

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**

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**Before the**

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION SECURITY AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION**

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Good afternoon, Chairwoman Jackson-Lee, Ranking Member Lungren and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you regarding the progress the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has made in implementation of the Registered Traveler (RT) program, currently in its pilot phase.

The Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA), P.L. 107-71, charged TSA with protecting the Nation's transportation systems while facilitating the movement of people and commerce. TSA is committed to providing comprehensive security to our Nation's transportation systems. At our Nation's airports, TSA has implemented a risk-based, multi-layered approach in order to efficiently allocate scarce security resources and institute redundancies in the system to thwart potential attacks. We know that where aviation security is concerned, there is no single silver bullet that will protect against all threats. Moreover, aviation security exists in an ever-changing security environment requiring TSA have the flexibility to change procedures and requirements quickly to respond to new threat assessments.

This has never been more clearly evidenced than by the prohibition on liquids implemented across U.S. airports in the aftermath of the foiled transatlantic terror attack of August 10, 2006. In less than one day, TSA was able to implement a completely new security regime nationwide. Just a few weeks later, after a thorough evaluation of the potential threat, we were able to reevaluate those procedures and allow some liquids in passenger carry-on baggage. We are only able to quickly respond to newly discovered threats because Congress has given us the discretion to adapt our security programs as necessary. We use that flexibility every day through unpredictable security procedures designed to counter constantly changing threats, known and unknown. It is imperative that we maintain this flexibility as we move forward with any change in airport security, including a developing RT program.

It is against this backdrop that TSA's RT program and its development and implementation must be understood and evaluated. Section 109 of ATSA authorized TSA to "[e]stablish requirements to implement trusted passenger programs and use

available technologies to expedite the security screening of passengers who participate in such programs, thereby allowing security screening personnel to focus on those passengers who should be subject to more extensive screening.” It is important to note a number of things about this authority. First, Congress understood in establishing this authority that a trusted traveler program, although not critical to security, is a program that may be beneficial to the traveling public and could complement TSA’s layered approach to aviation security, allowing TSA to focus resources elsewhere. Second, Congress recognized that any trusted traveler program would be dependent on the availability of appropriate technologies.

Essentially, the RT program is a privilege program that, if fully operational, would offer a streamlined security experience for applicants who pay a fee and meet both TSA and the Service Provider’s eligibility requirements. RT would provide benefits to participants while encouraging commerce, safeguarding personal privacy, ensuring a self-sustaining program, and enhancing the protection of the traveling public, all without disadvantaging the general public when they fly.

Currently, RT is a public/private sector partnership pilot program, supported and overseen by TSA, with distinct roles and responsibilities for each participating entity. TSA is responsible for setting program standards, conducting security threat assessments of participants, performing physical screening of RT participants at TSA checkpoints, testing new technologies prior to implementation, and other forms of oversight. The private sector Service Providers are responsible for enrollment of RT participants, verification of participants’ RT status using biometric technologies at RT kiosks, and related services. Participating airports and air carriers oversee their Service Providers and ensure that those Service Providers comply with the requirements of the RT program. As part of a complex, layered security scheme, RT may operate differently at each participating airport, within the broader security plan of the airport.

#### Registered Traveler Yesterday: A Brief History of Program Development:

Mindful of the challenges and potential of RT, TSA first undertook an elaborate pilot program to explore technology, customer reaction, and private collaboration in the development of a comprehensive, nationwide RT program. This pilot was funded by the Federal Government. During the summer of 2004, the Registered Traveler Pilot Program was initiated at five airports on a staggered basis around the country. This initial pilot ended in September 2005.

In June 2005, TSA initiated a new pilot, also funded principally by the Federal Government, known as the Private Sector Known Traveler, at Orlando International Airport (MCO), to test the feasibility of a public-private partnership model for the RT program. The initial successes of the pilot programs demonstrated that the biometric verification technology can work under airport operational conditions and that the public is willing to pay a participation fee and accept private industry involvement.

Following the Orlando pilot, TSA worked with private industry to roll out an expanded public-private partnership pilot to test interoperability among multiple service providers. Public expectations were raised by the pilots and the appealing original notion that vetted travelers could be sped through security while higher risk passengers received more scrutiny.

After my confirmation at TSA in late July 2005, I began a reassessment of TSA's security priorities based on Secretary Chertoff's risk-based approach to security throughout the Department. It was clear to me that TSA needed to apply its resources to achieve greater capability to stop attacks using explosives brought on an aircraft by terrorists. The Committee is well-familiar with the extensive progress that TSA has made in that effort. TSA has made significant progress in targeting our procedures towards specific threats and enhancing our workforce. Our Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) now receive enhanced training in detecting components of improvised explosive devices.

