



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

### ***Invasion of the Homeland: How China is Using Illegal Marijuana to Build a Criminal Network Across America***

**September 18, 2025**

Despite the extreme title of today's hearing, the topic is a serious one. Illegal marijuana farms operated by foreign criminal organizations are a threat to security, human rights, and the environment. Almost no state has been untouched by illegal marijuana farms. From Maine to Oklahoma to Colorado and California, authorities have played a sophisticated game of whack-a-mole with illegal marijuana farms and the criminal organizations who operate them.

Mexican cartels, Cuban gangs, Chinese organized crime, and American locals have established themselves throughout the country to make low-risk, fast money by growing illicit marijuana. But Chinese organized crime quietly became the money launderers for Mexican cartels and other criminal actors, then they invested those proceeds in the illegal marijuana trade. Today, Chinese organized crime is the dominant player in a field of illegal marijuana growers. The threat is not just from the illegally grown and unregulated marijuana that is entering the black market covered in chemicals and virtually untraceable. The international criminal organizations that have taken over the illegal marijuana trade are stealing water from critical sources in drought-ridden states.

They are covering marijuana plants and the ground around them with rodenticide, insecticide, and other poisons that enter water supplies, destroy farmland, and end up in the final product these gangs sell on the black market. They rely on human trafficking and forced labor to grow, cultivate, and tend these illegal marijuana grows. And their ill-gotten gains are reinvested in criminal activities that undermine American security at home and abroad. It is clear that illegal marijuana farms pose a complex threat that requires a coordinated national strategy to combat.

Sadly, at a time when the United States needs a coordinated national strategy to fight back against Chinese criminal organizations, Mexican cartels, and other illicit marijuana growers, the Trump administration is eliminating the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). At the same time, the Trump administration is myopically focusing law enforcement resources on deporting people rather than investigating the illegal marijuana grows that are funneling money to international crime and enabling human trafficking.

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses about the illegal marijuana farms that are fueling international criminal organizations in our communities. I hope my Republican colleagues will take the lessons we learn to heart and work with Democrats to ensure the Federal government has the resources and capability to combat this crime.

# # #

[Media contact](#)