

NEWS ALERT



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Homeland Security Committee

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, Chairman



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson

Human Trafficking: Recent Trends

March 19, 2008 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism Subcommittee hearing entitled *Human Trafficking: Recent Trends*:

“Human trafficking poses a serious threat to human rights worldwide, with an estimated 2 million to 4 million victims each year. About 17,500 of these individuals are trafficked to the United States annually.

Most of the victims are women, children, and individuals from vulnerable populations who are preyed upon by traffickers. Human trafficking jeopardizes the welfare of its victims, but it also poses a threat to our homeland security.

The same transnational organizations that traffic in people may also traffic narcotics or weapons across our borders.

Some of the same routes used to traffic persons into the U.S. may be used to smuggle terrorists or their weapons into the country. Proceeds from trafficking also could be utilized for other illicit activities that threaten our security.

Therefore, for both humanitarian and security reasons, it is imperative that we do everything possible to combat trafficking.

That is why the Committee on Homeland Security included provisions in the Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007 to strengthen the capabilities of the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center.

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses about whether issues related to coordination, staffing, funding, and information sharing among federal agencies involved in combating human trafficking have improved. I am also interested to hear what more needs to be done to ensure we are fighting this terrible problem as effectively as possible.

The fight against human trafficking is one we must win – for the sake of its victims and for America's homeland security.”

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