



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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

### ***Beyond the Border: Terrorism and Homeland Security Consequences of Illegal Immigration***

**September 19, 2024**

Around the world, vulnerable people are fleeing countries of oppression—countries we often don't have a good relationship with—as well as regions facing poverty and violence. They're seeking refuge, safety, and opportunity. And in accordance with our laws and longstanding humanitarian values, we welcome many of those who need protection and pose no threat to our public safety or national security.

As part of this Committee, it's our duty to ensure that the Department of Homeland Security has the tools and people it needs to keep our communities safe. That means investing in a robust vetting process to screen every single person who enters this country.

That means funding DHS to make sure that those who may pose a threat don't enter our communities. It means working with our allies to ensure that those who pose a threat do not even enter this hemisphere.

The Biden administration has taken action to secure our borders, despite Republican obstruction. And it's showing results. President Biden's executive action this summer led to a 55 percent decrease in encounters at our southern border.

Democrats do not shy away from addressing threats within our communities, at our borders, or beyond. I hope Republicans will work with us to tackle threats rather than use the issue for partisan politics. Bad actors would prefer we fight each other rather than fix real challenges.

I also want to point out that this Committee has yet to hold a single hearing on worsening domestic terrorism and violent extremism—which affects our national security, our public safety, and our way of life. Last fall, FBI Director Christopher Wray testified that his agency has over 2,700 open domestic terrorism cases.

And following the events of January 6<sup>th</sup> and mass murders in El Paso, Pittsburgh, and Buffalo its clear there are real threats right here at home from individuals from our own communities. We're now seeing unfounded and dangerous anti-immigrant rhetoric fueling hate by far-right extremists and neo-nazi groups in Springfield, Ohio.

More than 33 bomb threats in Springfield, Ohio have shut schools and municipal buildings over the past week. This hate was fueled in part by some Members of Congress across the aisle and former President Trump spreading false rumors that migrants are killing and eating pets.

Even amidst the bomb threats, Vice Presidential Candidate JD Vance defended making up such terrible stories. He told CNN that *"If I have to create stories so that the American media actually pays attention to the suffering of the American people then that's what I'm going to do."*

Let's be clear – it is never ok to make up stories that put our communities at risk.

Fearmongering about immigrants is not ok. Bomb threats and violence are not ok. This language must stop, and the threat of domestic violence and domestic terrorism should be a serious focus of this committee.

I look forward to today's discussion, and I ask my Republican colleagues to demonstrate the same interest and concern about the threat of domestic terrorism going forward.

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