



Transportation
Security
Administration

JUN 20 2019

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cummings:

Thank you for your letter dated May 20, 2019, co-signed by Chairman Stephen F. Lynch, requesting documents and information related to the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) support of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) efforts to address the humanitarian and security crisis at the U.S. Southwest Border.

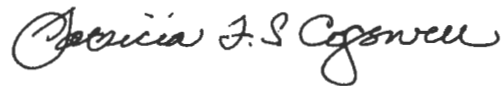
TSA, like other DHS Components, has solicited volunteers to deploy to the Southwest Border to assist with the historic surge in migrant arrivals. This influx has created operational challenges and stretched thin the resources of TSA's fellow DHS frontline agencies, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). To meet these challenges, TSA solicited volunteers from across the TSA workforce for specific support functions to assist CBP and ICE with the vulnerable populations arriving at the border so these agencies may focus on their border security responsibilities.

The TSA workforce has overwhelmingly answered this call to volunteer service in the same way our workforce has volunteered to assist the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the past for hurricane and disaster relief efforts. Based on CBP and ICE's stated needs, TSA anticipates that less than 1% of its 63,000 overall workforce will be selected for voluntary deployment. Given this number, TSA expects to be able to strategically manage deployments, minimizing the burden or operational impact to any individual airport or program area.

TSA will ensure the security of the traveling public remains paramount, and that security standards and processes are not impacted by any deployment.

Attached are responses to the questions posed in your letter. Please note the data in the attached spreadsheet reflects the number of volunteers on June 19, 2019. I have sent an identical response to Chairman Lynch. Thank you for taking the time to share your concerns with us. If I may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me directly or the TSA Legislative Affairs office at (571) 227-2717.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patricia F.S. Cogswell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "P".

Patricia F.S. Cogswell
Acting Deputy Administrator

Enclosures

**Response to Chairman Elijah E. Cummings' and Stephen F. Lynch's Letter to TSA
Administrator Pekoske on May 20, 2019**

- 1. For each TSA employee that may be diverted to the southern border or to units supporting operations on the southern border:
 - a. his or her current position and duty station: and**
 - b. The length of time he or she is expected to be diverted;****

See the attached Excel spreadsheet.

- 2. A list of the airports and other transportation facilities that will have TSA personnel diverted to the southern border or to units supporting operations on the southern border, including the number of personnel expected to be diverted from each airport or other facility;**

See the attached Excel spreadsheet.

- 3. A description of the job responsibilities each TSA employee diverted to the southern border or to units supporting operations on the southern border will perform and the training that will be provided to each of these employees;**

Volunteers will assist U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in the following areas in response to the humanitarian and security crisis at the Southwest Border:

- **Attorneys:** ICE's Office of the Principal Legal Advisor is seeking volunteer attorneys to appear on behalf of the government and provide support to ICE's operational clients, including preparing cases for trial, appearing regularly in immigration court, conducting legal research, drafting motions and other legal documents, preparing witnesses for trial, conducting direct and cross-examination of witnesses, and presenting oral arguments advancing DHS's legal position. In order to do so, the volunteer attorneys will receive substantive legal training, including formal immigration law and practice training sessions through ICE's training center in Dallas, TX.
- **Law Enforcement Officers:** Federal Air Marshals (FAMs) will be supporting CBP with some law enforcement duties including hospital watches, transportation of detainees, and monitoring detainees, so CBP may focus on its priority border security-related duties. CBP provides training to all deploying law enforcement officers.

- Detainee Support: TSA volunteers will assist CBP with meal provisions, welfare checks, and personal property management for detainees. CBP will provide the appropriate training needed to perform these duties.
- High Capacity Transportation of Detainees: TSA volunteers with a current Commercial Driver's License with passenger endorsement will assist CBP and the United States Border Patrol (USBP) by augmenting transport capabilities from field locations to USBP stations, and assisting in the movement of aliens from USBP stations to ICE detention facilities.

4. A description of any changes or reductions in TSA security operations due to the diversion of TSA employees to the southern border or to units supporting operations on the southern border, including with respect to Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response teams, Federal Air Marshal operations, and any other affected operations.

The security of the traveling public remains TSA's top priority. TSA will maintain all security standards and processes. TSA anticipates less than 1% of its 63,000 employee workforce will be deployed to support DHS efforts at the Southwest Border.

For airports, TSA will minimize its impact by strategically selecting volunteers and coordinating the timing of their deployments with DHS so no one airport is overburdened. TSA recognizes the heightened need for resources at airports during the high volume summer months, and is monitoring wait times and staffing needs in order to make adjustments as soon as needed.

The Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) has made short-term adjustments to minimize the impact to its operations. Specifically, FAMS assigned to ground-based assignments are being scheduled to cover flights previously assigned to personnel who were deployed to the Southwest Border. FAMS has also temporarily curtailed scheduled training hours so that more personnel are available for mission-status assignments. These adjustments will help ensure flight mission coverage, in the short-term, is not impacted.

In the long-term, FAMS anticipates a slight reduction in coverage of lower priority flights, as described in its Concept of Operations. FAMS' highest priority flights will not be impacted by supporting DHS efforts at the Southwest Border. In regard to its Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) Program, FAMS anticipates an approximate 19% reduction in overall VIPR operations during the 45-day deployment, since the initial group of FAMS volunteers was selected from its VIPR Program. These volunteers were all chosen from FAMS Field Offices with multiple VIPR teams to ensure surface and aviation VIPR operations continued in those areas.

5. A description of the risks to aviation security that could result from the diversion of TSA employees to the southern border or to units supporting operations on the southern border, including an explanation of how these risks were determined and how they will be mitigated.

TSA's primary airport-related risk is that if passenger volume exceeds TSA's security screening resources at one or more airports, it could see lines in the non-secure area of the airport; these lines could be a potential target. This risk is not unique to the deployment of personnel to the Southwest Border.

To minimize the potential impact of deploying volunteers to the Southwest Border, TSA implemented layered reviews by our Security Operations office and TSA airport leadership. To ensure no single airport would be overburdened by volunteer deployments, Security Operations limited the total number of volunteers for most of the larger airports. TSA is also distributing volunteers across several waves of deployments to further mitigate the impact to airport operations.

Additionally, TSA identified a handful of airport locations with staffing challenges that were not authorized to provide volunteers. TSA expects overall support for the southern border will impact less than 1% of the approximately 50,000 employee screening workforce. These mitigations will ensure the appropriate balance between operational mission requirements and staffing needs, and reduce the likelihood that passenger volume will exceed TSA screening resources.

TSA is also mindful of a potential increased risk to in-flight security. To minimize impact, TSA is prioritizing coverage of higher risk flights, as identified in the FAMS Concept of Operations.

6. A list of all TSA employees diverted to the southern border or to units supporting operations on the southern border since January 20, 2017.

No TSA employee was deployed to the Southwest Border or to units supporting operations on the southern border prior to April 2019. See the attached response to document requests #1 and #2 for the list of TSA employees deployed to the Southwest Border in April 2019.



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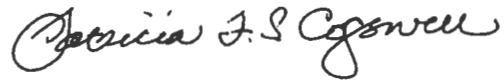
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