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FOR HEARING ON

TSA Pre✓® and Summer Travel Season

BEFORE THE

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Introduction

Chairman Katko, Ranking Member Watson Coleman, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to testify today regarding the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Pre✓® program and our preparations for the upcoming summer travel season. TSA appreciates the Subcommittee's oversight and commitment to ensuring the Agency has the tools it needs to accomplish its mission. TSA continues its efforts to raise the global baseline of aviation security. The Agency is leading by example through intelligence driven operations, layered security, and enhanced passenger and crew vetting.

TSA's most important job, as a national security organization, is to protect the traveling public and ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce. The adversary we face is determined and committed. The threat to transportation within our country, and around the globe, is real and dynamic. TSA addresses this threat by strengthening operations through developing and maintaining a committed workforce, refining its processes, and testing and deploying new technology to improve performance. Noting such, it is imperative to recognize that the essential element of our Agency's overarching success rests upon having dedicated, well trained professionals executing our frontline mission. Our Transportation Security Officers demonstrate exceptional skills, professionalism, and diligence in meeting the various demands of their jobs while serving the traveling public on a daily basis. However, as travel levels continue to increase and outpace predictions, TSA's workforce is challenged to meet the demands of passenger growth. Meeting these demands comes at the cost of the training and personal leave requirements of our Officers. Those tradeoffs ultimately impact morale, turnover, and performance. The additional 717 screeners included in the FY19 budget request will help address the current shortfall.

Summer Travel Season Efforts

TSA recently completed a record-breaking spring travel season. From March 15 to April 15, 2018, TSA screened more than 72 million passengers and crew members and nearly 45 million checked bags nationwide. This represents an increase of five percent over the spring of 2017. We successfully screened more people and bags than any previous Spring Break travel period. Ninety-five percent of all passengers waited less than 20 minutes at the checkpoint and nearly 93 percent of passengers who were in a TSA Pre✓® lane waited less than five minutes. Notably, during this time, TSA was also in the process of completing the nationwide rollout of enhanced screening procedures for carry-on baggage. These new measures, which began at a handful of airports in late summer 2017 and are now fully rolled out, are part of our effort to raise the global baseline for aviation security and to meet evolving threats to aviation.

TSA is now preparing for what promises to be one of the Agency's busiest summer seasons on record. From the Memorial Day through Labor Day holidays, TSA expects to screen more than 243 million passengers and crew members, an increase of four percent over the summer of 2017. To ensure there are sufficient officers available to meet the summer rush, TSA conducted several Transportation Security Officer hiring events at hard-to-hire and high volume airports, increased advertising and media outreach to recruit new hires, and improved the timeliness of the hiring and new employee training processes. From a workforce capacity perspective, TSA kept pace with attrition and increased our frontline workforce by 620 Officers since the beginning of the year. Further, we plan to bring more than 1,000 additional officers into our ranks before the peak of this summer's travel season in July. TSA regularly monitors wait times on an on-going basis and is prepared to address challenges that may arise at particular airports. Although TSA will still have a workforce capacity gap, these hiring efforts, coupled

with additional overtime resources, will ensure TSA is positioned to effectively meet projected screening demands this summer while mitigating wait times.

Canine Deployment

In addition to ensuring the availability of staff to meet increased passenger levels, canines are also an integral part of TSA's checkpoint strategy. Passenger Screening Canine (PSC) teams are an essential element of effective and efficient checkpoint screening. This summer, TSA expects to field an additional 50 operational PSC teams compared to July 2017. TSA also augments its PSC teams by providing resources for another 675 state and local canine teams, which are used for security in airport public areas as well as other modes of transportation. The FY 2019 Budget request supports 1047 canine teams, including 372 PSC teams as well as 675 state and local ones. With passenger levels rising, TSA believes that PSC teams are a cost effective resource to meet increasing demands and that growth in this capability is important for future years.

Technology

Another element of our strategy for improving checkpoint operations is through enhancing technology. Presently, TSA is in the process of testing Computed Tomography (CT) screening systems for use at domestic airport checkpoints. Use of CT at the airport checkpoint will enhance the ability for TSOs to examine carry-on baggage, reduce false alarms and improve the detection of prohibited items. The CT program is currently on track with developmental and operational testing and we expect to have approximately 35 systems deployed at our test labs, in our training centers, or at airports over the course of the summer. Depending on the timing of appropriations, deployment could begin early in calendar year 2019. Similarly, TSA is working

to deploy Credential Authentication Technology (CAT) units, which are designed to improve the travel document checker function at security checkpoints. Forty-two of these units are currently being tested in select TSA Pre✓® lanes at 13 airports across the nation.

