

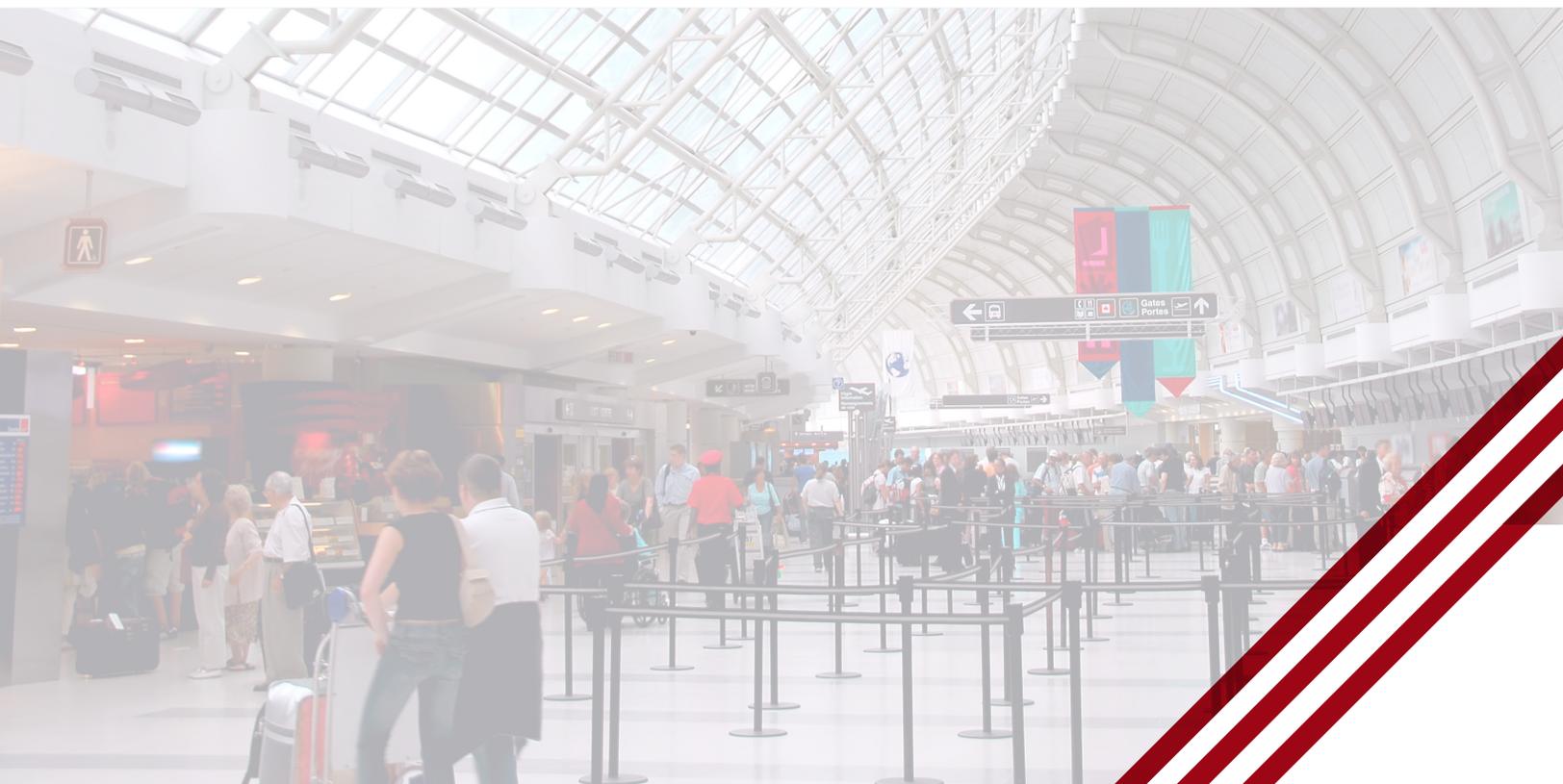


TRANSFORMING SECURITY AT AIRPORTS

An Update on Progress and a Plan for the Future of Aviation Security

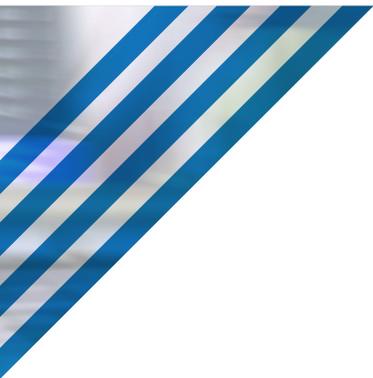


U.S. TRAVEL
ASSOCIATION





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FOREWORD

ROGER DOW

President and CEO
U.S. Travel Association

The U.S. Travel Association has been driving the national discussion regarding aviation safety and travel security for more than a decade. Our advocacy is rooted in the belief that greater security and increased travel are mutually compatible goals. Based on this view, we commissioned a report five years ago offering recommendations for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). It's now time for an update of that report.

Despite some challenges, TSA has improved its performance over the last five years, providing greater convenience to travelers while ensuring a high level of safety and security across the system. In particular, the TSA PreCheck trusted traveler program has been a major breakthrough in improving the travel experience. But much work remains. Some of the recommendations our organization made in 2011 still need to be implemented fully; for others, work has not yet begun. For example, we continue to believe that funds raised from TSA fees should be used to improve transportation security, not be diverted to general revenues. And close coordination with other federal agencies, and with the travel industry, is essential for TSA's continued improvement.

The best opportunity to ensure security and get travelers through lines quickly is presented by effective trusted traveler programs such as TSA PreCheck. Efforts to continue that program's expansion should focus on Four Ps: process, promotion, price and prioritization.

We look forward to working with TSA, Congress, the travel industry, and the traveling public to ensure the highest possible levels of security and expanded travel to contribute to our nation's prosperity.



INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the U.S. Travel Association concluded a year-long expert-led project to formulate recommendations for travel-enhancing changes to the goals and performance of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Led by former Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, Congressman Jim Turner, Sabre CEO Sam Gilliland and American Airlines CEO Robert Crandall, this blue-ribbon panel issued a groundbreaking report, “A Better Way,” which made 14 recommendations for reforming TSA, based on the experience of security professionals, input from industry stakeholders, advice from privacy advocates and surveys of travelers.¹

Five years later, we now urge the new administration and the new Congress to place a renewed focus on refining and enhancing the operations of the TSA. Its mission to detect and deter security threats to the busiest aviation system in the world while facilitating the travel of nearly 750 million fliers per year is a complex, expensive and extremely important undertaking. However, an effective TSA is crucial not only to our national security, but also to the U.S. economy. U.S. Travel surveys have demonstrated that the public travels less when the system is bogged down by excessive or unpredictable wait times, or TSA dysfunction and chaos. These real or perceived failures impose an immense cost on the American economy.² **Research found that travelers would take between two and three more trips per year if TSA hassles could be reduced without compromising security effectiveness—and these additional trips would add \$85 billion in spending and 888,000 more jobs to our economy.**

Unfortunately, the past five years for the TSA have been the most tumultuous political and budgetary environment in recent history, forcing the agency to regularly navigate the latest fiscal crisis amid its usual challenges. Notably, the TSA suffered a major budgetary setback when the Murray-Ryan 2013 budget deal became law. This law mandated that TSA fee increases be diverted to the General Fund as part of a deficit reduction package, which U.S. Travel opposed. These fees should have been appropriately reinvested into enhancing security measures and creating a first-class travel experience. In addition, Congress has failed to reauthorize TSA since its original creation. This creates confusion and dysfunction, because numerous Congressional committees have oversight of TSA and often provide inconsistent recommendations on how to balance security, privacy and facilitation.



“ [Wait] times are not soaring simply because security is that much tighter. It’s because TSA bureaucracy has gotten weaker.”

“ This crisis didn’t just come out of nowhere. Airports and airlines have been sounding the alarm for months.”

“ And in the coming months, we will take a broader look at TSA, including the first-ever reauthorization of the agency, which will give us an opportunity to make wider reform and long-term changes.”⁴

Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, Michael McCaul (R-TX 10th District)

In addition, in the lead-up to the summer travel season of 2016, lines at many TSA checkpoints became completely unacceptable due to a combination of more travelers, reductions in TSA screening staff numbers and the return of many travelers to the regular screening lanes after the sudden end of the “managed inclusion” practice from the early days of TSA PreCheck. These lines were alleviated only through an emergency reallocation of funds, along with significant efforts by airlines and airports to assume non-essential tasks from TSA and invest private-sector funds into many checkpoints.³ The crisis demonstrated, however, that **more structural changes are needed to help TSA succeed in its mission of strengthening security and facilitating travel.**

U.S. Travel Association President and CEO Roger Dow offered the following thoughts on TSA’s progress:

“ Fifteen years after 9/11, and five years after the issuance of ‘A Better Way,’ TSA has become a better-performing agency. It has improved most notably in the development and deployment of the TSA PreCheck trusted traveler program as part of its broader risk-based screening initiative. TSA has also made tremendous strides in working with travel industry stakeholders to improve its operations, and in developing long-term strategies for procuring the technology and equipment it needs.

This new report by U.S. Travel and some of its key stakeholders captures the most pressing issues facing our aviation security system, and suggests a new series of reforms that would further improve air travel in America, protect traveler privacy and dignity, and give the American people the best return on their investment of traveler fees and government dollars. In particular, the agency must continue to expand TSA PreCheck, with focus on the ‘Four Ps’: process, promotion, price, and prioritization.



We hope that this set of recommendations will be a top priority when the new administration and Congress take office early in 2017. **Making TSA into a world-class agency will provide immense benefits to not only security, but also our economy and our confidence in public-private collaboration to solve problems affecting everyday Americans.**

SEVEN WAYS TO TRANSFORM THE TSA

Five years of a tumultuous political and budgetary environment for the TSA have led to instances of long lines, budgetary uncertainty and traveler distress. At the same time, the security landscape has evolved, requiring enhancements to address the ever-evolving environment.

If TSA hassles could be reduced without compromising security effectiveness, travelers would take between...

2-3
MORE TRIPS
A YEAR

ADDING

\$85 BILLION
IN SPENDING
.....
888,000
MORE JOBS*



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE AGENCY FALL IN SEVEN AREAS:



FUNDING

- Direct all aviation security fee revenues to securing travelers



LOCAL EMPOWERMENT & COMMUNICATION

- Improve traveler education about security rules and regulations
- Overhaul TSA Screening Partnership Program
- Encourage stakeholders to improve the checkpoint experience for travelers

TSA PRECHECK IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION

- Make enrollment in PreCheck more convenient for travelers
- Allow people who have passed a security review to automatically access PreCheck
- Allow REAL ID to meet document requirements
- Align third party vendor growth
- Reduce the cost and/or offer quantity discounts on annual payment plans for select groups



TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

- Develop budgets using the strategic technology planning process
- Utilize automated technologies to better inform staffing needs at airports
- Increase funding for Passenger Screening Canines



TSA STRUCTURE

- Convert TSA Administrator position to five-year, non-partisan term



INTERNATIONAL SOLUTIONS

- Expand baggage screening agreement to EU



AIRPORT RISK MITIGATION

- Conduct system-wide airport vulnerability assessment



Congress and the next president should place a renewed focus on refining and enhancing TSA operations in order to improve air travel security in America while giving the American people the best return on investment of traveler fees and government funds.

DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL ARE KEY DRIVERS OF THE U.S. ECONOMY AND SUPPORT MORE THAN...



15.1
million jobs



\$2.1
trillion in economic output



\$231
billion in wages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. FUNDING

1A. Redirect Airline Passenger Fees to Cover the Cost of and Improve TSA Screening Operations



Travelers paid **\$1.6 billion** more in TSA fees in 2015 compared to 2013; however, this funding was diverted away from TSA.

Summary:

Under current law from the 2013 Murray-Ryan budget agreement, more than one-third of all airline passenger fees collected are being diverted from TSA aviation security screening to the General Fund until FY 2025.⁵ Revenue raised from aviation security fees should go toward securing travelers, not to deficit reduction. While we support solutions such as the FASTER Act (H.R. 5340)⁶, which repeals the requirement that a portion of aviation security service fees be credited as offsetting receipts and deposited into the General Fund of the Treasury, we encourage Congress to ensure that security funding is used to improve all aspects of aviation security including, but not limited to, staffing, developing technologies, and checkpoint and airport facility enhancements.

