



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

*Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Hearing Statement of Emergency Management & Technology Subcommittee Ranking Member Troy Carter (D-LA)**

### ***Protecting our Preparedness: Assessing the Impact of the Border Crisis on Emergency Management***

**December 5, 2023**

Let me start by saying that this Subcommittee has had productive hearings and briefings so far this Congress. Just last week, we were in my congressional district — where we received testimony about emergency preparedness challenges in coastal communities like the ones the Chairman and I represent. Unfortunately, I am concerned that this hearing may be a departure from the way we have worked together this Congress.

Some Republicans like to grandstand about border security, but the reality is they have voted against border security funding and opposed Federal funds to help communities, like New York, that are receiving migrants. Many Republicans would rather demonize asylum seekers and talk about impeaching Secretary Mayorkas than come up with productive solutions to border challenges. It's hard to have a productive conversation when some on the other side are focused on scoring political points.

Instead, we should be working together to respond to the global migration phenomenon, implement a more orderly and humane process at our border, and fix our broken immigration system. America has long been known as a land of opportunity; a place where diverse people from different cultures have come, one way or another, and made this country what it is today. Surely that can't be lost on my colleagues and friends from New York, who live and work in the shadow of Lady Liberty, of Ellis Island, and the city where millions have arrived from around the world fleeing poverty and persecution.

Louisiana, and specifically my community of New Orleans, is also a testament to how diverse cultures merge and create a vibrant and unique culture. The city's cultural amalgamation is shaped by French, African, Spanish, Italian, Native American, and Creole influences, among others, creating a distinctive and diverse identity. The city's music, cuisine, language, and traditions reflect the contributions immigrants have made to our community. Jazz, a genre synonymous with New Orleans, is a perfect example of this cultural fusion.

Immigrants also play a crucial role in Louisiana's labor force, making up 13 percent of residents employed in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations. Across the country, migrants fill crucial gaps in the labor market, providing a diverse and skilled workforce, particularly in industries such as technology and agriculture where their expertise and hard work are essential to the nation's prosperity. Immigrants also play a pivotal role in driving economic growth. Many bring entrepreneurial spirit and business acumen, establishing businesses that create jobs and stimulate local economies. That doesn't mean migration is without its challenges.

There certainly are issues to address regarding people arriving at our border, and we absolutely need to provide resources to communities receiving migrants. If there are impacts to emergency services, we need to understand what they are and find a way forward. But migration always has been and will

continue to be a benefit to our country. I hope we will not lose sight of that fact during today's hearing, and I hope that the hearing will be productive rather than political.

Going forward, I hope the Subcommittee will focus its attention on important programs within its jurisdiction, such as emergency preparedness grants, which are critical to places like New York and New Orleans, and the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which helps vulnerable nonprofit organizations strengthen their security.

The Subcommittee should also focus on the Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office, which has an uncertain future because Republicans have failed to do the necessary work to ensure the Office's existence. We have yet to hold a hearing on this important Office. The Subcommittee has also yet to hold hearings on the Office of Health Security or the Science and Technology Directorate, and they need our oversight as well.

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