



COMMITTEE ON
**HOMELAND
SECURITY**
DEMOCRATS

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, *Ranking member*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)
Combating Transnational Gangs Through Information Sharing
Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence
January 18, 2018

This hearing is focused on federal information sharing related to combating transnational gangs and criminal organizations, but given the recent antics from the White House I cannot address this topic in a vacuum.

President Trump began his campaign with an attack on immigrants and continues to use his Administration to advance an agenda that is based on racial and ethnic bias.

One of his first actions as President was a travel ban from majority Muslim countries.

Last Fall, Trump ended the Deferred Action Childhood Arrival program, upending the lives of many young immigrants, who have only known the United States as their home.

On January 8, the Trump Administration made a decision to cancel the Temporary Protected Status for people from El Salvador, mere months after the same decision was made regarding those that have sought shelter and compassion in the U.S. from Haiti and Nicaragua.

This week, the Trump Administration released a misleading report, which purports that foreign-born individuals commit terror at very high rates.

The data in the report perpetuates a myth that all immigrants are a threat and a danger to our communities and country.

The report is yet another propaganda tool by the Trump Administration consisting of falsehoods and half-truths to support its narrow-minded policies.

President Trump is becoming more and more comfortable openly stoking xenophobia to garner support for his misguided immigration and border security plans.

Republicans in Congress seemingly agree with President Trump, as they are silent when his Administration spews misinformation, turn a blind eye to his despicable decisions TPS and Dreamers, and refuse to denounce the vile remarks he has made about immigrants from Latin American, African, and Middle Eastern countries.

Republican Members of Congress, some of whom serve on this Committee, recently scrambled to justify a string of heartless actions by the Trump Administration all of which are in support of his border wall.

Those who allege rampant exploitation of our borders and immigration system by transnational gangs like MS-13 often fail to acknowledge the hundreds of millions of immigrants that reside legally and peacefully in our country.

After one year, it has become crystal clear that President Trump does not understand how important immigrant communities are to the history, makeup, and future of our country.

We are left to wonder whether many Republican Members of Congress actually agree with Trump or are simply afraid to hold him accountable.

The Committee has examined transnational gangs in the past, including a subcommittee field hearing on MS-13 in Long Island, New York, last summer.

However, this Administration and Republicans have focused solely on the threat from MS-13, while Democrats acknowledge that there are a wide range of threats posed by transnational gangs and TCOs, not just MS-13.

I want to be clear, I remain committed to protecting our homeland from transnational criminal threats and activities such as murder, assault, human trafficking, money laundering and cybercrime, as well as drug trafficking.

However, I am not willing to give President Trump a blank check to carry out his dangerous, un-American policy goals.

#

Media contact: Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978