Analysis:

The 2013 budget deal (known as “Murray-Ryan”) increased TSA fees from \$2.50 per segment to \$5.60, but used the increased federal revenue as a general revenue measure, failing to provide the funds to TSA. As a result, travelers are paying considerably more in user fees but are not receiving the benefits of their fees in terms of better TSA performance, shorter lines or better-trained screeners.

“To provide TSA with additional resources, Congress should immediately end the practice of diverting \$1.25 billion this year and \$15 billion over the course of the decade away from TSA’s core mission.”⁷

Kevin M. Burke, ACI-NA President and CEO





TSA cannot continue to rely on temporary band-aids by moving around limited homeland security dollars. The fact that each year over a billion dollars of the fees TSA collects from every flier is being diverted away from aviation security is a big part of the problem. The bipartisan bill we are introducing today will allow TSA to retain the fees it collects so it can properly staff airports around the country, operate as effectively as possible, and secure the American public.”⁸

**Ranking Minority Member, House Homeland Security Committee,
Bennie Thompson (D-MS 2nd District)**

This provision was included in the budget deal as one of many measures designed to meet revenue targets and avert additional worry about a government shutdown or debt limit crisis. Changes to TSA ticket taxes had been proposed numerous times by the Bush and Obama administrations but were always rejected by Congress as an inappropriate additional tax on travelers. During this budget negotiation, however, the breadth of the budget package made it possible for negotiators to not only include ticket tax increases, but also to use the additional revenue as an offset for spending outside of DHS or TSA. Over the objection of the travel and aviation industries, the provision became law in early 2014, and became effective in July 2014.⁹ It is worth noting that Congress has already been forced to fix this law once, when there was an outcry over what constituted a round-trip. The ensuing legislative changes instituted an \$11.20 maximum round-trip charge.¹⁰

Comparing 2013 to 2015, travelers paid \$1.6 billion more in fees—\$3.5 billion vs. \$1.9 billion—for the exact same service.¹¹ This diversion essentially requires travelers to fund aspects of government completely unrelated to TSA’s mission—anything from military bands to education funding to flood control. While we recognize the emergency nature of the Murray-Ryan deficit reduction package, Congress must reverse the ongoing diversion.



RECOMMENDATIONS

2. LOCAL EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNICATION

2A. Improve Preparation of Travelers and Encourage Wider Use of Secure Identification Documents



Inadequate communication surrounding screening instructions and a lack of universal compliance with REAL ID document standards lead to unnecessary confusion and frustration among tens of millions of American travelers.

Summary:

Travel industry stakeholders should work with TSA to improve its education and communication efforts about security rules and regulations, targeting locations and sources that travelers are likely to review as they book or prepare for their trip. This initiative specifically needs to tackle the possibility that individuals from states not in compliance with the federal REAL ID law may need alternative travel documents beginning in 2018.¹² Also, federal and state governments should embrace programs that build and deploy secure identification documents in order to provide the traveling public with higher-quality identity documents that meet government security standards.

Analysis:

While the public's general understanding of how TSA checkpoints work has improved, TSA officers still encounter far too many travelers who attempt to bring inappropriate and disallowed items through the checkpoint, or are confused by the rules for removing their personal items. For example, in 2015, TSA detected more than 2,600 firearms at airport checkpoints, and the amount of firearm detections continues to escalate.¹³ TSA typically releases "travel tips" around busy travel periods such as holidays and spring breaks, noting that travelers who fail to properly follow standards for liquids and weapons "cause delays for themselves and everyone behind them."¹⁴

The reduction in use of the "managed inclusion" program means that travelers will either clear checkpoints under TSA PreCheck rules if they are enrolled, or under the rules for the general public—no exceptions.¹⁵ While airlines and travel agencies normally provide TSA-related guidance somewhere on their websites, giving specific TSA screening instructions during the flight check-in process would be more useful to travelers. There is no reason for travelers to arrive at a TSA checkpoint unclear of what to do with their electronics, belts, jackets, shoes and liquids as they go through security. Additionally, families should be able to know in advance how the checkpoint will handle a mixture of adults and children.

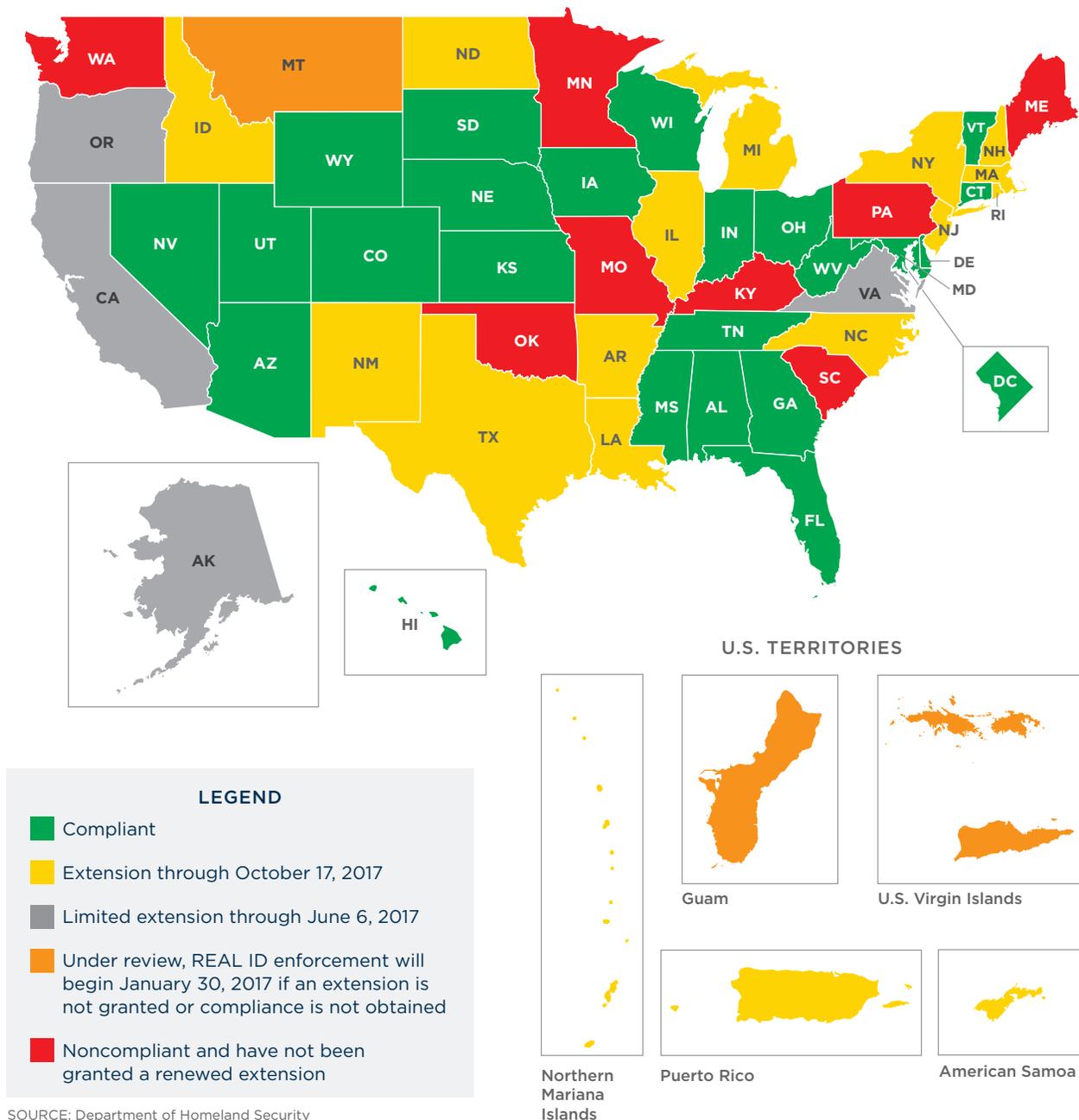
Meanwhile, the percentage of Americans traveling with secure travel documents continues to climb thanks to record issuance of passports, increased REAL ID compliance, and growth in trusted traveler programs. However, the current standoff between non-compliant states and DHS over the agency's planned enforcement of