We are also taking action to demonstrate our increased confidence in our TSOs. In July 2006, we announced that the TSO position was being reclassified to a specialized job series, in recognition of the nature of the work they do. In addition, we rely heavily on TSO input through the National Advisory Council, which represents TSOs throughout the nation on workforce issues. We have created an additional forum through our Idea Factory to promote workforce ideas on any number of topics, from technology and detection to quality of life issues.

As much as the RT concept appeals to all of us, it would be security folly to reduce security based only on the lack of prior criminal or discovered terrorist activity. The reality of the "clean skinned" terrorist – a terrorist without criminal history or identification on a watch-list – was made abundantly clear in July of 2005 when such terrorists attacked the London transit system. After prioritizing our security initiatives on a risk basis, TSA decided that taxpayer resources were best applied to more critical needs than RT. However, given the extraordinary public interest in the program, and the appealing logic behind it, TSA was willing to give wide latitude to private sector entrepreneurs, airlines, and airports if they were able to construct an RT program that did not increase risk to the system. It was this private sector-led program that TSA announced in February of 2006.

Private sector partners stepped up and organized themselves to set interoperability standards approved by TSA in May of 2006. This process took longer than initially expected, but produced the notable result that RT and TSA now have access to an interoperable biometric credentialing system, built in less than a year, and at no cost to the government.

Rather than wait for an entire rule-making process before testing this new system, TSA and the industry began a pilot, known as the Registered Traveler Interoperability Pilot (RTIP). TSA released the RTIP Fee Notice in the Federal Register and developed a comprehensive set of guidance documents allowing the private sector to implement the

interoperability pilot phase. The initial fee of \$28 per participant covers TSA's costs for vetting and program management. Any additional services or costs associated with RTIP will be established by the vendor, who may, in turn, charge the participant for those services. This expanded pilot is designed to ensure the interoperability of biometric cards among multiple services providers at different airports across the country.

The interoperability pilot began in January 2007, when the first airports/air carriers were approved by TSA to provide RT services. With the addition of Reno/Tahoe International Airport and a second active RT vendor in May 2007, TSA is closely monitoring RT interoperability to ensure that participants of one vendor can seamlessly use RT services provided by another vendor. This is a key component of RT that must be fully functional prior to launching the program nationwide.

Currently, seven airports and three air carriers are participating in the RTIP in nine locations. Four airports and one air carrier have initiated agreements with a Service Provider but are not yet operational, and four airports are currently soliciting Service Providers for RT. TSA has approved five Service Providers, with three currently offering active service and five more are in the approval process.

#### Registered Traveler Now: An Overview of the Current Program

RT, still in the pilot phase, is an entirely voluntary program; airports have the option to utilize the program and passengers may voluntarily sign up for the RT service. At airports that choose to offer the RT service, TSA is intimately involved in ensuring that any RT service offered has no negative impact on the security of passengers traveling through the airport. TSA and the airport work closely together to ensure the overall security plan of the airport is updated and provides robust security to the flying public.

While TSA will largely play a facilitating role, the private industry is responsible for market definition, program benefits, and interoperability. TSA-approved vendors are responsible for marketing the RT program to the general public, signing up participants, collecting enrollment fees, and providing verification services. Vendors are also responsible for working with airport authorities to modify airport configurations to minimize wait times, enhancing customer service, partnering with airport concessions and services to provide membership benefits, and investing in new technologies to facilitate security screening.

As part of the RT program, TSA uses participants' biographic data to conduct threat assessments against terrorist-related, law enforcement, and immigration databases that TSA maintains or uses, and ensures that participating airports maintain effective security procedures. As private vendors innovate, explore and seek to incorporate new technologies, TSA must ensure that each system is subject to rigorous testing. TSA will ensure that implementation of new technology does not compromise security.

Passengers using RT checkpoints today walk up to a biometric reader, place their card in the reader, and present their biometric (fingerprint or iris scan) for verification. Once

their current RT participation status has been verified, they can then proceed directly to TSA screening where they will go through the same screening process as all passengers. In most cases, RT participants use an integrated lane and may go to the head of a screening line.

A recent issue raised by the RT community is TSA's requirement that RT members, like all commercial aviation travelers, show government-issued photo identification when their boarding passes are inspected at security checkpoints. Based on the current aviation threat level, TSA views this step of the screening process as an essential layer of transportation security and the best way to provide assurance that the passengers presenting themselves at security checkpoints are the passengers identified on their boarding passes. Further, the configuration and location of RT verification kiosks, in relation to the security screening checkpoints, varies in different airports. Lack of control over the ingress to both screening and the secured area is a practical factor with possible security consequences. When establishing nationwide program standards, TSA must consider differing airport and vendor models.

