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Federal Aviation Administration Submits List of Mechanics with Fraudulent Certifications to Transportation Security Administration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, DC / November 10, 2009—On November 5, 2009, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC) transmitted to the President and the Congressional oversight committees for the Department of Transportation (DOT) findings of a DOT report submitted by the Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood. The report indicated that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has submitted a list of Airframe and Powerplant (A & P) mechanics certified by St. George Aviation (SGA), who have failed or failed to complete the re-examination process, to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). SGA was an FAA-designated mechanic examiner in Sanford, Florida, authorized to administer FAA's A & P mechanic exam and issue A & P mechanic certificates. In May 1999, following a DOT Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigation, the owner and an employee of SGA were convicted of fraud and conspiracy in relation to their administration of the A & P mechanic exam and issuance of certificates.

OSC received an allegation from a whistleblower, Gabriel D. Bruno, former FAA Manager of the Orlando Flight Standards District Office, that FAA failed to provide a list of A & P mechanics who received fraudulent certifications to the intelligence community for national security screening. Specifically, these A&P mechanics either failed or did not complete re-examination. Mr. Bruno believed this situation created a security vulnerability that left the aviation industry open to terrorist activity. OSC referred the allegation to the Secretary of Transportation for investigation. The DOT OIG previously recommended forwarding the screening list of SGA-examined mechanics, who failed or failed to complete the re-examination process, to TSA. However, FAA declined to provide the list to TSA, believing that it was constrained by the Privacy Act. FAA reconsidered its position and submitted the list to TSA on May 19, 2009.

OSC determined that the agency's report contains all the information required by statute and the findings appear reasonable.

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