REAL ID document standards potentially means that tens of millions of Americans will not be allowed to use their state-issued driver's licenses as a primary form of identity at airport checkpoints beginning in 2018.¹⁶

As of fall 2016, only 24 states were fully compliant with REAL ID, and several large states have repeatedly refused to enact compliance legislation.¹⁷ Education targeting these travelers on the new rules needs to commence early in 2017, far in advance of the January 22, 2018 deadline, so that citizens of these states know to provide alternate identification when traveling.

REAL ID: Current Status

As of November 2016. View current status at www.dhs.gov/current-status-states-territories.



RECOMMENDATIONS

2. LOCAL EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNICATION

2B. Empower Airports and the Private Sector to Innovate and Improve Security

“As Americans face wait times in excess of 90 minutes just to board their planes, expanding and reforming the TSA’s Screening Partnership Program offers a potential remedy to this travel nightmare.”¹⁹

Representative Diane Black (R-TN 6th District)

Summary:

Congress should overhaul the TSA Screening Partnership Program (SPP) so that it becomes a viable, flexible and innovative option for helping airports deploy more efficient, effective security solutions tailored to their specific requirements. In particular, the modeling used to evaluate SPP locations is outdated. Airports need more authority to select their vendors, and TSA should allow more flexibility in airport-specific security plans.¹⁸

Analysis:

The years-long political fight over allowing airports the option to utilize privatized airport screening under TSA supervision has been a disappointing development. While the current SPP has proven popular among the limited number of airports that participate, TSA has made it very difficult for airports to make a business case for shifting into the SPP.²⁰ As we wrote in our original TSA report in 2011, current law provides only limited flexibility for airports to utilize different methods of screening passengers and bags—therefore, the variations between “federal” and “privatized” screening workforces are not sufficient to merit consideration of another option.

We believe that the legal authorities regulating the SPP should be amended to provide airports with greater flexibility to propose alternate screening programs to TSA for their review and approval. This could include different approaches to equipment procurement, checkpoint configuration, workforce scheduling, use of canines and other screening requirements. In addition, TSA must be much more willing to work with interested airports on their SPP options, focusing more on oversight of security effectiveness than on micromanaging airport decision-making about security workforces. TSA should set the security requirements and allow airports to meet them in the way they deem appropriate for their particular environment. In this model, TSA would also be responsible for auditing performance against those requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. LOCAL EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNICATION

2C. Improve the Checkpoint Experience

Summary:

We encourage stakeholders to make the TSA process less stressful by collaborating on ways to occupy travelers' time and minds with interesting content such as informational videos, updates on flights and security processing times, and information about eating and shopping options after the checkpoint.

Analysis:

This recommendation requires a partnership at the local level, between TSA and airports and airlines servicing the airport. Private-sector players such as theme parks and hotels have long recognized that the time waiting in line can be less frustrating and more helpful when guests are occupied with interesting content while in a queue. We recommend that checkpoints not only feature informational videos prepared by DHS about threat levels and programs like “see something, say something,”²¹ but also display updates about flight departures, gate changes, and eating and retail opportunities after security. Airports may also find value in providing information about new flight routes, amenities, transit options and the like.

The time travelers spend waiting at the checkpoint may also present a marketing opportunity for TSA PreCheck. And if TSA PreCheck opportunities are available post-checkpoint, they should be advertised as well.

In short, there is no reason to make the time waiting in a TSA line a boring, frustrating process. Providing a traveler with information relevant to his or her flight or future travel options will make the wait more manageable and take advantage of a captive audience.



RECOMMENDATIONS

3. TSA PRECHECK IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION

3A. Improve and Expand Trusted Traveler Program



Approximately 3.5 million members are enrolled in PreCheck, with an additional 2 million receiving benefits through the Global Entry program.

“This [long wait times] is wholly unacceptable and I, along with the American taxpayer, expect the security at America’s airports to be streamlined, effective and efficient.”²⁴

House Homeland Security Transportation Security Subcommittee Chairman, John Katko (R-NY 24th District)

Summary:

As urged in our 2011 report, TSA has implemented TSA PreCheck, a voluntary, government-run trusted traveler program that utilizes a risk-based approach to checkpoint screening. The goal of TSA PreCheck is to refocus resources on the higher-risk passengers and expedite screening of low-risk, pre-vetted travelers. The program, while generally successful, needs important reforms to increase participation, particularly making enrollment more convenient without sacrificing security.

