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Congressman Bilirakis sought a seat on the Homeland Security Committee shortly after his election to Congress because few issues are as important as defending America's citizens from those who want to hurt them.

In December 2010, Gus was named Chairman of the critical Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications Subcommittee. As Chairman, Bilirakis' position is vital to the state of Florida, as he oversees FEMA, emergency grant programs, communication during emergency situations, and disaster response and recovery efforts.

In March 2011, Gus introduced the Student Visa Security Improvement Act, which will improve the background checks conducted on student visa applicants from high-risk areas and enhance America's ability to ensure that foreign students are abiding by the terms of their visas once in the U.S. He has also introduced the Metropolitan Medical Response System Program Act of 2011, H.R. 1411, to assist state and local governments in preparing for and responding to mass casualty incidents resulting from acts of terrorism, natural disasters, and other emergencies.

During the 111th Congress, Gus served as Ranking Member (Lead Republican) on the important Subcommittee on Management, Investigations and Oversight. In this role he was his party's top congressional watchdog over the Department of Homeland Security. He also served on the Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism Subcommittee.

The Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act, which the President has signed

into law, includes two proposals sponsored by Congressman Bilirakis. First, ensuring that rail and mass transit security coordinators are American citizens and requiring the real-world testing of rail tank cars carrying hazardous materials to determine the way to best protect them from attack.



He also has introduced legislation that will help the Coast Guard determine the identity of interdicted aliens so that they are not simply released to continue their illegal and dangerous behavior and ensure that terrorists do not slip through cracks in our border defenses.

Gus also introduced a resolution, which the House approved unanimously, which encourages increased maritime domain awareness and highlights a program called America's Waterway Watch, which serves like a neighborhood watch program for the water.

Gus has championed the most important issue to Florida's port community: ensuring that maritime workers are only required to have a single port access identification card with the most stringent standards possible.

He also has been a vocal proponent of strengthening the student visa process and has questioned the Homeland Security Secretary about the need to keep better track of foreign students. Gus secured invitations to testify before Congress for Richard Wainio, Director of the Tampa Port Authority, Craig Fugate, the Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, and Bill Janes, the Director of the Florida Office of Drug Control, on issues of importance to all Floridians.