



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)
Full Committee Markup
June 6, 2018**

The measures on the roster today address a range of timely homeland security issues. I am pleased that the Committee is considering legislation authored by Mr. Langevin to help prevent the trafficking of fentanyl and other synthetic opioids into the U.S. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, every day, opioid-related drug overdoses kill more than 115 people.

As startling as that statistic is, it gives a partial picture of the devastation that prescription and synthetic opioids are having on our communities, families, health care systems, and economy. By advancing H.R. 5762, the "Joint Task Force To Combat Opioid Trafficking Act," we can do something good here and help save lives.

Another good thing that we are doing today is focusing on securing public areas of transportation facilities. We will be considering a bill introduced by Mr. Payne that speaks to the lessons learned not only from the 2013 LAX shooting but also 2017 attacks in baggage claim in the Fort Lauderdale airport and in a passageway to a New York City Subway station.

For as much good as we are poised to do today, there is a gaping hole on today's roster. There is no school security legislation on the agenda. Today's markup was rescheduled from May 16th, when we were poised to consider a school security bill that you, Mr. Chairman, introduced.

Since May 16th, there were two more school shootings in Santa Fe, Texas and Noblesville, Indiana. The Texas attack claimed the lives of eight children and two teachers and the Indiana attack resulted in injuries to two people. Addressing the spate of mass shooting attacks in our Nation's schools should be the business of this Committee because school security IS homeland security.

For a long time, my colleagues on this Committee showed little appreciation for this truth but I was hopeful that there was increased awareness when "Securing Our Schools Act" was introduced.

There are three other timely homeland security matters that the Majority continues to ignore. I am, of course, referring to the Trump Administration's disastrous disaster response and recovery effort in Puerto Rico, the Trump Administration's cruel policy to

separate children from their parents at the border, and election security. I take my responsibilities as a leader on homeland security very seriously.

Secretaries of Homeland Security – be they in a Democratic or Republican Administration—understood that when I or my Members asked tough questions we did so out of obligation to our constituents and commitment to making the Nation more secure.

With so much at stake today, I am troubled that the Majority has refused to join with me to pursue action on such critical life-and-death and security matters.

Today, I have a resolution before the Committee that I introduced out of fear that the President, less motivated by national or cybersecurity, would take his boot off the neck of ZTE, a habitual abuser of sanctions we imposed on doing business with Iran and North Korea.

By favorably reporting out my resolution of inquiry you can send a message that this Committee is no longer in the business of giving cover to President Trump when he is not putting America first.

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