Analysis:

In 2011, the agency launched its TSA PreCheck program, providing a streamlined checkpoint process for enrolled travelers. This program is one of the most popular programs across all of government, and one of the most celebrated initiatives ever launched by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The current TSA PreCheck program allows travelers to apply for program participation and, if eligible, receive expedited screening through designated lanes at participating airports. Individuals who apply pay \$85 to receive the expedited screening benefit for five years. As part of the application, individuals have a fingerprint-based background check conducted by the FBI.²² Approximately 3.5 million travelers are enrolled in TSA PreCheck, and an additional 2 million travelers enjoy TSA PreCheck benefits via their enrollment in the U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) Global Entry program.²³ TSA is working on providing additional enrollment mechanisms and more fully integrating these marketing and enrollment mechanisms for all trusted travel programs—not just TSA PreCheck.

“This is going to be a rough summer; there is no doubt about it.”²⁵

Gary Rasicot, Chief of Operations, TSA

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. TSA PRECHECK IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION

3B. Offer Vetted Populations for TSA PreCheck Expansion

Summary:

Various proposals have been suggested to allow those individuals who have passed a security review automatic access to TSA PreCheck, including security clearance holders and Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) card-holders.²⁶ Millions of Americans have gone through elaborate and regularly recurring background checks deemed sufficient to provide them access to classified information, weapon systems, or sensitive transportation facilities and conveyances.²⁷ However, other than expansion to active military members, TSA has been very slow to leverage government security reviews for its own purposes.

Analysis:

As one particularly egregious example, an airport worker allowed access to secure areas of an airport and aircraft in the morning is not entitled to use the TSA PreCheck line if he or she is flying out of the same airport later in the day.

We recognize that issuance of a clearance does not mean an individual poses no risk. However, many of the categories listed above go through a more elaborate background check than TSA PreCheck requires. In an era where we expect that government will coordinate programs and not allow information to exist in silos, TSA should make prompt decisions about expansion of the TSA PreCheck program to these or other applicable populations.



Perhaps the most important step we can take is to continue to dramatically grow participation in trusted traveler programs, like PreCheck, that speed screening for vetted passengers and shorten wait times for those not in PreCheck lines, too.”²⁸

Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee
Ranking Minority Member,
Senator Tom Carper (D-DE)

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. TSA PRECHECK IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION

3C. Leverage REAL ID Compliance for TSA PreCheck Enrollment



The two-document requirement for applying in-person for TSA PreCheck is currently prohibitive in accepting spontaneous enrollment.

Summary:

The two-document requirement for TSA PreCheck applications is a major deterrent to travelers who would otherwise start an enrollment application spur-of-the-moment (i.e., with time to spend in an airport). At a time when DHS has pushed states to finally comply with REAL ID identity document quality mandates, DHS should allow an applicant with a REAL ID-compliant driver's license to fulfill the document requirement with that form of identification alone.

Analysis:

Currently, individuals who want to apply for TSA PreCheck, but who do not have a passport (or one of six other forms of identity/citizenship) must instead present two forms of identity documents—generally, an unexpired driver's license and a U.S. birth certificate. These identification requirements were set by law, and have not changed over time. Obviously, most individuals rarely carry around their birth certificates, and thus, spontaneous enrollment in TSA PreCheck is unlikely.

In 2005, Congress passed, and the President signed the REAL ID Act, which set new security requirements for driver's licenses. After numerous delays, implementation of the law will occur in two phases, with one phase beginning in January 2018, and the second phase in October 2020. During the first phase, individuals who want to board a commercial aircraft will have to show a REAL ID-compliant credential at the TSA security checkpoint.

Currently, compliance with REAL ID is inconsistent. Some 24 states are compliant, while another 28 have been given extensions by the DHS to issue identifications that are compliant with REAL ID.²⁹ Four states or territories have not been given extensions³⁰ and are not compliant.³¹

REAL ID documents are secure under federal standards and will become more commonplace over the next couple of years. Since the two-document requirement unnecessarily burdens individuals who want to spontaneously apply for the program, we recommend that Congress direct TSA to formally recognize REAL ID-compliant licenses as a single document that can be presented when applying for TSA PreCheck.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. TSA PRECHECK IMPROVEMENT AND EXPANSION

3D. Clarify the Role of Third-Party Vendors

Summary:

Currently, TSA PreCheck facilitates the movement of travelers through designated lanes at airports. Additionally, CLEAR, a company that uses biometric scanning technology to help customers speed through security by using fingerprints and iris images to confirm identity, operates at a limited number of airports.³² In the near future, we are likely to see an additional number of third-party prescreening vendors providing TSA PreCheck enrollment services to TSA. With the proliferation of travel facilitation products in the marketplace, it is important that the roles of each vendor, the benefits of their products and the regulatory structure they operate under are clearly understood by the public, airports and airlines.

Analysis:

Operating side-by-side in many airports with TSA PreCheck is the CLEAR program, run by a private company. CLEAR lanes are available at 16 airports³³, and speed the movement of the program's members through security checkpoints. CLEAR members who have TSA PreCheck simply verify their identity at a CLEAR lane and are then taken to the designated TSA PreCheck lane to be physically inspected.

Additionally, TSA is seeking to expand the number of people participating in TSA PreCheck by ramping up enrollment efforts, enlisting third-party prescreening companies to sign individuals up for the program. These companies would market the program to applicants, enroll them, adjudicate their application, and recommend them to TSA for participation in TSA PreCheck. Each third-party prescreening company would have its own means of measuring an applicant's risk and determining if the individual merits TSA PreCheck benefits. While this third-party prescreening program has not yet launched, it is expected to do so in 2017.

While the expansion of TSA PreCheck and expedited screening is a good thing, the growth of companies in this market must be carefully overseen by TSA. As additional companies market TSA PreCheck, consumers will need to clearly understand whom to call for customer service, what the different benefits offered by different vendors might be, how to appeal when their application for TSA PreCheck is turned down, and whom to call if a mistake is made on an application or with the issuance of a known traveler number (KTN). All of these items will need to be clearly understood by consumers, airports and airlines so that benefits are given appropriately, and so that customer service can be handled by the appropriate entity.



