



One Hundred Ninth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

May 23, 2006

The Honorable David Walker
Comptroller General
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

As you know, securing the nation's commercial airports is a joint responsibility shared by the federal government, airport operators, and the many private companies that conduct business at the airport, including air carriers. In the area of airport perimeter and access control security, airport operators play a significant role by implementing federal security requirements aimed at ensuring the physical security of airport grounds. Air carriers also play a key role by ensuring that their employees receive required background checks and security training before being granted access to secure airport areas. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is responsible for establishing airport perimeter and access control security requirements, and conducting audits to ensure that airport operators and airlines are complying with these requirements.

In April 2004, you issued a report examining the security of commercial airport perimeters and access controls. In that report, you identified security weaknesses related to airport perimeters and access controls and made recommendations for improving this important area of aviation security. In response to your findings and recommendations, TSA issued security directives for enhancing background checks and screening airport workers. TSA also reported taking additional action to assess and deploy available airport security technologies, including biometric access control systems.

The committee is interested in the progress that TSA has made in strengthening the security of commercial airport perimeters and access controls since your report was issued in April 2004. I am therefore requesting that GAO address the following questions.

- What actions has TSA taken, or plan to take, to strengthen the security of airport perimeters and access to restricted airport areas-including steps TSA is taking to prevent

the unauthorized use of airport credentials and have these actions been responsive to prior GAO recommendations?

- How has TSA assessed the effectiveness of actions taken to strengthen airport perimeter and access control security? What have been the results of these assessments? How has TSA determined whether actions taken have improved security to an acceptable level?
- What have been the current and expected costs associated with implementing these security measures, and who bears these costs?

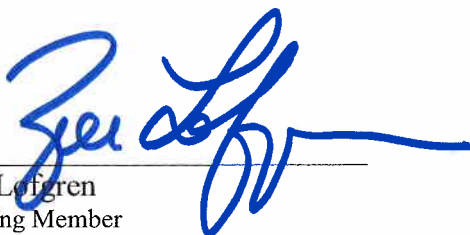
Thank you for your attention to this request. If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Herrera-Flanigan, Staff Director of the Committee staff at 226-2616.



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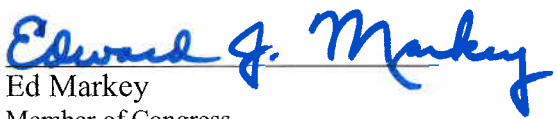
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