

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Homeland Security**  
**Subcommittee on Transportation Security**  
“A Review of Access Control Measures at our Nation’s Airports”  
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Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson, Chairman Katko, Ranking Member Rice and members of the subcommittee, I thank you for holding this hearing, and I thank you for including Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the world’s busiest passenger airport.

I want to begin my remarks with the following statement: the safety and security of Airport users is our top priority. I am reassured by the remarks offered by the witnesses on the first panel, and I agree that ensuring the safety and security of our passengers and employees is a crucial and collective goal for all of us. Further, I am pleased to know that a number of Committee members have backgrounds as prosecutors, evidencing a lifetime commitment to the safety of our nation.

At Hartsfield-Jackson, we have had some recent incidents in the area of security, which should give us all concern. There is no mistaking that fact. As the general manager for the Department of Aviation, it is my job to provide leadership to ensure that – working with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), airlines and other stakeholders – security gaps are closed, and the passengers and employees at the Airport are safe. Each year, we have more than 94 million passengers who pass through Atlanta; in addition, we have more than 63,000 employees on campus. Ensuring their safety and security is a big job, but I know that our partners, particularly TSA and the airlines, are equally committed to this task.

As you know, every airport is different. Each is unique in its configuration, and each is unique in terms of its risk profile. As such, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to airport security. As with every airport in the country, we work tirelessly with our security partners and operate under a TSA-approved security plan. This multi-layered system of security measures is based upon the determined risk at a particular airport. However, we recognize that air transportation is a system, and any system is only as strong as its weakest link. Approximately 64 million of the more than 94 million passengers who pass through Atlanta annually

are connecting from another airport. Therefore, we believe that some minimum standard of employee screening or inspection should be adopted across the entire system and should incorporate the input of all U.S. airports.

As noted earlier, at our airport, we need to do more. Hence, in the last six weeks, the Aviation Department has held meetings almost daily, with TSA, Customs and Border Protection, the FAA, airlines and other key stakeholders, to develop an improved short-, medium- and long-term safety and security plan for Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

In our early assessment, we have identified security enhancements that can be made now, while we continue to develop other security options that will take some time. I have instructed our team that we will not wait to take action. We will implement immediately what can be done now while we continue to improve our plan. At Hartsfield-Jackson, one action that we can implement immediately is the reprogramming of Security Identification Display Area badges, known as SIDA badges. These are the badges which currently allow employees access to the sterile areas of the airport. This reprogramming will be based on employee job function and work location, and will effectively reduce the number of access portals through which an employee can enter the airport's secured areas.

We recognize that 100% screening of airport employees has operational and cost challenges, and is neither practical nor sustainable. But the unmistakable fact, as recent events suggest, is that we need to be consistently vigilant in our efforts, and the kind of enhancements that we are considering will require a significant investment.

Therefore, in the medium to long term, Atlanta will work closely with TSA, the airlines and other key stakeholders, to screen airport employees who access the SIDA. The few exceptions will include law enforcement, emergency personnel, other first responders and those employees approved under federal regulations such as the TSA's Known Crew Member program. Even with those exceptions, we have begun processes whereby **all** employees at Hartsfield-Jackson have an expectation that they will be screened or inspected.

Additionally, we are focusing on improvements to employee background checks and screening. We will focus on smarter access control as noted. We are likewise focusing on the security and safety of goods brought onto Airport property. While we attempt, with our partners in the security and intelligence fields, to prevent individuals with ill will from working at the Airport, we are also focusing on eliminating illicit materials from ever entering the Airport campus.

In closing, this conversation is bigger than Hartsfield-Jackson. A safe and secure air transportation system also means an economically healthy system and directly impacts the entire U.S. economy. In order to achieve these security enhancements, we will need the cooperation of our partners at the Airport, and in particular, the financial support and resources of the TSA. Our commitment to ensuring the safety and security of everyone at Hartsfield-Jackson is unwavering. We are up to the task, and I am confident our partners are as well.

Thank you.