



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Hearing Statement of Oversight, Investigations & Accountability Subcommittee Ranking Member Glenn Ivey (D-MD)

### *Republicans Love Disinformation “Hearing”*

**May 11, 2023**

I would like to take a moment to express my deepest condolences for the eight people who were killed and at least 10 injured when an SUV deliberately slammed into a crowd at a city bus stop near a shelter for migrants in Brownsville, Texas.

I would also like to acknowledge the tragic act of targeted violence at an outlet mall that left eight people dead, including three children and seven injured in Allen, Texas. Texas is one of two states in the U.S. that has seen 17 mass shootings so far this year.

I’m heartened that next week, this Subcommittee will be discussing politically motivated violence since the Texas shooter wore a “right wing death squad” patch and had potential ties to white supremacist and extremist groups. Such violence can be stoked by misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information (MDM)—the topic of this afternoon’s hearing.

I certainly think it is critical that we look at the impact of false information on our country. For example, election denialism pushed our democracy to the brink in 2020. It led former President Trump to falsely claim that he had actually won the Presidential election. And to call election officials like Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger to pressure him into “find[ing] 11,780 votes” so he could claim victory. President Trump wasted taxpayer dollars on unnecessary recounts.

Worse still, it’s an ongoing problem nationally, election officials across the country are now planning public education campaigns so the public is harder to fool with these kinds of false election claims. We still have people here in Congress, on this Committee no less, who cannot bring themselves to admit that Trump lost fair and square—even though they represent States in which Federal judges (some of them Trump appointees) have expressly found that the elections were not stolen and that the elections were fair and accurate.

Donald Trump also created what I call verdict denialism, which undermines the rule of law. He’s already started saying that the jury’s verdict that he sexually assaulted Jean Carroll is a “disgrace”, and that the \$5 million award is somehow unfair. This is just another one of his endless “witch hunt” claims, even though judges keep rejecting his denials and more indictments are likely to come.

He’s not alone. Trump adviser Steve Bannon has been charged for defrauding hundreds of thousands of donors out of \$25 million dollars, under the false pretense that all the monies raised for the “We Build the Wall” campaign would be spent constructing the U.S.-Mexico border wall.

Then there is Alex Jones, who used his media empire to say that the massacre at Sandy Hook was staged by Democrats and that the grieving parents were actually lying. He was told by a jury that he was the

one actually telling the lies. But he denies the verdict and ducks paying over \$1 billion in damages claims.

Then there are my colleagues and conservatives who still claim that January 6 rioters were merely tourists. That they were merely peaceful protestors, even though five officers died and countless more were injured. More than 1,000 of those supposedly peaceful protestors have been charged, 541 have pleaded guilty, and 14 have been convicted or pleaded guilty of seditious conspiracy (basically an attempt to overthrow the 2020 election). This is the kind of false information that has been rejected by countless judges and juries, but the false hoods continue to be pushed. Even by my colleagues who know better.

Let's move on to the false and misleading information issued before Russia invaded Ukraine. Russia's goal was to splinter the NATO coalition so it could attack Ukraine with impunity. Fortunately, the United States countered the false information with reconnaissance that showed the world that the Russians were lying, which held the coalition together and gave Ukraine the international support it needed to impose repeated defeats on the supposedly superior Russian military. This is the kind of capability we need to meet the international threats that we face as a nation.

We also need to bolster our ability to fend off false information from other dangerous actors in the world, including China and the drug cartels who are flooding America with fentanyl. This is the kind of focus that the House Homeland Security Committee should have. Unfortunately, it appears that Republicans do not want to focus on these dangers to our country.

When it comes to protecting our Homeland, we all have an interest in ensuring that the public has access to the accurate information they need to keep their communities safe. I am looking forward to hearing from the Democratic witness, Dr. Cynthia Miller-Idriss, who will provide this Subcommittee with information on preventative approaches to combatting misinformation, disinformation, and mal-information.

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