Undoing this progress is dumb, cruel, and illegal.

The Secretary cannot unilaterally rescind a binding legal contract. I hope the courts will put a stop to this nakedly political madness. In the meantime, I am proud to have reintroduced by bill, the Rights for the TSA Workforce Act, which would provide TSA workers with full collective bargaining rights and fair pay under title 5 of the U.S. Code.

Now is the time for Members of both parties to stand up to Donald Trump and push back against his cruel and foolish policies. Donald Trump is putting America last. The U.S. travel and tourism industry will be among the Trump Administration's first casualties if we do not change course quickly.

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