With the increase in third-party vendors, it is important that the roles of each vendor, the benefits of their products and the regulatory structure they operate under are clearly understood by the public, airports and airlines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. IMPROVE AND EXPAND TSA PRECHECK

3E. Reduce the Cost of TSA PreCheck for Families and Corporate Groups



Slower corporate adoption of TSA PreCheck may be largely due to the high cost of reimbursement imposed by the strict \$85 enrollment fee. Offering corporations a financial incentive or cost break may help to spark more volume enrollments.

Summary:

Currently, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has required TSA to charge a standard enrollment fee (currently \$85 for five years) for all TSA PreCheck applicants. This one-size-fits-all approach has hindered efforts to enroll large classes of individuals that would benefit TSA and more than pay for the cost of their enrollment.

Analysis:

Bureaucratic rules governing fee-funded programs like TSA PreCheck require a standard application fee meant to cover the cost of providing the service. Thus a parent who is handling enrollment for three young children is treated the same as four distinct enrollments. A corporate travel manager who is handling enrollment for perhaps thousands of employees pays the same fee per employee, ignoring obvious economies of scale.

For families, the math is important. While younger children (12 and under) are allowed to join a parent in the TSA PreCheck lane, older children cannot. The one-time cost of enrolling a family of five may be a significant factor for many families and deter enrollment. We encourage TSA and its partners at OMB to reconsider fee rules for children, offer volume discounts, and explore a subscription model for fees that would be paid on an annual basis, not five years at a time.

In terms of companies, Microsoft recently announced it would reimburse employees for both TSA PreCheck and Global Entry.³⁴ As noted by its global travel manager:



The return on investment is so simple, you don't need to do the math. It is such a simple decision with a quick ROI and so many benefits for us, airports, airlines, security and for everybody involved. My goal is to provide benefits to our travelers while improving security...."

The company hosted a mobile enrollment event for 800 employees as a first step to potentially enrolling up to 5,000 employees this year. This decision came after DHS Secretary Jeh Johnson and Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker wrote to 100 large U.S. companies requesting assistance in marketing and promoting TSA PreCheck.³⁵

The fact that more companies have not followed Microsoft's lead may be because the up-front cost of an \$85 enrollment fee, multiplied by hundreds or thousands of employees, is a measurable and significant cost, with harder-to-measure returns. Providing quantity discounts to corporate travel managers, especially those who supply applicants to TSA for on-site enrollment, may create more corporate interest. Annual payment plans would also spread the cost out and ease concerns for cost-conscious managers.

“ Last summer's intensive media coverage of the situation at airports had the unintended consequence of effectively promoting TSA PreCheck, and it highlighted the obstacles keeping millions of qualified Americans from applying. U.S. Travel found that half of those who stated that they were unlikely to apply for TSA PreCheck hesitated to do so because the price was too high—to me, this presents a clear opportunity. TSA PreCheck is a proven return on investment for both the federal government and the traveling public, as it enhances security while providing a streamlined screening experience. TSA should focus on removing barriers to enrollment as much as possible.”

**Roger Dow, President and CEO,
U.S. Travel Association**

U.S. TRAVEL
ASSOCIATION



RECOMMENDATIONS

4. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

4A. Develop a Strategic Technology Planning Capability



TSA's five-year plan, if adequately inclusive of implementation strategy and budget, can effectively guide the planning effort to improve checkpoint technologies.

Summary:

While TSA produces a five-year technology plan every two years, it does not use that plan when building budgets or funding deployment of the most advanced technology possible. Akin to the Department of Defense, TSA's budget submissions should aim to implement multi-year strategic planning priorities, particularly related to checkpoint technologies. These plans should take advantage of technology advances developed elsewhere inside DHS via robust information-sharing across agencies and offices.



We have also worked with our partners in the private sector to enhance the screening technology equipment available. We are driving vendors to develop new software, new operating concepts, and technology upgrades to meet the needs of a complex threat environment.”³⁶

TSA Administrator Peter Neffenger

Analysis:

TSA is implementing a new procurement strategy consistent with legislation successfully backed by U.S. Travel. To date, two five-year procurement plans have been developed by the agency, approved by the OMB and released to stakeholders. They have included an appropriate level of detail on what TSA envisions deploying and when the agency plans to do so.

In 2014, Congress passed, and the President signed H.R. 2719, the Transportation Security Acquisition Reform Act.³⁷ A core part of this measure requires the TSA to annually produce a projection of its technology needs over the next five years. This requirement emerged due to years of strained relationships between technology vendors and TSA. Vendors complained that TSA's failure to produce a technology roadmap made it difficult for companies to create investment plans, while TSA argued that its technology needs have changed quickly, and a detailed forecast would become outdated too quickly to be useful.³⁸

While the requirement to create a five-year plan has been helpful in enabling all stakeholders to better understand how TSA views technology's ability to manage risk, the agency has not built and followed acquisition strategies designed to field the technology in the plans. As a result, the five-year planning process is just an exercise on paper that has meant little in terms of deploying technology in the commercial aviation sphere.

In order to make this a truly effective process that improves security and the experience of commercial aviation passengers, TSA should, like the Department of Defense, include implementing plans, acquisition strategies and sufficient budgets in its five-year plans. Until the link between plans, acquisition and budget is effectively made, this five-year planning effort will be of little value to TSA or its stakeholders.

Additionally, to be as effective as possible, this plan should draw from resources across DHS that are trying to solve security problems similar to TSA. The DHS Science and Technology Directorate and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for example, have reviewed inspection and detection technologies that should be assessed to determine if they might assist TSA as it implements its transportation security mission.



RECOMMENDATIONS

4. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

4B. Deploy Modern Staffing Solutions



Using available professional staffing management resources can help to solve staffing complexities and fluctuations affecting TSA today.

Summary:

For TSA to most effectively manage its workforce, the agency should provide its airport Federal Security Directors (FSD) the ability to utilize world-class staffing management tool and technologies, including staffing software. It is imperative that staffing and technology solutions be managed under the FSD's authority and coordinated with the local airport.

