

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Full Committee Markup Statement of Ranking Member Bennie Thompson**

September 30, 2015 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following remarks for the full Committee markup:

“I thank the Chairman for working with me and the Democratic Members of this Committee to advance a wide range of timely legislative measures. The roster for today is ambitious and includes vehicles from each of our six subcommittees. By and large, there is bipartisan agreement on these measures and many of the amendments that Members are expected to present today.

I would like to highlight the four bills sponsored by Committee Democrats. H.R. 3350, as introduced by the Ranking Member of the Counterterrorism Subcommittee, Representative Higgins, is targeted at ensuring that the best minds come together to protect our citizens and roadways from the threat of release or misappropriation of chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear materials.

The “Know the CBRN Terrorism Threats to Transportation Act” was introduced in response to a decision by the Department of Energy to allow nuclear waste to be transported on our roadways. That decision was made without the benefit of timely information about the threat picture. Enactment of H.R. 3350 will ensure that DOE gets that information.

Representative Richmond, the Ranking Member of the Cybersecurity Subcommittee, introduced H.R. 3510, the “DHS Cybersecurity Strategy Act of 2015,” in response to a recent Office of Inspector General Report that found that coordination among DHS’ components and offices involved in executing its multi-faceted cybersecurity mission was lacking. Enactment of H.R. 3510 will put DHS on the right path by requiring DHS to have a Department-wide strategy and plan.

Representative Payne, the Ranking Member of the Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee, introduced H.R. 3144, the “Partners for Aviation Security Act” to prevent TSA from making changes to the list of items that passengers are prohibited from bringing on a plane without consulting its main partners in aviation security—the organizations that make up the Aviation Security Advisory Committee. Enactment of H.R. 3144 will strengthen the partnership between TSA and stakeholders who share its commitment to security—the ASAC.

The final Democratic bill to be considered is legislation that I introduced, H.R. 3505, the “Department of Homeland Security Clearance Management and Administration Act.” As the title suggests, it seeks to improve how DHS manages its clearance process, at all stages—from decisions on whether to designate positions as requiring clearances to processes to ensure uniformity in how clearances are adjudicated, suspended, denied and revoked.

I appreciate Chairman McCaul’s willingness to work with me and the Democrats on this Committee. Before I yield back, I would like to acknowledge that many of the bills under the consideration today are the products of extensive bipartisan collaborate.

In particular, I would like to single out three major bipartisan bills: H.R. 3572, the “DHS Headquarters Reform and Improvement Act of 2015,” as advanced by Oversight Chairman Perry and Ranking Member Watson Coleman; H.R. 3583, the “PREPARE Act,” as advanced by the Emergency Preparedness Chair McSally and Ranking Member Payne; and H.R. 3578, the “DHS Science and Technology Reform and Improvement Act,” as advanced by Cybersecurity Chair Ratcliffe and Ranking Member Richmond.”

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