

TESTIMONY OF

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**Transportation Security Administration
U.S. Department of Homeland Security**

BEFORE

House Committee on Homeland Security

ON

**“20 Years After 9/11:
The State of the Transportation Security Administration”**

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Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Katko, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I must admit, it's a freeing feeling testifying as a *former* TSA Administrator. I would just like to highlight a few key points as I assess the landscape of transportation security in the U.S. 20 years after 9/11.

First, as you know Chairman Thompson, when I was confirmed by the Senate in June, 2010 and began my tenure as TSA Administrator, I was pleasantly surprised at the broad, almost sweeping authorities Congress had given the position when the Bush Administration proposed it after the 9/11 attacks. I'll be glad to cite one or two examples during my oral testimony. My strong recommendation to you and all of Congress is to maintain these broad authorities which allow TSA, through its Administrator and the Secretary of DHS, to act quickly and decisively in time of imminent threat, such as was experienced on Christmas Day 2009 with the "Underwear" bomber, or with the October, 2010, AQAP toner cartridge bombing plot. Under these broad authorities, my leadership team and I were able to effectively address those threats through domestic and global mitigation measures through my issuance of Emergency Amendments and Security Directives. Additionally, under these broad authorities, we were able to envision and implement the popular trusted traveler program TSA PreCheck, now with nearly 11 million members.

Second, I would encourage you and the Administration to ensure the Administrator has maximum flexibility and authorities for internal personnel matters, such as pay, promotion and representation. When I issued my Determination to allow TSA employees the right to pursue collective bargaining, it was important in my mind to recognize and support the frontline workforce, especially the Transportation Security Officers (TSOs), while ensuring that security considerations remained outside the purview of the CBA. I could not imagine a situation where TSOs would be allowed to go on strike in a time of crisis, thereby possibly impacting national security.

Third, I believe both of my successors, Adm Peter Neffinger and Adm David Pekoske, have done an outstanding job of encouraging innovation in and among the TSA workforce and with key stakeholders, including providers of security equipment and processes. This type of innovation, such as done through the Innovation Task Force, is critical for ensuring that TSA stays at least one step ahead of the terrorists. And the best innovation I've seen is usually done in partnership with industry. The best way to facilitate meaningful partnerships is through shared investments. So my strong recommendation in this respect is that your Committee, working with the Appropriators and OMB, help fund this innovation work to incentivize the private sector, which obviously has to have a positive return on investment. And this security investment needs to be made not only in the screening equipment at airport checkpoints and checked baggage locations, but in the processes and connectivity which enables TSA to seamlessly "deploy next generation technology today" across the 440+ airports with TSA personnel.

Finally, each day we hear about new cyber-attacks, especially ransom ware, impacting private businesses and governmental agencies globally. This spring's Colonial Pipeline attack caused panic buying across the southeast U.S. and, frankly, I think most Americans were surprised to learn that TSA has regulatory authority over that critical infrastructure. Congress and the Administration must continue investing money, resources and personnel, to ensure that key transportation systems, whether pipelines or much better known critical systems such as Secure Flight and FAA's Air Traffic Control systems, are secure 24/7.

The women and men of TSA are dedicated to keeping travelers safe. Thanks for doing your part to ensure they have the tools, resources and support to do this critical job properly. I'll be glad to take any questions you may have.

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