

KEN SALAZAR
COLORADO



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20510 - 3903

November 21, 2007

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Mr. Secretary:

As a follow-up to our telephone conversation this morning, I am writing to reaffirm my request that 1) you assign additional Transportation Security Administration screening officers to Denver International Airport ("DIA"); and 2) you provide whatever assistance is necessary to investigate the recent revelations that de-icing contractors have cheated on their qualifications exams.

I am concerned about the low number of Transportation Security Officers performing security screenings at DIA.

Upon creation of the Transportation Security Administration in 2001, more than 1100 full-time equivalent (FTE) screening officers were allocated to DIA. Today, that number has fallen to only 686 FTE. During the same time period, DIA passenger traffic has increased by 40%. The large volume has resulted in excessively long wait times for passengers to go through the screening process. In my view, these waits are unacceptable for the traveling public. The wait creates inconvenience for the millions of travelers through DIA, including missed flights. I have often personally witnessed lines snaking the equivalent of several city blocks at peak periods. While DIA and the local TSA office have worked diligently together to combine resources and create efficiencies in the process, this local effort is not enough.

On October 31, 2007, the Colorado Congressional delegation wrote to TSA Administrator Hawley requesting additional screeners for DIA. Yesterday, I met with DIA management and the local Federal security director to discuss passenger screening and other DIA issues. DIA management indicated that an additional 75 FTE screeners were needed to address the screening wait times. I therefore respectfully request that the Department of Homeland Security immediately review the DIA screening process and authorize the hiring of additional screening officers for DIA as soon as practicable so as to decrease passenger wait times.

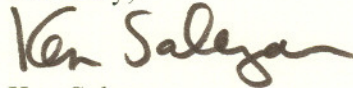
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My second request relates to the recent revelations that a trainer for the de-icing vendor had encouraged the falsification of answers on qualifying exams. The de-icing program is a keystone to safety to the flying public. The qualifications of those working in the de-icing program must never be compromised. Therefore, I appreciate your help in ensuring the integrity of this program, including any assistance you might offer in the ongoing investigation.

I look forward to continuing to work with you to resolve these issues. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Salazar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Ken" and "Salazar" being capitalized and prominent.

Ken Salazar
United States Senator