



Committee on
HOMELAND SECURITY
Chairman Peter T. King

Opening Statement

February 16, 2012

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**Statement of Chairman Mike Rogers (R-AL)
Subcommittee on Transportation Security**

**"Last Line of Defense: the Federal Air Marshal Service 10 Years After
9/11"**

**February 16, 2012
Remarks as Prepared**

I would like to welcome everyone to this hearing and thank all of our witnesses. We look forward to your testimony and greatly appreciate your time.

As a senior member of this committee since its creation in '05, and in leadership of three unique subcommittees, I have focused my energy on ensuring that we do not just address the past but that we are adequately equipped to respond to the threats of today and tomorrow.

We all know that the outcome of one of the darkest days in our nation's history could have been very different if we had Federal Air Marshals on those planes.

But the reality is the terrorists have adapted to our security measures and changed their tactics. We saw this on Christmas Day in 2009 and in other

attempted attacks since 9/11. The threat of an IED being detonated aboard an aircraft is very real.

With an annual budget approaching \$1 billion, we need to ask the question of whether today's Federal Air Marshal Service is capable of preventing current and future terrorist threats and what new efficiencies can be gained to reduce the cost of the program.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the Federal Air Marshal Service, or FAMS, evolved into the primary law enforcement entity within TSA, deploying air marshals on countless domestic and international flights every day.

TSA has undergone many changes since its formation after 9/11. But FAMS has largely maintained its autonomy throughout the years. Both its annual budget and its day-to-day operations and training are separate from the rest of TSA.

Recently, Administrator Pistole announced sweeping changes to TSA's internal organization and structure, which included the Federal Air Marshal Service. I want to ensure that this reorganization does not set the air marshals back in any way, particularly with respect to training, operations, or adding unnecessary layers of bureaucracy.

While I can understand TSA's desire to restructure itself amidst all the criticism it gets, it should not make these types of decisions in haste. The ultimate goal should be to provide security while reducing the cost to the taxpayer in a tight economy. So if reorganization, such as this, does not lead to any cost savings, it is difficult to see the logic behind it or support it.

From what we have been told, TSA's reorganization will not result in any tangible cost savings. I would urge the witnesses today and other officials at TSA and DHS to look at this committee as a partner in your efforts. The sooner we are informed of the changes you plan to make, the better.

Today, I look forward to hearing directly from the leadership of the Federal Air Marshal Service about these recent organizational changes; how air marshals are adapting to the constantly evolving threats we face from terrorists; and ways we can reduce the burden on taxpayers.

With that I now recognize the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, the gentle lady from Texas, Ms. Jackson Lee for five minutes for her opening statement.