



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Hearing Statement of Transportation & Maritime Security Subcommittee Ranking Member Shri Thanedar (D-MI)

### *Safeguarding the Homeland from Unmanned Aerial Systems*

**December 10, 2024**

Over the past few years, the use of unmanned aerial systems—also known as drones—has become common across a wide range of applications.

Drones have become increasingly affordable and useful within agriculture, law enforcement, search and rescue, photography, and other industries.

However, as the airspace becomes more and more crowded with unmanned aircraft, we must ensure the government is prepared and empowered to protect the safety and security of U.S. critical infrastructure and the American public.

In 2018, Congress enacted initial authorities for the Executive Branch to begin testing and operating counterdrone technologies, also known as CUAS technologies.

Those authorities have kickstarted the interagency coordination and technology development needed to carry out such a complex effort, but the authorities remain limited and have relied on one short term extension after another.

I hope Congress will act early next year to advance legislation to extend and expand these authorities.

As we do so, we must ensure the government's counterdrone activities appropriately protect privacy and civil liberties and do not have unintended impacts on the safety of the national airspace.

As Ranking Member of the Transportation and Maritime Security Subcommittee, I am especially interested in making sure airports are protected from threats posed by drones.

Already, we have seen major airports shut down due to errant drones, causing significant delays.

Introducing new technologies that affect radio signals is especially sensitive within the airport environment and other urban environments, so we must ensure such technologies are carefully tested.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how Congress can push our counterdrone efforts into a new phase in a measured yet meaningful manner.

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