Passenger Experience: @AskTSA and TSA Social Media

TSA recognizes the American public is a key stakeholder in our security mission, and that informing passengers ahead of time helps prepare them for the screening process and improves the overall passenger experience. TSA's social media presence continues to grow and has become a valuable customer service tool. For example, our internationally recognized and award winning Instagram account, which has more than 865,000 followers, highlights prohibited items that are intercepted at the checkpoint.

Through the AskTSA online platforms, TSA's social care team monitors the @AskTSA Twitter and Facebook messenger accounts to address passengers inquires in real time, 365 days a year. To date, TSA has received and responded to more than 450,000 questions from the traveling public via its AskTSA accounts. This includes more than 110,000 questions on what passengers can bring on planes, more than 33,000 inquiries on TSA Pre✓® including Known Traveler Number resolution, and more than 12,000 responses to help passengers with disabilities and medical conditions with the security screening process. TSA's customer centric, mobile compliant website, TSA.gov, gets more than 7 million views each month. The recently revised agency app, MyTSA, has added features such as TSA Pre✓® checkpoint hours, a graph predicating how busy airport checkpoints will be based on historical data, live assistance with AskTSA, and a searchable database of items that can be placed in carry-on and checked baggage.

These efforts aim to make the traveling process more transparent and easier to navigate for the traveling public.

Risk-Based Passenger Screening and TSA Pre✓®

In 2011, TSA launched a risk-based approach to vetting and passenger security screening. Instead of employing a one-size fits all approach to passenger security screening, the Agency's design is to spend less time with individuals we know more about while focusing a greater proportion of our security resources on unknown passengers. TSA Pre✓® is a voluntary, expedited security screening program connecting low-risk travelers departing from the United States with smarter security and a better air travel experience. TSA Pre✓® is one of a number of Department of Homeland Security Trusted Traveler programs that allow enrolled individuals to use expedited lanes when crossing international borders, and at the airport.

TSA plans to dedicate our TSA Pre✓® lanes at airports to pre-vetted and enrolled Trusted Traveler passengers. TSA is taking a multi-faceted approach to achieve that goal. First, the Agency is focusing on expanding vetting and notification capabilities. Second, TSA is working to implement technology enhancements to improve credential authentication and passenger verification. Finally, we are examining our screening measures and looking at other innovative ways to quickly differentiate passengers based on their level of risk.

TSA Pre✓® marketing efforts are designed to increase traveler awareness and encourage enrollments in the program. By increasing the percentage of travelers that have been vetted and are known to be of lesser risk, TSA will be better positioned to provide those individuals with an

expedited checkpoint experience while also applying a greater portion of its resources to those passengers that require a greater level of screening at the checkpoint.

TSA has and continues to engage industry to identify private-sector capabilities to improve traveler identity verification and increase the public's enrollment access to TSA Pre✓®. To increase the number of Trusted Travelers, TSA has engaged in a marketing program for TSA Pre✓® consisting of a paid advertising campaign, as well as ongoing outreach, marketing and communications initiatives with stakeholders from industry and our other TSA Pre✓® eligible trusted traveler, pre-vetted programs. Many of our airline stakeholders and their associated credit card partners offer incentives for members to join TSA Pre✓®.

Currently, there are more than 13 million travelers in DHS Trusted Travel Programs, including 6.4 million enrolled in TSA Pre✓®. Since 2014, we have seen the Trusted Traveler population increase by 500 percent. There has also been substantial increase in TSA Pre✓®as well. As you may know, the program launched with two airlines in four airports. Today, more than 50 airlines participate in the program and TSA has implemented TSA Pre✓® lanes at more than 200 airports.

We thank the members of this Subcommittee who have demonstrated an interest in helping TSA achieve its goal of making our security measures more effective and adaptable. We are constantly looking at innovations to facilitate enrollments and screening to achieve more effective utilization of TSA Pre✓® lane operations.

Conclusion

TSA is remains dedicated to securing the Nation's transportation systems from terrorist attacks. We are focused on improving transportation security through the development and implementation of intelligence-driven, risk-based policies and plans. I appreciate the Subcommittee's support of TSA's mission. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering your questions.