



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

Markup of: H.R. 5274, H.R. 7174, H.R. 7777, H.R. 7778, and H.R. 7779

May 19, 2022

Let me begin by saying that this has been a sad week for our country. First, on Friday night in Milwaukee, 21 people were injured in a mass shooting as the city hosted the NBA playoffs. On Saturday, in Buffalo, a young white man radicalized on the internet—bought into the “Great Replacement” conspiracy theory that immigrants and minorities are somehow going to replace white Americans—and targeted a grocery store in a predominantly Black neighborhood, murdering 10 people. And on Sunday, in Laguna Woods, a shooter opened fire on a predominantly Taiwanese congregation meeting at a Presbyterian church.

Today, in America, the sad truth is that minority communities across the country have to fear grocery shopping, going to a salon, or gathering in fellowship and to worship. DHS Secretary Mayorkas, FBI Director Wray, and others have been warning that domestic violent extremists pose the greatest terrorism threat to the homeland. And tragically, those warnings are becoming more evident everyday. It is time we truly heed those warnings.

In that vein, this Committee will continue its rigorous oversight of this severe and pervasive threat. Turning to today’s agenda, we have 5 timely measures that we are considering. The first measure, H.R. 7174, authored by Representative Slotkin, would reauthorize, for 10 years, the National Computer Forensics Institute (NCFI), which is the Secret Service’s training center for State and local law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges to learn how to legally and effectively process computer evidence related to ransomware attacks and other computer crimes. With ransomware and cyber threats rising, the NCFI’s mission is more important than ever. Without this reauthorization, the NCFI’s authority to carry out its important work would sunset in November of this year.

We are also taking up measures that would authorize CISA to carry out training to develop and strengthen the skills of the cybersecurity workforce related to securing industrial control systems and authorize training for CBP personnel to prevent secondary exposure to fentanyl and other potentially lethal substances.

Additionally, we are considering a measure that will bolster the protection of DHS research and development from foreign malign influence operations - H.R. 7779, the “DHS Restrictions on Confucius Institutes and Chinese Entities of Concern Act,” introduced by Representative Pfluger. The bill aims to be responsive to what Members of the Committee have heard in classified briefings over recent years, about the Chinese government’s efforts to infiltrate American colleges and universities.

I worked with Mr. Pfluger on an amendment to support the goals of the underlying bill in a way that avoids making historically Black colleges and universities and other minority serving institutions choose between R&D opportunities with DHS and keeping valued cultural and language exchange programs operational. Specifically, my amendment limits the prohibition on funding for universities and colleges to just those that have relationships with Confucius institutions - just as the prohibition works at the

Defense Department. At the same time, it would require greater transparency about contacts with other Chinese universities. And I thank Congressman Pfluger for working with me on this.

Finally, we will be considering my bill, H.R. 7778 the “Department of Homeland Security Seal Protection Act,” which will provide much-needed statutory protection for the DHS seal against misappropriation in a manner intended to convey the impression that DHS or a component has approved, endorsed, or authorized such use. This legislation is a priority of the Department and is responsive to the recent high-profile arrest of two individuals who cultivated law enforcement in the Secret Service and in other Federal agencies while pretending to be DHS officers.

I look forward to passing these important measures and thank the Members for their participation today.

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