

Statement of Frank Capello
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Before the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation Security
“Lessons from the LAX Shooting”
May 29, 2014

Chairman Hudson, Ranking Member Richmond, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to be with you today to discuss aviation security issues. These issues impact our Nation in so many ways and impacts all those who use our Nation’s airports for employment, business travel and leisure travel.

I am the Aviation Security Director of the Fort Lauderdale Hollywood International Airport. My duties include the planning, directing and administering a comprehensive safety and security program for the County’s Aviation Department to ensure compliance with all federal security regulations. The central core of my duties is to ensure the safety and security of the traveling public and employees who work at Fort Lauderdale Hollywood International Airport.

Fort Lauderdale Hollywood International Airport averages over 700 scheduled passenger aircraft flight operations daily. We have more than 64,000 passengers in our terminals daily. Twenty five scheduled airlines operate from our 4 terminals.

Mr. Chairman, I want to assure you and the members of this Subcommittee that airports across our nation take recent incidents and the potential for future incidents involving terrorism and other criminal acts as a very serious matter. Airport executives, including the Aviation Director of the Broward County Aviation Department, Mr. Kent George, hold safety and security as our first and foremost priority. We work very closely in collaboration with our local Transportation Security Administration (TSA) office to reinforce the layers of security that currently exist and to work towards continuous enhancement of aviation security on a daily basis.

I would like to add that our department works very closely with our local Customs and Border Protection office and also the contingent of FBI Agents assigned to our airport. In addition to the 93 sworn officers assigned as our law enforcement provider, the Broward Sheriff’s Office, we are also very proud of the work of our Fire Department which is a service also provided by the Broward Sheriff’s Office. Crash Fire and Rescue services are an integral part of any response to a critical aviation security incident involving protection of property and lives. I would like for you to know that our law enforcement services and our Crash Fire and Rescue services are provided by the

same organization, the Broward Sheriff's Office, as I think that the distinction avails our organization a high degree of interoperability.

The nature of many tragic events is unpredictable and therefore there is not one way to prevent certain behavior from occurring. Unfortunately, many threats can only be mitigated and not eliminated. Random shootings are not new to airports. On November 22, 1974 Samuel Byck entered BWI Airport, shot Police Officer George Neal Ramsburg in the back and proceeded in a hijacking attempt of a Delta DC-9 aircraft. During this incident the copilot of the flight was shot dead and the pilot was shot numerous times.

I cite this incident as I believe that it is relevant in recent discussions regarding the use of law enforcement officers at a fixed post near airport passenger screening checkpoints. At Fort Lauderdale Hollywood International Airport we use a hybrid of fixed post officers and flexible response officers to handle responsibilities related to the safety of those in the vicinity of TSA screening checkpoints. The flexible response officers further enhance security as the officer has the ability to patrol a greater area and adds a certain degree of unpredictability towards someone planning an attack.

We also use a unique way to provide these law enforcement officers in a more cost effective way. Instead of using a normally scheduled officer at a fixed post, we provide a "detail" officer. The "detail" officer is usually an officer from the airport district what works a detail that is scheduled outside of the officer's normal duty hours. Currently we deploy detail officers at each passenger screening checkpoint 8 hours daily. This officer is authorized by law, to affect an arrest or discharge their firearm for cause while on duty. The "loaded" cost of an officer is approximately \$67.00 an hour. The "detail" officer costs \$37.00 an hour. The manner in which officers are provided to TSA passenger screening checkpoints allow our airport to provide additional law enforcement officers as a result of a lower cost per hour.

Unfortunately, random shootings are not new to airports; they are also prevalent in other public areas. As an example, last Friday a crazed gunman went on a shooting rampage in a popular Santa Barbara student enclave. Numerous active shootings have occurred throughout the country in the past 12 months. They are one of a multitude of aviation security challenges airports in the United States have implemented measures to address.

Since the tragic events of November 1, 2013 at LAX, the airport community has been working with the TSA to identify and develop security enhancements. We appreciate the TSA's collaborative approach of their working with industry to protect all those who work in and travel through the airport environment. We concur with recommendations put

forth by TSA in Information Circular 14-01. We find that the recommended enhancements contained in the Information Circular are prudent and we plan to follow the recommendations. The current threats to airport terminals are diffuse, complicated and unpredictable. The FBI reports that academic studies of active shooter statistics reveal that 49% of the time, the active shooting ended before police arrive. Also of interest is that in 10% of the cases, the shooter stops and walks away. In 20% of the cases the shooter goes mobile, moving to another location. The average active shooter incident lasts 12 minutes, while 37% last less than 5 minutes.

