

Statement of
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Good morning Chairman Katko, Ranking Member Watson Coleman, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me here today to testify on the President’s FY 2019 Budget, which includes a request of \$7.7 billion for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

I am grateful for the longstanding and constructive relationship that TSA enjoys with this subcommittee. This budget supports our highest priority funding needs and allows TSA to continue its critical mission of protecting America’s transportation systems.

TSA was created in the wake of the September 11th attacks and charged with the mission of preventing another large scale act of terrorism on the American transportation system. Many things have changed since that fateful day, but our fundamental mission has not. Our nation

relies on the professionals at TSA, and across the transportation community, to protect passengers and commerce traveling to and within the United States.

Across the country, TSA screens more than two million passengers every day. Since September 11, 2001, there have been no successful attacks on the U.S. aviation system. Our motto, “not on my watch,” speaks to our commitment to defeat terrorist attempts to attack our transportation systems.

Every day we are reminded anew that we face ambitious adversaries who are watching us, studying our vulnerabilities and working hard to develop new attack strategies to replace those that have failed. To stay ahead of them, we have to innovate, we have to deploy new solutions rapidly and effectively, and we have to make the most of our resources. Since 9/11, we have taken bold and unprecedented steps to ensure the security of aviation. Aviation and transportation hubs remain highly-valued targets for terrorists, and terrorist modes and methods of attack are much more decentralized and opportunistic than ever before.

Since my swearing in, I have made it a priority to meet with members of the TSA workforce, industry, and stakeholders. These discussions reinforce that our transportation systems fundamentally underpin our economy and that as technology is changing the way the world operates it is also changing the way our adversaries operate. Securing this environment requires a proactive and agile agency with a professional workforce that coordinates closely with key partners in government and industry domestically and around the world.

As I traveled across the transportation system, I met thousands of people who are deeply committed to the security of the system. These encounters strengthened my belief that security is a communal effort and that our greatest assets are – and will always be – our people, our

partners, and the traveling public. These experiences have also led me to conclude that TSA must move faster if it is to meet the demands of the future. Faster to minimize vulnerabilities, faster to test new technology, and faster to procure and deploy new technology. In short, we need to be more agile.

That is why I have set out in the new TSA Strategy, three key priorities: improve security and safeguard the transportation system, accelerate action, and commit to our people. These priorities reflect my focus on preserving frontline operations, quickly transitioning to new technologies, and creating efficiencies to optimize limited resources.

We believe strongly that innovation is central to our continued success. This firm belief inspired the creation of the TSA Innovation Task Force in 2016. This task force is collaborating with industry, airlines, and airport authorities to find and deploy the very best ideas for increasing security while reducing friction for the traveler.

For example, with your help, we will drive as hard and fast as we can to rapidly deploy Computed Tomography (CT) systems to high-risk domestic airports in 2019. Our confidence in the security impact of these solutions has led us to request \$71.5 million to purchase and deploy CT systems in FY 2019. Research and development efforts have shown that CT is the most consequential technology available today for airport checkpoints, as it automates much of the threat detection function. We have devoted significant resources into testing this technology during this current fiscal year, and pending results, we anticipate field testing will be conducted at up to eight airports in the coming months.

The FY 2019 budget request includes \$71.5 million for CT technology, which will allow us to begin purchasing and deploying CT technology to airport checkpoints. This will allow for

the purchase of at least 145 CT units and an additional \$2.4 million for 19 new full-time Transportation Security Specialists-Explosives to help respond to the increased alarm rates that we expect as we roll out the new technology. With the funding requested in the FY 2019 President's Budget, we also plan to procure and deploy 294 credential authentication technology (CAT) units at a number of airports. CT and CAT are cornerstone technologies to transform security at the checkpoint.

TSA has extraordinarily dedicated employees -- people of high integrity, who have great respect for and commitment to our mission and to one another. Both the Administration and I share a continued commitment to invest in and strengthen this workforce. Therefore, the FY 2019 budget request includes funding for 43,877 full-time Transportation Security Officers. This request will increase TSA's workforce by 717 full-time Officers, which begins to address our frontline shortfall in the face of increased passenger volume and evolving threats to aviation.

To make the most of these budgetary priorities, we are asking industry and our stakeholders to partner with us to develop and deploy new technology. We are asking our employees to recommit to our core values of integrity, respect, and commitment, to be leaders regardless of their titles or level in the agency, and to be ambassadors for TSA. We ask members of the public to see themselves as part of the solution and to remember that the Officers at the checkpoint are doing their job to keep Americans safe. Finally, we ask you, the members of this subcommittee, for your continued partnership, insight, and support.

Securing our Nation's transportation system is a complex task and we cannot do it alone. Since our inception, TSA has lived by the motto "not on my watch." This has served as a powerful call to action for the TSA workforce. I hope to encourage an even stronger relationship

between those outside TSA and those within by acknowledging our shared security mission. Together we will adopt and embrace a new creed: “Not on Our Watch.”

Chairman Katko, Ranking Member Watson Coleman, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I look forward to your questions.