

Statement of

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Good morning Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Jackson-Lee, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) ongoing efforts to foster continued excellence in the TSA workforce and to make air passengers' experience at the checkpoint more efficient without compromising security.

The TSA workforce remains vigilant in carrying out TSA's mission every day. To do so, TSA employs risk-based, intelligence-driven measures to deter and prevent terrorist attacks and to reduce vulnerabilities in the Nation's transportation systems. These measures create a multi-layered system of transportation security to mitigate risk. We continue to evolve our security approach based on intelligence by examining the procedures and technologies we use, how specific security procedures are carried out, and how screening is conducted.

The TSA workforce operates on the frontline in executing the agency's transportation security responsibilities in support of the Nation's counterterrorism efforts. These responsibilities include security screening of passengers and baggage at over 450 airports in the United States that facilitate air travel for 1.8 million people per day; vetting more than 14 million passenger reservations and over 13 million transportation workers against the terrorist watch list each week; and conducting security regulation compliance inspections and enforcement activities at airports, for domestic and foreign air carriers, and for air cargo screening operations throughout the United States and at last point of departure locations internationally.

The transformation of TSA headquarters functions, which I announced last fall, included two important components to promote excellence within the TSA workforce and to address the needs of the traveling public. A new Office of Training and Workforce Engagement (TWE) was created to centralize technical, leadership, and workforce programs that were previously dispersed throughout the agency and to promote processes that engage our employees and empower them to execute TSA's mission. The Office of Special Counsel was expanded to the Office of Civil Rights and Liberties, Ombudsman and Traveler Engagement (CRL/OTE) to ensure that employees and the traveling public are treated in a respectful and lawful manner, consistent with Federal laws and regulations protecting privacy and civil liberties, affording redress, governing freedom of information, and prohibiting discrimination and reprisal while promoting diversity and inclusion.

Maintaining a First-Rate Workforce

Before discussing the initiatives being introduced by the new TWE and CRL/OTE program offices, I want to stress that excellence in the workplace begins with a dedicated and professional workforce. While technology and instruction manuals support our efforts, it is our people that protect travelers. Public service requires public trust and demands adherence to the highest ethical and personal conduct standards. As public servants charged with protecting the Nation's vital transportation systems, we owe the traveling public nothing less. All aspects of our workforce regimen – hiring, promotion, retention, training, proactive compliance inspections, investigations and adjudications – are driven by adherence to the highest ethical standards.

TSA employs a diverse workforce that reflects the traveling public we serve. In addition, approximately 23 percent of our employees have served our Nation honorably in uniform through prior military service and our commitment to recruiting and hiring veterans continues, as TSA works with key stakeholders towards that end. We are also proud of the dedication our workforce has to the mission. The agency's Voluntary Attrition Rate, including full-time and part-time employees, was 7.2 percent in Fiscal Year 2011. This rate is a significant decrease from 18 percent in Fiscal Year 2004. As TSA marks its 10th anniversary, we are also pleased to

report the average length of service for the Transportation Security Officer (TSO) workforce is approximately six years.

Training Initiatives Improve Workforce Capabilities

A dedicated TSA workforce assures the traveling public that they are protected by a multi-layered system of transportation security that mitigates risk. An effective workforce must be properly trained and good management is a key ingredient in preserving a motivated and skilled workforce. TSA's new training office has implemented several new initiatives to accomplish this objective.

Leaders at Every Level. TSA has implemented the Leaders at Every Level (LEL) initiative, a structured process designed to identify exceptional leaders at every level of TSA, from TSOs to Federal Security Directors at the airports as well as Headquarters managers. The goal is to identify traits of these exceptional leaders that can be modeled for all leaders and employees through example and training.