Analysis:

Domestic and international travel are key drivers of the U.S. economy, supporting over 15 million jobs, \$2.1 trillion in economic output and \$231 billion in wages.³⁹ It is expected that domestic and international travel will continue to increase in 2017. This growth is positive for the U.S. economy and job creation as a whole, but these increases and persistent funding fluctuations are straining TSA's current staffing resources. It is imperative for TSA to continually strive to develop and deploy strategies that will optimize its current workforce.

“At Las Vegas McCarran International Airport, our goal is to provide a first-class traveler experience. These recommendations offer TSA the chance to do the same by improving its staffing tools and resources with direct input from airports.”

Rosemary Vassiliadis, Director, Clark County Department of Aviation



“The Staffing Allocation Model (SAM) did not take into account [a number of] factors and clearly fell short of the deployments necessary to prevent long waits at checkpoint[s].”... Wait times that are up to three hours long and missed flights have become a normal part of the flying experience for passengers.”⁴⁰



J. David Cox, Sr., National President,
American Federation of Government Employees

Given these factors, the efficiency of the TSA workforce must be constantly evaluated. Staffing airports with the right number of full- and part-time workers is a complicated responsibility, taking into account leave, vacation, union rules, management of the overtime budget, and training. Regardless of whether the TSA has the appropriate number of Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) or is understaffed, it is imperative that the TSA be able to fully optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of its current workforce. This approach will have the added benefit of reducing staff turnover, overtime, training costs and traveler complaints.

To accomplish this goal, the agency should utilize world-class staffing management tools and technologies, including staffing software that exists in the market today.⁴¹ Deploying available technologies that continuously collect and aggregate real-time data from numerous sources including airlines, airports and third-party providers will lead to more accurate predictions of staffing needs at airports. This will allow for the creation of a strategic short- and long-term staffing matrix that will enhance TSA's ability to predict and incorporate the complexities of scheduling a large and dynamic workforce.

Undertaking a technology assessment to identify enhancements and close any technology gaps will further the goal of TSA's management at the national and local level to remove pressure from the frontline workforce, so it can focus on security while creating a scheduling system that provides flexibility to local airports. This would help keep travelers secure, but also create a memorable customer experience, which would be a win for the traveling public and the TSA.



The travel industry is constantly adopting innovative solutions to create a seamless travel experience. Technology is leading the way by reducing the cost and complexities of travel, which increases the opportunities and demand for more people to travel. The TSA and other government agencies can benefit by developing a comprehensive and thoughtful strategy on deploying technology that will collect and aggregate travel data to optimize the workforce and processes to ultimately benefit the traveler.”

Tom Klein, President and CEO, Sabre





RECOMMENDATIONS

4. TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

4C. Further Utilize Canine Screening Units

Summary:

TSA currently uses two types of canines to support airport security operations—the traditional “approach and sniff” type (called Explosive Detection Canines) and “vapor wake method” trained dogs (called Passenger Screening Canines).⁴² Passenger Screening Canines (PSC) are trained specifically for use in the checkpoint area, while also being able to perform the more traditional explosive detection missions.⁴³ TSA should continue to increase funding for the PSC program to bring this capability to a larger number of Category X and Category 1 airports. At the same time, we encourage TSA to better engage local law enforcement so that resolution protocols (i.e., operating procedures employed when a PSC detect explosives) can be adopted, which is critical to program expansion.

Analysis:

The National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program (NEDCTP) was transferred to TSA in 2002, after its establishment as the Federal Aviation Administration’s Explosives Detection Canine Program in 1972. TSA’s NEDCTP utilizes Passenger Screening Canine (PSC) teams to deter and detect explosives within airports and other transportation systems across the nation.⁴⁴ The agency currently deploys 997 canines, 322 of which are led by TSA handlers, with the remaining 675 utilized by local law enforcement in transportation environments, including airports. Approximately one-half of TSA’s 322 teams are already certified, and 10 teams are operational in passenger screening.

In a June 2016 hearing before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, TSA Administrator Peter Neffenger emphasized the importance of PSC, noting that the program increases efficiency in the passenger screening process, often with greater accuracy than conventional methods.⁴⁶ As a result, TSA shifted PSC teams to the 20 largest airports in the United States, to maximize detection capability in an effort to mitigate long wait times outside of secure areas.

TSA is currently retraining cargo canines for passenger screening, with the goal of deploying them by the end of the calendar year. The remaining multi-modal teams will be trained for passenger screening operations in 2017.

“The TSA can optimize passenger screening by increasing the number of explosive detection canine units at airports. At a March hearing, experts told this committee that dogs are more effective and efficient than technology because dogs can process multiple passengers and bags simultaneously.”⁴⁵

Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Chairman Ron Johnson (R-WI)

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. TSA STRUCTURE

5A. Facilitate Non-Partisan Leadership of TSA

Summary:

The post of TSA Administrator should be converted to a five-year position extending across Presidential administrations, and filled by non-partisan officials with expertise in both security and facilitation.

Analysis:

The Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA), which created TSA in 2001, provides for a five-year term for the position of TSA Administrator⁴⁷, held by Vice Admiral Peter Neffenger since his confirmation in July of 2015. However, there does not appear to be a general consensus on whether the Administrator is expected to offer to resign when the new administration takes office in January 2017, or should be considered a term appointment like the FAA Administrator or FBI Director.

TSA's duties are not political and should not be partisan. Providing continuity of leadership would be valuable to the agency and to each new administration. A five-year term also would make the position more attractive to qualified future administrators. After six administrators, two acting administrators and two withdrawn nominations in TSA's first 14 years, it is time to convert the TSA Administrator position to a five-year term extending across Presidential administrations.

Should this not be possible due to legal considerations, we urge the new administration to allow Admiral Neffenger to continue in his position indefinitely, in order to provide continuity at a time when the rest of the DHS leadership is likely to be leaving office.



A five-year term will ensure continuity during new administration transitions.

6. INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

6A. Reduce Duplicative TSA Screening for International Arrivals



TSA's rescreening luggage requirement puts a strain on resources and passengers.

Summary:

The requirement that TSA rescreen luggage that has safely arrived in the U.S. on an inbound international flight has long been the bane of travelers forced to reclaim, manage and recheck their bags during a flight connection. TSA has agreed to end the rescreening requirement for bags arriving from Canada. We recommend that TSA negotiate an agreement with the European Union based on the Canadian initiative.