My testimony today contains two recommendations. I would be glad to work further with TSA and the Subcommittee on matters that can further improve aviation safety and security and I look forward to any questions you may have.

First, I believe that training for the most recent threat is relevant, but this training should not overcome the need for a training program that ultimately makes an airport more secure. The training I am suggesting would have a goal to “add a new layer of ingenuity” within the airport environment. A majority of aviation security training must be proactive and well thought out with a lesser focus on airport security training that is rooted towards reactivity concerning recent events. Many airports throughout the United States have already implemented some form of this training to a degree. This training must enhance the awareness of not only first responders, but must be afforded to all those who work in an airport environment.

In developing this type of training program, there must be varying types of knowledge imparted with an amount of training that is customized for the actual responsibilities of the workforce. Much of this training should be followed by actual on the job training (OJT) that is actually conducted in the workplace setting. Online training is very useful, table top exercises do allow for a further understanding of training objectives. The use of some form of “tactical” training for all employees with responsibilities in airport passenger terminals is a big step forward when considering comprehensive training for aviation security.

In a typical airport setting there would be specific training for law enforcement personnel, other specific training for personnel such as TSA and airport authority employees, and then another specialized curriculum for the other employees working in an airport setting. At all layers the training would encompass aviation security awareness and how to report security issues to the proper authorities responsible for aviation security. Additionally this training would identify how to evacuate or escape. This type of training is available today. The two major factors that limit the use of this type of training is the ability to accept training from an outside entity and the cost. These

hurdles are easily overcome when logic is used to analyze the cost benefit of the training.

Second, federal funding for aviation security initiatives, such as the training I mentioned, must be considered. There is a need to specifically fund aviation security initiatives and technology throughout airports in the United States. The amount airports are reimbursed by TSA under the Law Enforcement Officer Reimbursement Program has decreased significantly over the last several years. The decision to reduce the amount of these funds comes at a time when funding should be increased as a result of the strains being placed upon airports throughout the United States as they comply with an increasing amount of federal mandates and simultaneously work to provide an optimal level of aviation safety and security. At the same time, airports are challenged by the lack of available funding necessary to provide for projects to update infrastructure. Restoring sufficient funds to the Law Enforcement Officer Reimbursement Program would be instrumental in providing more capability to deter criminal activity and is certainly a prudent measure to mitigate an active shooter situation.

I do not believe TSA Transportation Security Officers should be armed. Generally speaking, more guns at a TSA passenger screening checkpoint are not a solution. TSA officers have specific duties that would be impacted if the same officers were required to be fully trained in the laws involving the retention and handling of firearms, and the time needed to maintain proficiency in the use of a firearm. Additionally, as more and more entities are introduced into a response plan, that plan becomes exponentially harder to plan, coordinate and implement. The use of law enforcement officers that have already been trained and equipped to respond to active shooter incidents is the most prudent and effective way forward.

Funding for United States airports was made available in the 1980's after a terminated employee used his airport identification badge to board PSA Flight 1771 and crashed the aircraft as a result of a murder/suicide. All 43 people aboard the aircraft died. This funding was used to install automated access controls that are used to deny restricted area access immediately. Since 9/11 significant federal funding has been provided to TSA to purchase and install hold (checked) baggage explosive detection systems to further address the threat of a bomb being placed in the baggage which is to be loaded aboard the aircraft at airports in the United States.

Congress should study the provision of additional aviation security specific funds that would be used by airports throughout the United States to fund security initiatives, technologies, and increased reimbursement for law enforcement officers to further enhance aviation security in the public areas of airport terminals. Additionally, if

provided airport specific funding, airports could increase the tempo of continually improving the various layers of security currently in place at airports throughout the United States. Congress should also allow for the additional funding of research of airport security technology, such as the evaluation and testing currently being conducted by the National Safe Skies Alliance which is funded by the Federal Aviation Administration. For example, this research could enable airports to more wisely use limited monetary resources to implement projects to better protect airport perimeters to reduce the amount of unauthorized entries onto airfields.

In closing, I wish to assure you that we are in the process of implementing many specific post LAX shooting enhancements to our Airport Emergency Plan and to our Disaster Preparedness Plan. We are currently involved in evaluating different types of active shooter training that will improve our ability to better train airport employees. We know you understand the importance of the need for airports to consider, evaluate and implement local initiatives to enhance our layers of security, and our opportunity to leverage available and future technology.