



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Markup Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)

Markup of 20 Homeland Security Measures

July 25, 2024

Turning to today's markup, the Committee will be taking up 20 measures—the most ambitious markup of this Congress. Six Democratic measures will be considered today covering cybersecurity, transportation security, and the accreditation of DHS's basic training programs.

Congressman Lou Correa's *DHS Basic Training Accreditation Improvement Act* requires the Homeland Security Secretary to report to Congress on the accreditation status of each of the Department's basic training programs. As this Committee heard last Congress from the Director of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, accreditation "assigns rigor to training processes" and "results in the best product". The full House adopted a version of this bill last Congress, and I am pleased to see it advance again.

Representative Robert Garcia sponsors H.R. 9469, the *Pipeline Security Act*, that aims to more explicitly codify the TSA Administrator's pipeline security role with particular focus on cybersecurity. In the wake of the 2021 Colonial Pipeline ransomware cyber-attack, TSA has issued a series of security directives to protect pipelines. This measure would also direct the TSA Administrator to produce a personnel strategy for carrying out the pipeline security mission, including developing more cybersecurity expertise.

H.R. 3386, the *Bottles and Breastfeeding Equipment Screening Enhancement Act*, by Representative Katie Porter, would help make sure the needs of those traveling with babies are better considered at TSA checkpoints. The bill directs the TSA Administrator to issue or update guidance to minimize the risk of contamination of breast milk, baby formula, juice, and related products.

The Committee will also be taking up a variety of cybersecurity measures. Representative Clarke's measure would codify DHS's cyber internship program, which provides paid internships to students from a variety of secondary schools, technical schools, community colleges, and universities. Such opportunities not only help DHS fulfill its cybersecurity mission, but they provide invaluable experiences for the students.

Representative Menendez's bill would enhance the ability of DHS and CISA to engage with allies to advance shared cybersecurity goals by authorizing the Secretary, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, to station DHS personnel, including CISA employees, overseas to collaborate with international partners.

Representative Swalwell's *Joint Cyber Defense Collaborative Act* would clarify and formalize existing CISA authorities to provide a forum for public-private collaboration to defend cyberspace. CISA launched the JCDC in August 2021 and is comprised of CISA, Federal partners, and private-sector entities and has served as the hub for the Federal Government's collaboration with the private sector on a range of cybersecurity issues.

I applaud the excellent work of our Members and staff to get us to good places on the vast majority of the measures to be considered today. I recognize, though, that today's Committee markup is just one stop in the legislative process, and I look forward to continuing the conversation on several of today's bills.

Unfortunately, though, two bills on today's agenda fail to advance this Committee's mission to keep the homeland safe.

H.R. 5729 would prevent the Secretary of Homeland Security from benefitting from diverse, outside perspectives on intelligence issues. Tying the hands of the current and all future Secretaries of Homeland Security from establishing intelligence advisory boards does not make sense unless you live in the echo chamber of right-wing conspiracy theories. Trying to win short-term political clout among MAGA extremists should not motivate homeland security policymaking.

Similarly, H.R. 9731, the "Tipping Off Terrorists Act," would expose sensitive national-security information to our adversaries in order to stoke fear about border security. House Democrats do not oppose transparency and accountability in the statistics DHS provides Congress and the public about encounters along our borders. However, this measure would give terrorists and transnational criminal organizations an inside track every month on DHS's screening practices and focus, since who is considered "special interest" is a dynamic assessment made according to the threat landscape.

Committee Democrats refuse to recklessly betray our solemn vows to preserve, protect, and defend our great Nation.

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