



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Hearing Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) *Confronting the Coronavirus: Perspectives on the Response to a Pandemic Threat*

March 4, 2020

Today, the Committee is meeting to hear from medical experts about how our country can best confront the coronavirus.

Americans are justifiably concerned about the virus, which has spread around the world and claimed the lives of thousands, including at least nine people here at home.

Understandably, they have questions about how it may affect them, their loved ones, and their communities:

- How concerned do we need to be about the coronavirus?
- Who is most at risk?
- What can communities do to prepare?
- What can Americans do to protect themselves and their families?
- What is the Federal government doing?
- What more should it be doing?
- When might we have a vaccine or other treatment?

My constituents are looking to the Federal government for leadership, guidance, and expertise, and am sure my colleagues' constituents are too.

I am concerned the Trump Administration has downplayed the threat, overstated how close scientists are to developing a vaccine, and silenced experts in his own administration who disagree with him.

Instead, we must acknowledge the threat and allow doctors and scientists to offer candid assessments of the situation and direct the Federal response.

We are fortunate to have a distinguished panel of physicians to offer their expert opinions today.

I look forward to hearing from them about what the Federal government must do to support state and local efforts, help hospitals and healthcare providers, and protect the lives of Americans.

Input like theirs will be absolutely essential to confronting the threat posed by the coronavirus, and I appreciate their willingness to join us here today.

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