

Statement of
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“Examining the President’s FY 2020 Budget Request for the
Transportation Security Administration”
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Good afternoon Chairwoman Roybal-Allard, Ranking Member Fleischmann, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me to testify on the President’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Budget, which includes a \$7.79 billion request for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). This is my first time appearing before this subcommittee since becoming the TSA Administrator in August 2017. I am honored to be here and welcome the opportunity to update you on the progress the agency has made during FY 2018 and thus far this year. My testimony will highlight the accomplishments of our exceptional workforce and explain how we have improved our mission execution.

The U.S. transportation system accommodates approximately 965 million domestic and international aviation passengers annually – this equates to the screening of 2.2 million

passengers, 1.4 million checked bags, and 5.1 million carry-on bags each day. There are also over 5.3 billion passengers traveling on transit and over-the-road buses each year, more than 10.1 billion passenger trips on mass transit per year, and nearly 900,000 chemical shipments on trucks every day. Beyond those usage numbers associated with a relatively open network of transportation modes, the physical scope of the system encompasses approximately 126,000 miles of railroad tracks, 4.2 million miles of highway, 615,000 highway bridges, 473 road tunnels, and nearly 2.5 million miles of pipeline.

Aviation and transportation hubs remain highly-valued targets for terrorists, and terrorist modes and methods of attack are more decentralized and opportunistic than ever before. Every day, TSA is challenged by a persistent, pervasive and constantly evolving threat environment, both in the physical and cyber realms.

We face ambitious adversaries on a daily basis who watch us, study our vulnerabilities, and work diligently to develop new attack strategies to replace those that have failed. To stay ahead of these adversaries, we have to innovate, deploy new solutions rapidly and effectively, and make the most of our resources – goals that are reflected in TSA’s three strategic priorities: Improving Security and Safeguarding the Transportation System; Accelerating Action; and Committing to Our People. In short, we must strive to deliver *Better Security Faster*.

TSA’s workforce has made significant progress implementing those priorities. In FY 2018, we -

- Screened more than 804 million aviation passengers, representing a 5 percent checkpoint volume increase from FY 2017;

- Established and rapidly implemented a Computed Tomography (CT) carry-on baggage screening program through procurement of 49 CT units and deployment of 30 of them to airports and laboratories;
- Expanded the training of explosives detection canine teams in support of maintaining 1,047 TSA Passenger Screening Canine and Law Enforcement Officer teams; and
- Conducted 1,967 air carrier inspections at foreign airports, 145 foreign airport assessments, 62 pipeline critical facility security reviews, 92 assessments of mass transit operator security enhancements, and 124 assessments of security enhancements by motor carriers.

Additionally, TSA's workforce consistently demonstrated extraordinary diligence and commitment to duty throughout FY 2018 and continues to do so today. Of particular note, Transportation Security Officers (TSOs), vetting personnel, Transportation Security Inspectors, canine handlers, and Federal Air Marshals worked for 35 days under extraordinarily challenging circumstances during the lapse in appropriations. Many of those individuals, and in particular our TSOs who are in junior pay bands, continued to report to work despite suffering financial hardships. TSA leveraged the flexibility provided by our appropriations to use prior year funding to mitigate the adverse financial impact on our workforce. Moving forward, I continue to look at various options under the broad scope of TSA's authorities to demonstrate our commitment to the workforce, reward high performers, reduce turnover, and improve employee morale.

Another important element of TSA's ability to deliver *Better Security Faster* relies upon our legal authority to execute our mission. To that end, I want to thank Congress for the passage

and ultimate enactment last October of the *FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018*, which includes the *TSA Modernization Act*.

The *TSA Modernization Act* represents the agency's first reauthorization since its inception in 2001. Among many things, the *TSA Modernization Act* authorizes appropriations for FY 2019, 2020, and 2021, modernizes TSA's structure and operations, and expands the Agency's ability to innovate, engage domestic and international stakeholders, and execute our critical mission to protect passengers and cargo traveling across all modes of transportation. In addition to directing an agency-wide efficiency review, we believe the *TSA Modernization Act* requirement for TSA to formally apply risk-based budgeting to surface transportation and to develop and submit a Capital Investment Plan (CIP) will better position us to strategically plan and apply our resources more effectively. We anticipate the CIP will be submitted next month and the surface transportation security assessment, which is a precursor for associated risk based budget and resource allocation efforts, will be completed by its October 2019 deadline. These documents will be used in the development of future budget requests.

