

NEWS ALERT



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Homeland Security Committee

Rep. Bennie G. Thompson, Chairman



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson

“A Report Card on Homeland Security Information Sharing”

September 24, 2008 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment Subcommittee hearing entitled “A Report Card on Homeland Security Information Sharing”:

“I agree that State, local, and tribal voices should be the benchmark we use to judge whether information sharing is working. The 9/11 Act that became law just a year ago was clear: homeland security doesn’t happen just in Washington, D.C. Preventing the next terrorist attack instead requires new and strong partnerships with State, local, and tribal leaders – especially in law enforcement.

Put simply, police and sheriffs’ officers, in the course of their day-to-day crime-fighting duties, are in the best position to stop a terrorist plot in its tracks. If we don’t have a Federal intelligence and law enforcement community that knows how to meet their needs, however, we risk disaster.

That’s why I was disappointed by the results of the National Governor’s Association’s recent survey of State and local homeland security advisers.

Fully 50% of survey respondents described the intelligence products they receive from Federal agencies as “unhelpful.” And more than half of the respondents – 53% – stated that those intelligence products were not specific enough to direct operations in the communities they serve. We can and must do better.

An intelligence shop that serves the needs of its State and local customers well can be the “glue” that will hold the Department of Homeland Security together. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses about how to make that glue stronger and better – at DHS and across the Intelligence Community – as we move forward.”

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