

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 8, 2016

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Roybal-Allard:

We write on behalf of American travelers who are frustrated and angry because of excessive delays at security screening checkpoints in airports throughout the country. We are concerned at the recent high-profile instances of multiple hour wait times at major airports. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) must have the authority and resources to effectively protect the nation's transportation systems to ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce.

While we support DHS' immediate corrective actions to decrease wait times, these steps are only temporary solutions. In recent years, the size of the TSA workforce has declined by approximately 12 percent, while the number of domestic air travelers has increased by a similar percentage. A range of key stakeholders—including major airports, industry groups and organized labor—have called for increased TSA staffing levels.

Accordingly, as the Subcommittee develops the Fiscal Year 2017 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Act, we strongly urge you to ensure that TSA can effectively and efficiently implement a risk-based aviation security screening process that optimizes deployment of agency resources to match seasonal fluctuations in travel volume. Specifically, we believe the FY 17 DHS appropriations bill should:

- Eliminate arbitrary restrictions that cap the size of TSA's Transportation Security Officer (TSO) workforce without regard to the continually evolving and growing range of terrorist threats targeting the traveling public or the level of traveler demand;
- Ensure TSA possesses necessary flexibility to deploy TSO personnel in an agile and responsive manner that matches a continually changing threat environment and fluctuating traveler volumes based on various factors;
- Require TSA to analyze and enhance its TSO staffing allocation model to be more flexible and responsive to variations in travel volume;

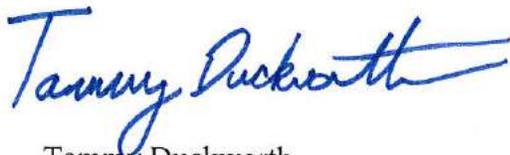
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- Provide TSA with necessary resources to recruit, retain and continually train a talented TSO workforce that is of sufficient quantity and quality to implement the improved staffing allocation model; and
- Ensure TSA is provided robust funding to deploy advanced personnel and proven detection technology, particularly K-9 teams, in an agile manner to airports experiencing elevated travel volumes and higher security threat assessments.

Recognizing that the DHS appropriations bill must address a range of pressing homeland security priorities, we strongly encourage the Subcommittee provide funding for TSA operations at a level commensurate with the agency's growing workload in preventing terrorist plots targeting our aviation system. **In addition, we strongly believe aviation security must never be compromised by irrational or unjustified congressional caps on the number of transportation security officers the agency may employ to best protect American travelers.**

Thank you for your attention to these requests. TSA's counterterror mission is, and must always remain, the agency's highest priority. Fortunately, the goals of enhanced security and more efficient processing are not mutually exclusive objectives. We look forward to working with you to support the important work that tens of thousands of Transportation Security Officers do every day to keep the American people safe.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Patrick E. Murphy
Member of Congress



John Lewis
Member of Congress

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Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



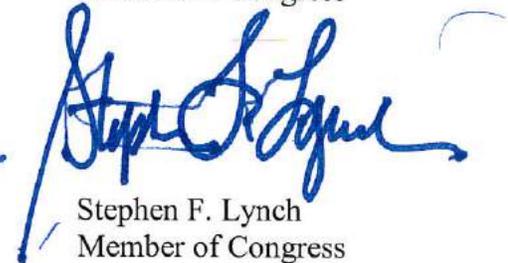
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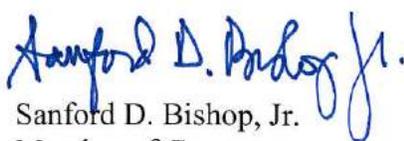
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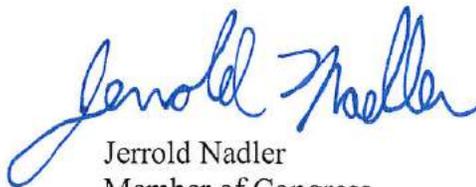
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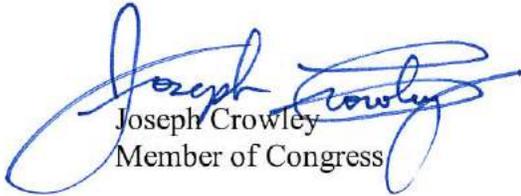


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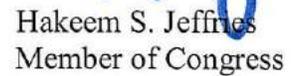
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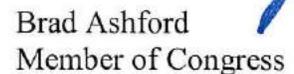
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Ted Lieu
Member of Congress



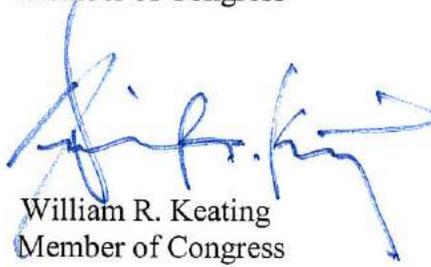
Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress



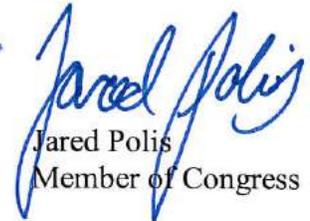
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