



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

April 12, 2011

Administrator John S. Pistole  
Transportation Security Administration  
601 South 12th Street  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Administrator Pistole:

The Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act (P.L. 110-53), authorizes the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to establish an expedited security screening system for sterile area access control within commercial service airports.<sup>1</sup>

This system, to be used by all airline crew members, will help focus resources more effectively and efficiently while simultaneously reducing security checkpoint congestion. On February 10, 2011, you testified that TSA has established working groups to review this issue and examine available options.<sup>2</sup> In the last three years, TSA has made progress in testing and implementing a crew access system, including establishing a demonstration program at three airports, issuing biometric crew access system guidelines, and reviewing existing air carrier proprietary systems for expedited crew access. At the conclusion of the initial phase of the demonstration program, TSA wrote industry stakeholders of its preference “to incorporate biometric technology into an enhanced sterile area access system, ideally with an interoperable capacity.”<sup>3</sup>

As TSA considers the most appropriate method for implementation of a uniform, expedited crew access system, we urge you to ensure that the system includes a biometric component. The inclusion of a biometric component is an important step in the augmentation of a risk-based aviation security program.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1614, P.L. 110-53.

<sup>2</sup> Testimony of TSA Administrator John S. Pistole, before the Subcommittee on Transportation Security, Committee on Homeland Security, at a hearing entitled “Terrorism and Transportation Security,” February 10, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from TSA Administrator Kip Hawley to John Prater, President, Air Line Pilots Association, International, October 17, 2008.

Finally, in accordance with the plain language of Section 1614, we urge you to assure that any expedited crew access system is available to all aircraft crew, including pilots and flight attendants.

For further questions or concerns regarding this issue, please contact Cherri Branson, Chief Counsel for Oversight, at 202-226-2616.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security



Sheila Jackson Lee  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation Security  
Committee on Homeland Security