As part of the budget development process, we identified cost-savings and efficiencies in order to pursue top funding priorities in FY 2020. These include reduction to the Federal Air Marshal Service based on our new Concept of Operations; contract and travel costs savings of \$40.2 million; and anticipated staff attrition of 11.5 percent resulting from the consolidation of TSA buildings into our new headquarters. In total, TSA reductions include 166 positions from headquarters and \$181.5 million in expenditures that will be redirected to other higher priority items, including support of the frontline workforce.

Fully funding TSA's FY 2020 Budget Request will enable the agency to build upon the progress we have made to improve frontline operations, accelerate the deployment of new

technologies, and gain efficiencies through organizational restructuring and optimizing the use of limited resources. For instance, this Budget Request continues ongoing capital investment efforts to purchase and deploy new technologies.

In FY 2020, TSA will buy 320 CT units using requested resource funding and prior year resources available in the Aviation Security Capital Fund. Building upon the FY 2018 efforts noted earlier, and the anticipated procurement of approximately 202 additional CT units in FY 2019, funding the FY 2020 request will enable us to continue to accelerate the deployment of CT technology to the field to equip our workforce and more effectively enable mission execution. CT systems provide TSOs with a 3-dimensional view of baggage, the ability to remove unwanted clutter, and a greater capacity to detect explosives and prohibited items. We are also requesting a \$12.6 million increase to further develop CT detection technology to identify a broader range of homemade explosives, reduce false alarms, enable detection of greatly reduced threat mass, and potentially provide the ability for passengers to leave liquids and laptops in their carry-on bags.

In addition, TSA will continue purchasing 294 Credentialing Authentication Technology (CAT) units using \$14.8 million from base resources. The ongoing purchases of CAT units will improve the detection of fraudulent documents and allow us to screen passengers more effectively on a risk basis.

This Budget also requests an additional \$58.6 million, including associated costs, for additional TSOs (1028 positions/700 FTE) to bolster our screening workforce. As passenger enplanements increase, so does TSA's operational workload. We constantly explore ways to improve screening efficiencies while maintaining or improving security effectiveness and consider various factors including space constraints, passenger/baggage screening demand,

equipment, and risks at airports to right size the workforce. For FY 2020, this investment in TSO staffing is necessary for us to continue to meet passenger expectations, maintain acceptable wait times, and avoid crowding at the checkpoints, which is itself a security concern. The FY 2020 Budget Request also includes \$8.8 million to implement improved training requirements for the agency's TSO Career Progression Plan. We expect this investment in the professional growth of our workforce to enhance screener proficiency, performance, and morale.

Recognizing that aviation transportation security requires global cooperation, the Budget requests \$10.2 million for increased international outreach. This reflects TSA's commitment to raising the global transportation security baseline by increasing our international footprint in Asia, the Middle East, and at CBP preclearance locations. This approach is designed to deter, detect, and deny potential adversaries access or the ability to insert a threat into the global transportation system.

Finally, in conjunction with the FY 2020 Budget Request, the Administration proposes raising the Aviation Passenger Security Fee, also known as the September 11th Security Fee, in order to fully cover the costs of aviation security by FY 2028. The fee was created to cover the costs of aviation security, but currently it covers only 40 percent. This proposal would increase the fee by one dollar, from \$5.60 to \$6.60 per one-way trip, in FY 2020 and then from \$6.60 to \$8.25 in FY 2021. This measure would generate \$599 million in new revenue in FY 2020 and close to \$23 billion over the next ten years.

Last year, I announced a one-word revision to TSA's motto - changing "*Not on My Watch*" to "*Not on Our Watch*." This simple but significant adjustment reflects the fact that securing our transportation systems is a communal effort and that our greatest assets are – and will always be – our people, our partners, and the traveling public.

TSA's FY 2020 Budget Request is consistent with that approach. To achieve the priorities reflected within it, TSA will engage industry and our stakeholders to partner with us to develop and deploy new technology. We will also invest resources in our employees, who reflect TSA's core values of integrity, respect, and commitment, and ask them to serve as leaders regardless of their titles or level in the agency, and as ambassadors for TSA. We will continue to encourage the public to be part of the solution. Finally, through constructive oversight and dialogue, we seek to partner with Congress as we work to provide *Better Security Faster*.

Chairwoman Roybal-Allard, Ranking Member Fleischmann, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.