



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)
Checkpoint of the Future: Evaluating TSA's Innovation Task Force
Initiative

Subcommittee on Transportation & Protective Security

April 27, 2017

In March 2016, TSA launched the Innovation Task Force as a platform for collaboration between TSA, airports, air carriers, and security technology stakeholders in furtherance of the development and integration of innovative security capabilities into our nation's airports.

Since the launch of the Task Force, we have heard from stakeholders about the progress that has been made in passenger screening. As a result of Task Force efforts, there are a number of technology demonstrations in the cue to be rolled out in the airport environment. These innovative systems are geared at making TSA's security screening more efficient and effective.

In preparation for this hearing, one thing has become apparent to me-- the private sector has provided a great deal of leadership in passenger screening initiatives. I applaud the efforts of the airlines, the airports, vendors who have overwhelmingly embraced this opportunity to improve passengers' screening experience, while enhancing airport security.

It has also become clear to me that this Task Force was something that was needed for a very long time and I applaud former-TSA Administrator John Neffenger for recognizing the need and putting this initiative in place.

I also want to recognize Dr. Huban Gowadia who- since January, has overseen TSA in an acting capacity and has shown great commitment to the Task Force. It is troubling that we are nearly 100 days into the Trump Administration and, as with so many other critical positions, the President has failed to nominate a TSA Administrator.

Turning back to the subject at hand, I look forward to learning more about how the Task Force has been functioning, how stakeholders have been able to build upon their working relationships with TSA and each other to move forward with innovative passenger screening technologies as well as how Congress can support these efforts.

I look forward to hearing today about ways Congress can be a partner in helping the Innovation Task Force achieve its goals.

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Media contact: Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978