



COMMITTEE *ON* HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Opening Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Full Committee Markup of H.R. 5736, 5780, 5802, 5804, 5823, 5824, 5811, 5828, 5822, and S.2035

February 12, 2020

Today, we will be considering ten timely measures to improve DHS' effectiveness and support for State and local partners and its own operations.

The "State and Local Cybersecurity Improvement Act," as introduced by Cybersecurity Subcommittee Chairman Richmond, would establish a new grant program to help States build up cyber capabilities. This important bill recognizes that States need a full partner at DHS to help them address costly cybersecurity attacks—including ransomware attacks—that have grown in sophistication and frequency.

The "Transnational White Supremacist Extremism Review Act," as introduced by Intelligence Subcommittee Chairman Rose, directs DHS to take a hard look at the intersection of foreign white supremacist extremist groups and white supremacist extremist groups in the U.S. and share what they learn with State and local law enforcement. Over the past year, the evidence has started to pile up to support the conclusion that the tactics used by these foreign groups to train, recruit, inspire, and support Americans who have an interest in carrying out attacks is not all that different than what we have seen with Al Qaeda or ISIL. I commend Chairman Rose for introducing this critical measure.

Another bill targeted at supporting State and local partners was introduced by the Committee's Vice Chair, Representative Underwood. The "Safe Communities Act of 2020" directs CISA to enhance its efforts to get timely security guidance, best practices, and other related infrastructure security materials to infrastructure owners and operators. One feature of the bill that I think holds a lot of promise is the provision calling on CISA to pilot a train-the-trainer program on how to perform security vulnerability and terrorism risk assessments.

We also will be considering measures to address certain operational challenges within DHS.

Through his oversight work into conditions within TSA, Transportation Security and Maritime Subcommittee Chairman Correa has taken to heart the child care struggle of so many who serve

on the frontlines and has partnered with Representative Katko to produce a pair of bills that we will be considering today that seek to improve access to child care for the screening workforce.

These measures, together with H.R. 1140, which the Committee recently approved to grant the screening workforce the same benefits, rights, and protections as other federal employees, will really make a difference at TSA.

We also will be considering a bill that was introduced by Oversight and Management Subcommittee Chair Torres Small. The “Federal Law Enforcement Training Research and Reporting Act of 2020” was informed by her subcommittee’s oversight findings regarding the need for all DHS law enforcement basic training programs to be accredited. I am particularly pleased that her bill encourages DHS to do more to make its active shooter and other trainings available to State and local law enforcement in rural and remote areas.

I am also pleased that we will be considering the “TSA Credential and Endorsement Harmonization Act of 2019,” as introduced by Senator Tammy Duckworth, which should help TWIC and HME holders get included in TSA’s PreCheck program

Before I yield back, I would like to take a moment to react to the President’s budget request. It is troubling that, even as we work here today to strengthen DHS’ operations, the President is pushing for a budget that would—

- Cut \$700 million in homeland security grants that State and local governments need;
- Cut \$250 million from CISA which would severely curtail its cyber operations and completely defund its program to secure chemical plants from terrorism; and
- Sever the bonds between the U.S. Secret Service and the rest of DHS by irresponsibly transferring it to the Treasury Department.

I urge my colleagues to join me in rejecting the President’s budget and supporting the bills before us today.

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