

**Testimony of Ken Fletcher**

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**Before the**

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**Subcommittee on Transportation Security**

**United States House of Representatives**

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Good afternoon Chairman Katko, Ranking Member Rice, and distinguished Members of the subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Pre✓<sup>®</sup> program.

The primary mission of TSA is to secure our Nation's transportation systems, while ensuring freedom of movement for people and commerce. To fulfill this vital mission, TSA employs a multi-layered, risk-based approach to security through a well-trained workforce, state-of-the-art technologies, intelligence analysis and information sharing, explosives detection canine teams, Federal Air Marshals, Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) teams, and our industry partners who voluntarily adopt security improvements and comply with regulations. These initiatives help TSA focus resources on high-risk and unknown travelers and commerce, while facilitating the movement of travelers and commerce and enhancing the customer experience for the traveling public.

The 9/11 Commission Report noted that the U.S. Government should set risk-based priorities to protect transportation assets, and implement the most practical and cost-effective programs to protect them. By applying a risk-based approach to security, TSA is able to employ resources with the greatest impact in reducing risk and enhancing the security of the traveling public and the Nation's transportation systems. Expedited screening for low-risk passengers is key to the success of RBS in aviation security. Through RBS measures, TSA increased the percent of passengers receiving some form of expedited screening from 9.6 percent in September 2013 to 50 percent by November 2014. This increase resulted in an overall average of 43.5 percent of passengers receiving some form of expedited screening by TSA during 2014.

Our approach to Risk Based Security (RBS) is to effectively manage security risks to maximize the value TSA provides to the nation in executing our security mission. The RBS measures implemented over the past three years have significantly increased our ability to move people through the checkpoint, requiring fewer resources than traditional screening operations. As a result, TSA has gained efficiencies through RBS initiatives, with savings totaling \$319 million over the past two years.

### **TSA Pre✓® Program**

In December 2013, TSA launched our TSA Pre✓® application program, which is the cornerstone of our expedited screening efforts. TSA Pre✓® was one of the first initiatives in TSA's shift toward a risk-based and intelligence-driven approach to security. Through this program, U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents can apply directly to participate in TSA Pre✓® and undergo a background check in order to become eligible for a period of 5 years.

Passengers may qualify for the program either directly through the TSA's Pre✓® application program, or through the U.S Customs and Border Protection's Global Entry program.

TSA has worked closely with U.S. and foreign airlines to expand the number of airlines participating in TSA Pre✓®, and has enhanced the Known Crewmember Initiative, as well as extended eligibility for TSA Pre✓® to U.S. Armed Forces personnel, Department of Defense personnel, and U.S. Coast Guard civilian employees. In November 2014, TSA extended TSA Pre✓® expedited screening benefits to students of four U.S. service academies. More than 60,000 DOD employees benefit from TSA Pre✓® each week, and that number continues to steadily increase.

TSA is currently working with a number of other Federal departments and agencies to include other lower risk populations into TSA Pre✓®. TSA increased the number of airports with TSA Pre✓® screening lanes to 125, established 481 dedicated and supplemental TSA Pre✓® lanes, and added TSA Pre✓® Application Program enrollment centers for a total of 326 centers processing more than 1 million applicants. Since September 2013, TSA Pre✓® volume has increased 600 percent with more than 300 million passengers receiving TSA Pre✓® screening to date.

This year, TSA will continue to focus on increasing participation in TSA Pre✓® with the goal of providing expedited screening to a majority of the traveling public. We plan to accomplish this by identifying and enrolling more low-risk populations, expanding participation to additional U.S. and foreign airlines, exploring potential opportunities to leverage private

sector capabilities and expertise in the TSA Pre✓® application process, and offering additional opportunities for enrollment in TSA Pre✓®.

### **Risk Based Security**

RBS enhancements do not stop with prescreening through TSA Pre✓®. Beyond efforts like TSA Pre✓®, RBS screening at checkpoints includes real time threat assessments through the deployment of behavior detection techniques, explosives detection canines and explosive trace detection equipment, and risk-based physical screening utilizing differentiated screening procedures and technology applications.

RBS is not a standalone program, but a strategic application of intelligence-driven risk mitigation principles that moves away from the one-size-fits-all approach to security. TSA will continue to focus on applying our risk-based security approaches to other aspects of transportation security, including checked baggage, air cargo, regulatory compliance, and Federal Air Marshal deployments.

### **Industry Engagement**

Our industry and stakeholder partners are vital to TSA's ability to implement risk-based security into every area of transportation security. Cooperation with and engagement by these partners was essential in helping TSA establish and expand the TSA Pre✓® program across the aviation sector. Airlines worked with us to update their systems to handle new requirements, such as TSA Pre✓® interconnectivity and boarding pass markings. Our airport partners also worked with us to reconfigure checkpoint space to accommodate a TSA Pre✓® lane for

passengers. To date, TSA has expanded the program to 10 domestic and one foreign airline at 125 airports nationwide, and continues to partner with industry to add partners and innovations to the program.

TSA's goal of increasing the number of passengers who receive expedited screening can only be accomplished through continued collaboration with industry stakeholders. We must develop a collaborative governance strategy between TSA and the private sector as we are asking them to invest their resources to realize risk-based strategy-driven changes. Recent market research conducted by the U.S. Travel Association indicates that more than 15 million travelers are willing to enroll in TSA Pre✓<sup>®</sup>, and we believe private sector involvement can significantly increase that enrollment potential.

### **OIG Report**

The DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) recently concluded an audit of TSA Pre✓<sup>®</sup> and made 17 recommendations, of which 13 are resolved but open. TSA is working to address the OIG's recommendations, such as working with the DHS Office of Policy and CBP to establish a common definition for identifying "lower-risk" travelers and low-risk trusted travelers across the Department for consistency in application across all DHS vetting programs. The OIG also recommended that TSA work to improve communications about TSA Pre✓<sup>®</sup> to the public, as multiple avenues for access to TSA Pre✓<sup>®</sup> can be confusing. TSA is working with OIG to address the intent of the outstanding recommendations, and further improve the program's security and access for the traveling public.

## **Conclusion**

TSA plays an important role in partnership with airports and airlines in securing access to our Nation's airports, and is committed to fielding responsive, risk-based solutions that can enhance our current security posture. I want to thank the subcommittee for your interest in this important issue and your support as we consider recommendations and future changes to improve aviation and airport security nationwide. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, I look forward to your questions.