Since its inception last year, LEL has used a rigorous process to identify 284 exceptional leaders across all levels of TSA to act as a resource for Senior Leadership to inform their initiatives and decisions. Specifically, we have created a one-year detail position within the Office of Human Capital for an LEL selectee to provide field insights and experience; two LEL selectees were tapped to serve as Subject Matter Experts in informing the new supervisor's training course; and all exceptional leaders were asked to provide leadership stories that will be shared agency-wide to model desired leadership characteristics for the next generation of agency leaders. Moving forward, we intend to provide further opportunities for Senior Leadership to tap into the LELs' unique insights and empower LELs to directly reach out and support their colleagues throughout TSA.

In addition, TSA has implemented a new four-tier performance management program for non-TSOs. This effort enables the workforce to actively engage in developing their annual performance goals in collaboration with their supervisors while promoting two-way communication between employees and their supervisors throughout the performance year. This

program ultimately provides a mechanism to proactively identify opportunities to improve employee performance.

Communications Skills Development Course. Communications is paramount to TSA’s success, and the agency is providing its officers with training opportunities to improve their communications skills with the travelling public. A course titled “TACCOM” – an acronym for Tactical Communications – is an interactive communications skills development course that will be delivered to every officer, supervisor and manager by the end of this year.

TSA’s headquarters training officials have received many unsolicited testimonials from those who have completed the TACCOM course, highlighting how the principles, tools and techniques covered during this course have not only helped employees on the job, but also in their personal life. To date, almost 60 percent of the nearly 50,000 employees who will be required to participate in this one-day eight-hour instructor facilitated training course have completed it, and the feedback continues to be very positive.

Emphasis upon Supervision. In July 2012, TSA will also launch a new course titled “Essentials of Supervising Screening Operations (ESSO)” for Supervisory Transportation Security Officers (STSOs) only. The ESSO course is designed to incorporate both technical and leadership expectations and operational responsibilities for STSOs. This course will help STSOs understand their individual leadership strengths and weaknesses and identify the most effective ways to communicate with each person they come in contact with. STSOs will also have an opportunity to strengthen their customer service skills by understanding the need to model appropriate interactions with their team, the traveling public, and stakeholders.

The learning objective for the customer service module, as well as the ESSO course overall, is to demonstrate how important it is for STSOs to lead by example, and how to provide effective feedback to their team members.

CRL/OTE Promotes Policy of Inclusion

As mentioned previously, TSA’s new CRL/OTE office is responsible for ensuring that TSA employees and the traveling public are treated in a fair and lawful manner, consistent with Federal laws and regulations protecting privacy and civil liberties, affording redress, governing

freedom of information and prohibiting discrimination and reprisal, while promoting diversity and inclusion.

As a result of the transformation, the role of the Ombudsman has been heightened to now report directly to the Administrator. While the Ombudsman is primarily focused on providing neutral, informal and confidential problem resolution services to employees for issues, concerns, and conflicts involving TSA policies or personnel, the Ombudsman is also available to address passenger concerns.

We also established a new Disability and Multicultural Division within CRL/OTE by merging our disability and multicultural programs that were in two different offices. This new division is responsible for ensuring, in collaboration with the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL), that TSA security screening policies, procedures and practices comply with all applicable laws, regulations, Executive Orders and policies and do not discriminate against travelers on the basis of disability, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, or gender. It is also responsible for developing, managing, and strengthening partnerships and outreach with community leaders from disability and multicultural related interest groups, DHS Components, the DOD *Wounded Warrior Program*, and the CRCL. CRL/OTE provides advice on the impact or potential impact of new and existing screening procedures on members of the disability and multicultural communities, and collaborates with CRCL and the appropriate TSA offices to mitigate these impacts.

“TSA Cares.” TSA strives to provide the highest level of security while ensuring that all passengers are treated with dignity and respect. The agency works regularly with a broad coalition of disability and medical condition advocacy groups to help understand their needs and adapt screening procedures accordingly. All travelers may ask to speak to a TSA supervisor if questions about screening procedures arise while at the security checkpoint.

