

***Opening Statement of Ranking Member Kathleen Rice  
Subcommittee on Transportation Security***

**Hearing Titled “A Review of Access Control Measures at Our Nation’s Airports,  
Part II”**

**April 30, 2015**

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Recent incidents – most notably the gun-smuggling operation involving a Delta employee – have highlighted the urgent need for us to look closely at access controls in our nation’s airports and the potential threat of employees exploiting security credentials to commit criminal activity like we saw in Atlanta, or even to commit acts of terrorism.

Our first oversight hearing in February revealed alarming vulnerabilities that exist in regard to employee screening, employee vetting, and access controls. These vulnerabilities constitute a major threat to our homeland security, and they must be eliminated.

As part of our effort to correct those deficiencies, Acting Administrator Carraway asked the Aviation Security Advisory Committee, or ASAC, to review security measures for industry employees. The ASAC, which was codified into law by legislation that Ranking Member Thompson offered last year, recently released its 90-day report on access control.

First, I want to thank the members of the Advisory Committee for their swift and diligent response – we’re very grateful for the work you put into this report. I also want to say I’m pleased to see the ASAC working exactly as it was intended. The job of maintaining our aviation security doesn’t fall solely on the TSA, or any one agency or entity. It is and must be a collaborative effort, and that’s why this advisory committee serves such an important purpose.

The ASAC brings all the stakeholders to the table – from federal agencies and law enforcement, to leaders in the aviation industry – so that we can consider all perspectives and work together to identify ways to make our aviation system safer and more secure. That kind of collaboration is exactly what this report represents. The 28 recommendations in the report are thoughtful, constructive and well-researched. And I look forward to the dialogue today to understand how they can help us strengthen security procedures, tighten access controls, and neutralize the insider threat.

I want to thank each of our witnesses for being here today. I thank Acting Administrator Carraway for his service, and look forward to hearing his perspective on how the TSA will work with industry partners to act on these recommendations, as well as how TSA is working to implement the mandates issued by Secretary Johnson at the time of the report’s release. Ms. Olivier, I want to also thank you for being with us today, and look forward to hearing the perspective of the American Association for Airport Executives on this report and these important issues. Your ideas and knowledge of the collective sentiments of airport executives across the nation will add tremendous value to this discussion.

Lastly, I would like to thank Mr. Grossman, the CEO and Executive Director of Jacksonville International Airport and member of Airports Council International- North America, who will explain how one individual airport handles access control and insider threats issues. I understand that your airport participated in the 2008 100% employee screening pilot program, and I’m eager to hear about that experience.

I also understand that your airport employs unique strategies to mitigate the insider threat, such as yearly background checks from surrounding states, and I’m eager to hear about that as well. Certainly, every airport in this country is different and there is no one cure-all solution – but I think we may be able to draw best practices from your experience that could enhance the security across our aviation system.