

NEWS ALERT



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Homeland Security Committee

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

Full Committee Markup

May 9, 2012 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee markup:

“At the outset, I would like to commend you for continuing this Committee’s important efforts in the area of WMD preparedness, response, and recovery. Approval today of H.R. 2356, the “WMD Prevention and Preparedness Act of 2011”, will mark the second consecutive Congress that this Committee has produced comprehensive legislation to enhance our ability to prepared for, respond to, and recover from a WMD attack.

I am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 2356, which was authored by Representative Pascrell of New Jersey, a former Member of this Committee. Representative Pascrell deserves credit for taking on the complex challenge of addressing the WMD threat and producing the “WMD Prevention and Preparedness Act”. Enactment of this measure will strengthen our Nation’s homeland security posture in some very meaningful ways.

I am also pleased that we will be considering another measure that I cosponsored— H.R. 3173. This measure will direct TSA to streamline and reform the Transportation Worker Identification Credential program to provide some relief to transportation workers, who must secure TWICs to do their jobs. I would note that this Committee has previously taken action on H.R. 2356 and H.R. 3173, in some form or fashion.

In contrast, the other two measures to be considered today have never seen legislative action. Putting aside the substance of these bills, I am troubled that the Chairman has decided to stray from the regular order and fast-track measures that have no legislative history when there are six bills pending at the Full Committee that have been favorably forwarded by subcommittees.

The areas covered in the Subcommittee-approved bills are Border security, Federal facility security, Credentialing, Medical response, and Grants management. Additionally, a bill authorizing the Transportation Security Administration has been lingering between Subcommittee and Full Committee since September 2011. Unfortunately, having bills linger between Subcommittee and Full Committee is just one of the persistent issues this Committee has faced in the 112th Congress when it attempts to legislate.

This Congress, the Committee has ordered reported to the House 12 bills and 1 resolution. Today, 16 months into the 112th Congress, only one of those bills has been considered by the Full House.

With the notable exception of the DHS Authorization Act, whose report has not even been processed, all the other bills have sat indefinitely on the Union Calendar for months. With respect to the DHS Authorization Act, I am sure the Members of the Committee will recall, prior to the Committee taking a final vote on the DHS Authorization Act in October, I requested that we take

the time to have the Congressional Budget Office score the bill. My request was objected to and the Committee proceeded to vote on it without a CBO score. Today, six months later, we still do not have a CBO score and the report for the bill has not been processed and made available to the public.

Even as we consider these bills today, we must not lose sight of the fact that there are three (3) areas of major unfinished business. While in Committee, we have made some progress on these areas, we still need to bring to the House floor:

- Legislation to reauthorize the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards program;
- Cybersecurity legislation to protect critical infrastructure networks; and
- An annual DHS authorization bill.”

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