Last December, TSA launched “TSA Cares,” a new helpline number designed to assist travelers with disabilities and medical conditions prior to getting to the airport. Travelers may call the TSA Cares toll free number with questions about screening policies and procedures as well as what to expect at the security checkpoint. When a passenger with a disability or medical

condition calls TSA Cares, a representative will provide assistance either with information about screening that is relevant to the passenger's specific disability or medical condition or the passenger may be referred to disability experts at TSA. This additional level of personal communication helps ensure that even those who do not travel often are aware of our screening policies before they arrive at the airport.

Since its inception, TSA has provided information to all travelers through its TSA Contact Center (TCC) and Customer Service Managers in airports nationwide. TSA Cares will serve as an additional, dedicated resource for passengers with disabilities, medical conditions or other circumstances or their loved ones who want to prepare for the screening process prior to flying.

Expanded TCC Hours. In an effort to further enhance our support for travelers, we recently expanded the hours of the TCC. The TCC can provide information in response to questions, concerns, or complaints regarding security procedures; reports and claims of lost, stolen or damaged items; and programs and policies. TCC operators are trained to address passengers' questions about screening in order to resolve passengers' concerns. The expanded hours are now Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 11 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST); and weekends and Federal holidays, 9 a.m. – 8 p.m. EST. In Fiscal Year 2011, the traveling public contacted the TCC more than 750,000 times.

RBS and TSA Pre✓™ Continue to Expand

As you know, last Fall TSA began developing a strategy for enhanced use of intelligence and other information to enhance a risk-based security (RBS) approach in all facets of transportation, including passenger screening, air cargo, and surface transportation. At its core, the concept of RBS demonstrates a progression of the work TSA has been doing throughout its first decade of service to the traveling public. Our objective is to mitigate risk in a way that effectively balances security measures with privacy, civil rights and civil liberties concerns while both promoting the safe movement of people and commerce and guarding against a deliberate attack against our transportation systems.

RBS in the passenger screening context allows our dedicated TSOs to focus more attention on those travelers we believe are more likely to pose a risk to our transportation network while providing expedited screening to those we consider pose less risk. Through various RBS initiatives, TSA is moving away from a one-size-fits-all security model and closer to its goal of providing the most effective transportation security in the most efficient way possible.

The most widely known risk-based security enhancement we are putting in place is TSA Pre✓™. Since first implementing this idea last fall, the program has been expanded to 15 airports, making it possible for eligible passengers flying from these airports to experience expedited security screening through TSA Pre✓™. The feedback we've been getting is consistently positive. TSA pre-screens TSA Pre✓™ passengers each time they fly through participating airports. If the indicator embedded in their boarding pass reflects eligibility for expedited screening, the passenger is able to use the Pre✓™ lane. Currently, U.S. citizens flying domestically who are qualified frequent fliers of American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, and Alaska Airlines, or members of U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) trusted traveler programs, such as Global Entry, may be eligible for expedited screening at select checkpoints. TSA is actively working with other major air carriers such as United Airlines, US Airways and Jet Blue to expand both the number of participating airlines and the number of airports where expedited screening through TSA Pre✓™ is provided. By the end of 2012, TSA plans to have TSA Pre✓™ operating at many of the Nation's busiest airports.

TSA Pre✓™ travelers are able to divest fewer items, which may include leaving on their shoes, jacket, and light outerwear, and may enjoy other modifications to the standard screening process. As always, TSA will continue to incorporate random and unpredictable security measures throughout the security process. At no point are TSA Pre✓™ travelers guaranteed expedited screening.

Conclusion

As we strive to foster excellence in the TSA workforce and continue to seek ways of improving the overall travel experience for the traveling public through risk-based security initiatives, we must always remember that our success is defined, in large part, by the professionalism and dedication to duty of our people. Whether it is for business or for pleasure, the freedom to travel from place to place is fundamental to our way of life, and to do so securely is a goal to which everyone at TSA is fully committed. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am pleased to address any questions you may have.