Despite these concerns, we believe that, under certain circumstances, TSA may be willing to accept RT cards in place of government-issued ID cards. For example, we have stated that if all RT Service Providers adopt a card protocol requiring photographs, legal names, and appropriate security features, we would reconsider our position. However, the Registered Traveler Interoperability Consortium (RTIC), which includes all five TSA-approved Service Providers, has decided through consensus not to add this requirement to the technical interoperability specification governing their mutual operation of the program. In alignment with the public/private partnership model for the RT Program, TSA will continue to act in an oversight role, and allow private industry to agree upon standards for business and technical interoperability. In short, if the RTIC collectively decides to implement a photograph and other security measures on the standard RT card, we are willing to consider accepting an RT card as sufficient identification to pass through TSA screening.

It is important to note that the RT program is still in its pilot stage, and TSA is continually assessing security and operational issues to determine whether changes to the pilot are necessary. The market, through participating airports/air carriers and Service Providers, will help determine the future shape and scope of RT by recommending new technologies and practices that provide an equivalent or higher level of security and service compared to current procedures which TSA will evaluate based on the guiding principles of RT.

#### Registered Traveler Tomorrow: Where We are Going

As the interoperability pilot matures, we expect to begin the rulemaking process to further define RT. We will use the lessons learned in implementing the RTIP and feedback from RTIP participants and partners to develop necessary regulations. Initial benefits of the RT program may include modified airport configurations to minimize RT passenger wait times, enhanced customer service for RT participants, such as divesting

assistance, concierge service for luggage, parking privileges, and discounts for service or concessions. We expect benefits to be defined as the private sector identifies and invests in innovations.

While working to facilitate where the market may take RT, we must also consider that the number of RT passengers flying on a given day is likely to be only a small portion of the travelers who pass through TSA security. The total membership in the RTIP is 39,000. To put that in perspective, if the entire current enrollment of RTIP were to fly every day of the year, RT passengers would amount to less than 2% of the 2 million passengers screened by TSA. We are working to ensure that as the RT program matures, we are not disadvantaging the general public.

TSA is excited about the technological innovation potential of RT and is already seeing the benefits of the biometric credentialing system; some technology companies have already begun to bring new security innovations to us for testing. We are working with those entities to provide testing, including laboratory testing, and feedback as products develop. The critical factor in developing technology is that it work seamlessly with security protocols and that it not compromise security in any way.

To this end, TSA has a consistent process for the evaluation and testing, acquisition, deployment, and operation and maintenance of security technologies procured by the agency to meet a mission need. Since its inception, TSA has utilized this process with multiple vendors and believes vendor responsiveness and technology maturity significantly contribute to the approval process. In response to the RT program and the introduction of security technologies designed for an accelerated access control lane for passenger screening, TSA has developed a similar process that permits the rapid but thorough testing of any equipment proffered by the private sector to substitute for current security protocols. This process provides assurance to TSA that the technology introduced into the RT program will not compromise security. In short, we are committed to facilitate the rapid deployment of technology to RT participants once we know that the technology will achieve its objective and that its implementation will not diminish security.

We hope to see new improved technology in the market as RT matures, and look forward to continued technological success from private industry as they search for ways to make the RT service more successful. TSA will continue to work with the RT community and our network of airports and air carriers to advance our mission of securing our Nation's transportation network.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. We look forward to working with the Subcommittee as we continue our efforts to strengthen homeland security. I will be pleased to answer any question you may have.

## ATTACHMENT

### Airlines involved in initial RT pilot (4):

Northwest Airlines  
United Airlines  
Continental Airlines  
American Airlines

### Airports involved in initial RT pilot (5):

Minneapolis-St. Paul International, MN  
Los Angeles International, CA  
George Bush Intercontinental/Houston, TX  
Logan International, MA  
Ronald Reagan Washington National, VA

### Locations currently operating RT programs (9):

Albany International, NY  
Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International, KY  
Indianapolis International, IN  
Jacksonville, FL  
John F. Kennedy International, NY (Virgin Atlantic, British Airways, and Air France)  
Newark Liberty International, NJ (Virgin Atlantic)  
Orlando International, FL  
Reno/Tahoe International, NV  
Norman J. Mineta San Jose International, CA

### Airports currently in agreement with a service provider, but RT is not yet operational (5):

Air Tran at LaGuardia International, NY  
Greater Rochester International, NY  
Little Rock National, AK  
San Francisco International, CA  
Westchester County, NY

### Airports currently soliciting service providers (4):

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International, GA  
Denver International, CO  
Ronald Reagan Washington National, VA  
Washington Dulles International, VA

### Approved Vendors (5):

Fast Lane Option Corporation (FLO)  
Unisys Corporation  
Verant Identification Systems, Inc.  
Verified Identity Pass (VIP) (CLEAR)  
Vigilant Solutions

Vendors Seeking Approval (5):

Priva Technologies, Inc

Fly Fast, LLC

PKM Music, LLC

DSCi

VIP Alaska