Analysis:

The rescreening issue remains a major problem for inbound flights from all other countries in the world. The policy requires TSA and airlines to expend immense resources in order to rescreen such checked luggage. The policy was predicated on the concept that TSA should only recognize screening at a foreign airport if it used the same high standards imposed on the U.S. aviation process.

In 2011, as part of the U.S.-Canadian "Beyond the Border" initiative, the countries agreed that inbound bags from Canadian flights would not need to be rescreened once Canadian airports utilized TSA-approved explosive detection equipment.⁴⁸ We understand that by the end of 2016, all Canadian airports with flights to the U.S. will meet this standard, and TSA will end the rescreening requirement for bags associated with connecting flights in the U.S.

While TSA has improved its scrutiny of foreign airport screening, a wholesale end to rescreening is not likely. We recommend that TSA negotiate an agreement with the European Union based on the Canadian initiative. We understand that productive discussions on issues such as screening of liquids have been held, but also recognize that recent events in Europe require that our mutual confidence levels in detection programs be high. This initiative should be a top priority as part of broader border and aviation security discussions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

7. AIRPORT RISK MITIGATION

7A. Annually Test Vulnerabilities and Weaknesses to Improve Perimeter Security of U.S. Airports.

Summary:

In May 2016, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommended that TSA update the risk assessment of airport security to reflect changes to its risk environment and share results of this risk assessment with stakeholders on an ongoing basis. According to the report, since 2009, TSA has conducted perimeter security assessments at only 19 percent of commercial airports. We support improvements in this critical area.

Analysis:

The risk to aircraft does not solely come from passengers. Security experts have been increasingly worried about insider and perimeter threats, especially in light of attacks at foreign airports. The 2016 GAO report notes that while TSA has made some progress in assessing airport perimeter and access control security risks, including developing its own Comprehensive Risk Assessment of Perimeter and Access Control Security in 2013, it has not updated this 2013 assessment to reflect the current potential for insider threats.⁴⁹ Most worrisome is the hypothetical rogue aviation worker exploiting his or her credentials, access and knowledge of security procedures throughout the airport. TSA needs to update this risk assessment to better focus limited resources on the most severe risks to airport security. TSA's Joint Vulnerability Assessment (JVA) process, which it conducts with the FBI, has only been conducted at 81 (about 19%) of the 437 commercial airports in the U.S. due to resource constraints.

GAO recommended, and we concur, that TSA should develop and implement a method for conducting a system-wide assessment of airport vulnerability that will provide a more comprehensive understanding of security vulnerabilities in airport perimeter and access control. Perimeter security assessment at only 19 percent of commercial airports is not acceptable. While we recognize that resources are not unlimited, we do not believe constraining this program is in the best interest of national security, the airports or the traveling public.

“Unbelievably for several months, guns were brought into the Atlanta airport by airport workers, were transferred to a passenger that had already gone through security, TSA security, and they were actually transported over a number of months from Atlanta to New York...It was the lack of security on the perimeter of allowing workers into the airport proper that needs to be tightened up at all of our 300 airports.”⁵¹

Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee Ranking Member, Senator, Bill Nelson (D-FL)

“In February, in addition to strong action taken to screen employees, reduce access points, and vet airport workers more frequently, I directed a nationwide vulnerability assessment of airports in collaboration with airport operators and local employers. Those assessments were completed in April, and we are now further enhancing security with localized mitigation plans designed to address local vulnerabilities.”⁵⁰

TSA Administrator Peter Neffenger

FAA EXTENSION ACT PROVISIONS SUPPORTED BY U.S. TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

In July 2016, Congress passed, and President Obama signed into law the FAA Extension, Safety and Security Act (P.L. 114-190). The act strengthens risk management practices and increases efficiency for travelers as Congress continues to develop a long-term reauthorization of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) programs. We support the security provisions contained in the extension and urge Congress to pass long-term reauthorization legislation with the same provisions in tact, which will provide certainty to security experts, airport officials and the traveling public. These security provisions relate to tighter access controls and employee vetting, the expansion of TSA PreCheck enrollment and embracing “Checkpoint of the Future” technology innovation. The following sections were initially included as recommendations to our report, so we are pleased at their inclusion in the FAA extension.

Implement “Checkpoint of the Future” Technology. Section 3501 authorizes the Aviation Security Advisory Committee to make recommendations on “Checkpoint of the Future” technology to more effectively configure checkpoints, deploy technology and address security vulnerabilities to improve the passenger experience. Instituting this technology will improve the passenger experience, occupying travelers’ time and minds with interesting content such as information videos, updated flight information, security processing times, and dining and retail options available in the secure area of the airport.

Develop a Staffing Advisory Committee Comprised of Airport and Air Carriers at Each Airport to Help Determine TSA Staffing Numbers and Practices. This provision (Section 3304) provides local airports and air carriers the opportunity to coordinate with TSA on minimum staffing levels, and requires the establishment of a staffing advisory working groups at each airport to provide staffing level recommendations to TSA.

Facilitate Increased TSA PreCheck Enrollment. The FAA extension directs TSA to work with private-sector partners to develop enhanced enrollment and vetting methods (Sections 3101-3102). With these enhancements, TSA can strengthen security by identifying trusted travelers and increasing efficiency at checkpoints. We believe that a stronger marketing push will drive enrollment in the program, and improve security and efficiency at airports nationwide.

Conduct Recurring Background Checks of Airport Employees and TSA Employees.

Stronger employee vetting requirements, as outlined in Section 3405 of the FAA extension, will minimize insider threats to airport security. The DHS Inspector General and others have pointed out vulnerabilities, and the FAA extension bill looks to fix these perceived weaknesses in airport security with, among other proposals, a requirement that TSA develop procedures for risk-based screening of airport and airline employees.

Implement Risk-Based, Airport-Specific Insider Threat Mitigation Security Checks for Airport Employees.

These provisions require TSA to work with airports to enhance efforts to deter and detect insider threats. TSA should work expeditiously to implement the provisions to incorporate enhanced threat analysis (Section 3402), toughen airport oversight (Section 3403), strengthen credential issuance (Section 3404), potentially tightening credential eligibility (Section 3406) and address other weaknesses.



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