



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

June 16, 2008

The Honorable Edmund S. Hawley
Assistant Secretary
Transportation Security Administration
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, VA 22202-4220

Dear Assistant Secretary Hawley:

On March 26, 2008, you submitted the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) report regarding its efforts to institute a sterile area access system for flight deck and cabin crewmembers as required by Section 1614 of the *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007* (Public Law 110-53), which was signed into law on August 3, 2007.

The report, which was due on January 30, 2008, stated that TSA has "begun evaluating several crewmember screening proposals." However, your report does not describe actions that have been taken to begin the evaluation process. Nor does it provide any benchmarks for future action. The report does not provide any evidence that you have undertaken the analytical work necessary to conduct a comprehensive assessment of how to institute a sterile area access system that will validate the identity for working flight deck and cabin crew members. Nevertheless, at a recent staff briefing, TSA indicated that it would initiate a pilot in early June. I am looking forward to continuing our dialogue on this issue.

Given that realistically this Administration has less than six months to institute any new pilots, policies or programs, I am concerned about whether TSA will initiate any pilot program to assess the feasibility of instituting sterile access systems. Therefore, pursuant to Rule X (3)(g) and Rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, please respond in writing to the questions or provide the information requested below no later than July 1, 2008.

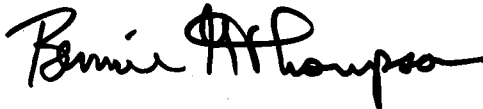
1. Are you testing the "feasibility of instituting sterile access systems"? If so, how? Please provide specifics.

2. Do you have a schedule for “widely instituting” such systems “on a pilot basis at selected airports?” Do you have any outline for an eventual implementation plan, should an eventual pilot program prove successful? If so, please share details.
3. How many airports do you expect to participate in an eventual pilot? What are your criteria for selecting airports to participate in an eventual pilot?
4. Have you identified which airports would be the “selected airports” for an eventual pilot? If so, which airports would participate?
5. Your report highlights Cockpit Access Security System (CASS) as a “promising solution” to meet this mandate. In addition, your report highlights its limitations as a program made only for “flight deck crewmembers” and not all crew members; however, the report does not include any specific recommendations to reconcile this limitation. Have you developed any specific recommendations that would be applied in an eventual pilot program?
6. In your 4-page report, you opt to limit your consideration of approaches to expedite access to sterile areas of the airport to only “working crew members” and fail to meet your statutory obligation to also consider approaches for airline flight deck personnel. Would an eventual pilot also be limited in this regard? What are your plans for meeting the statutory requirement to consider airline flight deck personnel?
7. What would this pilot program measure and test? Please provide information on the scope, duration and purpose of the eventual pilot.
8. What existing databases or technologies do you intend to assess during this eventual pilot program?
 - a. Do you intend to consider biometrics as an approach, in addition to expanding the Cockpit Access Security System (CASS)? If not, why?
 - b. Are there any new technologies or databases that you expect to integrate in the testing?
9. Will you be working with any key stakeholders, including but not limited to trade associations, to design this eventual pilot program?
10. Do you intend to manage this pilot program in-house or will you be issuing a procurement notice?
11. Please provide a list of participants in the working group you mention in your report that may be consulted, to complete the comprehensive assessment mandated in Section 1614 (PL 110-53).
12. Please provide any materials that set forth the human and monetary resources that will be required to complete an eventual pilot and the subsequent assessment

needed to determine how a program can be devised that enhances security and improves operations at airports by properly identifying authorized airline flight deck and cabin crewmembers at screening checkpoints.

Should you have any questions on this request, please do not hesitate to contact Rosaline Cohen, Chief Counsel, at 202.226.2616. Thank you for your time and attention on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bennie G. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping tail.

Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman