



**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman John Katko (R-NY)  
Joint Transportation Security and Oversight and Management Efficiency Subcommittee Hearing**

*How Pervasive is Misconduct at TSA: Examining Findings from a Joint Subcommittee Investigation  
July 7, 2016*

Remarks as Prepared

Since the Creation of the Transportation Security Administration after the terror attacks of September 11th, Congress has had to step in numerous times when the agency has failed to appropriately manage its personnel. These instances have included countless allegations of misconduct throughout TSA from top to bottom. As chairman of the Transportation Security Subcommittee, I am particularly invested in, and concerned about, ensuring that the good men and women who protect our Nation's critical transportation systems everyday are not only provided with the resources they need, but are also surrounded by an ethical and positive work culture.

Such a culture currently does not exist within TSA. In fact, in recent months, a number of disturbing accounts of misconduct on the part of high-ranking TSA officials, as well as frontline workers at airports and Federal Air Marshals, have contributed to a discouraging picture of a bureaucracy struggling to meet the demands of an increased threat environment and spiking passenger volume. All of this at a time in which we are facing unprecedented threats to our security. In the last several months, terrorists have bombed two—and potentially three—commercial aircraft, and have orchestrated devastating attacks against transportation modes in Brussels and Istanbul. Frankly, this is not the time to be dealing with misconduct or corruption within our own ranks. The risk is simply too great.

Administrator Neffenger, for his part, has instituted a number of reforms to right the ship. Despite these efforts, however, much more needs to be done to give the American people the security they need from a TSA that is responsive to reforms and ethical in its operations. As public servants, TSA personnel must be held to the highest ethical standards and we must be training up workers of the highest moral caliber if we are entrusting them with the lives of traveling Americans. Unfortunately, TSA management has often sought punitive actions against responsible employees who have attempted to speak out against the problems plaguing the agency, rather than taking their concerns seriously. This is unacceptable. Covering up or discouraging individuals from speaking out only perpetuates a negative culture and serves as a direct assault on employee morale. Employee misconduct, particularly the sort that compromises security and wastes taxpayer dollars, must not be permitted to continue. It is because of this that our two subcommittees have conducted a joint investigation to assess the scope and depth of misconduct across the TSA workforce. Resulting from this investigation, we are releasing a telling report on the challenges facing TSA and the actions needed to rectify years of mismanagement.

Much has been written and discussed surrounding the abysmally low morale at TSA, which suffers the lowest employee satisfaction levels of any agency in the Federal Government. Rampant allegations of misconduct plaguing the agency in the news media and through word of mouth no doubt serve as a contributing factor to low employee moral within TSA. Any efforts to improve the culture at TSA must start with addressing the issue of employee misconduct. As my subcommittee has continued to investigate the

insider threat to aviation security over the last year, I have become thoroughly convinced that stemming misconduct among TSA personnel and individuals with access to secure areas of airports is directly tied to mitigating insider threats to the security of the traveling public. The ease with which certain individuals have accepted bribes and smuggled drugs and weapons through our nation's airport terminals is of serious concern. While the issue certainly extends beyond just TSA personnel, TSA is on the front lines of improving access controls, detecting insider threats, and ensuring that its own house is in order and being held to the highest standards.

I commend Chairman Perry's dedication to this issue and to developing this report, and I look forward to continuing to work together to reform TSA into an efficient, effective, and accountable organization. Oversight work like what we are doing today is what the American people expect of their representatives in Congress, and I am optimistic that we on this Committee and together with TSA can create a better culture within the agency and ultimately improve the security of the traveling public.

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