



COMMITTEE ON
**HOMELAND
SECURITY**
DEMOCRATS

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, *Ranking member*

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

Sixteen Years After 9/11: Assessing Suspicious Activity Reporting Efforts

Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence

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This past Monday, we commemorated the 16th anniversary of the September 11th attacks. As we reflect on that somber day, we also begin to take note of how our daily way of life has changed in the interest of security.

We consider the changes that have been made to how we travel, and we also realize that now, as a society, we are more vigilant. This vigilance has likely prevented terrorist attacks.

One way society plays a part in preventing attacks is through suspicious activity reporting. Years of data show that if used appropriately, suspicious activity reporting is part of a layered security approach designed to assist in keeping Americans safe and help raise public awareness.

However, we have to ensure that these programs are administered appropriately. As you know, our Committee works to find a balance between the need for these programs and Constitutional concerns.

Today, we must thoroughly discuss and examine the many strengths and faults that may accompany our suspicious activity reporting efforts. We must acknowledge these concerns in order to quickly reflect and improve our SAR programs at local, state and federal levels. This means making sure all of the appropriate stakeholders have a seat at the table.

Our nation is best served when that table is set with law enforcement personnel, civil liberties and civil rights groups, and community members. We must ensure that proper training guidance and protocols are developed and followed by law enforcement and homeland security practitioners.

Properly identifying, reporting, evaluating, and sharing information to prevent acts of terrorism remains mission-critical. As we hear from witnesses today, I hope that we can learn more about what suspicious activity reporting looks like moving forward.

Moreover, I hope to receive concrete recommendations about how new policies and guidelines can be shaped to ensure that our information sharing mechanisms continue to evolve to stay ahead of our enemies.

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