



**Statement of Charles Barclay, A.A.E.
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On behalf of the men and women who manage the nation’s primary, commercial service, reliever, and general aviation airports, I want to thank you for the opportunity to update the subcommittee on the ongoing work of the airport community to enhance aviation security. While challenges clearly remain, airports and the federal government have made great strides since the tragic events of 9/11 to enhance the effectiveness of the nation’s aviation security apparatus. We are grateful for the role this subcommittee has long played in calling attention to critical aviation security issues and in pursuing creative approaches to security challenges. Your leadership and continued interest is important and appreciated.

I also want to take a moment at the onset to complement Assistant Secretary Kip Hawley and his team at the Transportation Security Administration for their work over the past several years in making the agency more effective, efficient and responsive. I have the utmost respect for Assistant Secretary Hawley and believe that his vision, commitment, and leadership have been invaluable to the agency and the country. The airport community couldn’t ask for a better partner than Kip Hawley.

Airports Play A Key Role Partnering with TSA and Performing Inherently Local Security Duties

As you know, airport executives play a unique role in aviation security, serving as a critical partner to TSA in helping the agency meet its core mission of passenger and baggage screening. The significant changes that have taken place in airport security over the past six-plus years with the creation of the TSA, and its assumption of all screening duties, have been aided dramatically by the work of the airport community, and we will continue to serve as a cooperative local partner to the agency as it seeks to enhance aviation security.

In addition to partnering with TSA to meet its core mission, airports as public entities have important public safety responsibilities and perform a number of inherently local security-related functions at their facilities, including incident response and management; perimeter security; employee credentialing; access control; infrastructure and operations planning; and a myriad of local law enforcement and public safety functions. These critical public safety duties have long been local responsibilities that have been performed by local authorities in accordance with federal standards under federal oversight.

Airport operators meet their security-related obligations not with an eye on profit or loss but with a sharp focus on the need to secure public safety, which remains one of their fundamental missions. The public safety professionals that perform these duties at airports are highly trained and have the first responder duties that I know each and every member of this subcommittee, the Congress, and the country value immensely. From a security and resource perspective, it is critical that these inherently local public safety functions remain local with federal oversight and backed by federal resources when appropriate.

TSA Must Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness of Passenger and Baggage Screening

Over the past six years, airport executives have placed a great emphasis on TSA efficiency to improve the experience of passengers at airports. In our view, improving the efficiency of the screening process goes hand-in-hand with the goal of enhancing the security and safety of airport facilities and the aviation system. Long lines and poor customer service do not equate to better aviation security. To the contrary,

long lines in airport terminals and at security screening checkpoints are targets for terrorists as past experiences prove.

The problems of today's labor intensive passenger and baggage screening system are evident to anyone who has been to an airport lately. Even with traffic levels down slightly as a result of rising fuel costs, the heavy volume of travelers has placed great strains on TSA's passenger and baggage screening capabilities as is evidenced by increasing wait times at passenger screening checkpoints and growing problems with checked baggage screening. Without changes to the aviation security model in use today, the system will not be able to cope with future passenger levels.

While additional screening resources may ease the situation at some airports in the short-term, we all understand that the realities of the federal budget situation and the myriad of competing homeland security priorities make it highly unlikely that significant new funds will appear to deploy additional screeners. And, while a number of airports have a genuine need for more screeners, it is clear that applying band-aid solutions on the existing, personnel-dependent screening system will not work in the long-term. The deployment of better technology holds great promise in allowing TSA to meet the long-term challenges on the horizon

Expediting Deployment of In-Line Baggage Screening Systems Will Enhance Security, Lower Costs

The in-line installation of explosive detection systems (EDS) for baggage screening is one area in particular that offers enormous advantages in terms of enhanced security, increased efficiency, and dramatically reduced TSA personnel requirements.

The case for expediting the deployment of in-line EDS systems was perhaps best expressed by 9/11 Commission Chairman Thomas Kean during a congressional hearing on the Commission's report:

“The Commission supports an effort to move explosives units out of airport lobbies and into a secured area where they can be integrated into the process of moving the bags from the check-in counter to the loading area in a seamless in-line process. This will promote greater security because: screening machines will not be exposed to the public; screeners will be able to focus on screening bags rather than moving them; and fewer people will be congregating around machines in the public area. Moreover, processing bags from checking to loading through an in-line system is functionally more efficient making travel more convenient as well as more secure.”

The House Appropriations Committee also made a strong case for in-line systems last year, noting (H.Rept.110-060) that:

“Both TSA and the Government Accountability Office have reported that in-line baggage screening: (1) reduces security risks at airports nationwide, (2) is more efficient because the number of checked bags screened could more than double when systems are placed in-line, (3) reduces the number of bags that require labor intensive secondary screening, (4) lowers life-cycle costs, and (5) significantly reduces injuries. The recently released baggage screening investment study noted that ‘without expedited capital investments, the life-cycle replacement requirements for initially deployed screening systems will impede investments in new optimal systems, slowing deployment of additional EDS equipment to additional airports and increasing costs.’”

As the last sentence in the report points out, the federal government faces the choice of investing in efficient in-line systems now or unnecessarily wasting scarce resources fixing aging systems that were haphazardly put in place immediately after 9/11 to meet the deadline to screen all checked baggage by

electronic means. The fact that the FY 2009 budget requests more than \$250 million for EDS maintenance, and the recent growth in that budget item, illustrate the choice we face between maintaining the old inefficient system or investing in modern, efficient in-line systems. From a security, efficiency, accuracy, and convenience standpoint, it is clear that investing in in-line systems makes the most sense.

Despite the good work of this subcommittee and the full committee in recent years to help secure additional funding for in-line systems, we still have a long way to go before all airports have optimal screening systems in place. The baggage screening investment study referenced in the House committee report above estimated last year that there was close to \$4 billion in unmet needs at airports across the country for in-line systems. While resources have been appropriated for EDS purchase and installation since the release of that report, it is clear that billions of dollars in needs remain. Rapidly increasing construction costs across the country have exacerbated the problem.

At Washington Dulles International alone, for example, cost estimates for an integrated in-line system run as high as \$236 million. Initial cost estimates at the airport were \$121 million several years ago. Over time, construction material costs, inflation and other factors have caused costs to rise considerably, which points to the urgent need to move forward with these projects at airports as quickly as possible.

Airport executives are gratified that the President's budget request for fiscal year 2009 seeks to make the expedited deployment of in-line baggage systems at airports a priority by proposing to devote increased resources toward that goal. What is evident with the budget request is that there is general agreement that additional resources must be devoted to bringing in-line systems to airports. Unfortunately, a significant amount of the proposed funding – some \$425 million – is contingent upon congressional approval of a \$0.50 increase in the \$2.50 passenger security fee, which is unlikely given past opposition to proposed fee increases by Congress and air carriers.

In addition to growing the amount of money available for optimal baggage screening systems at airports, airport executives believe strongly that the Administration must follow the mechanisms in place for releasing those funds as dictated as part of the 9/11 Commission recommendations legislation that was signed into law last year.

The 9/11 Act provides that a minimum of \$200 million annually be set aside for multi-year "letters of intent" (LOIs) to airports. By signing multi-year agreements with airports, the federal government can spur airport operators to leverage their resources to begin in-line projects with a promise that they will be reimbursed by the federal government over a set period of time into the future. Under this approach, \$200 million in annual funding can leverage billions of dollars worth of projects almost immediately. In-line systems in Boston, Denver, Atlanta, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Seattle, Los Angeles, and Dallas were all built under LOIs signed in 2002 and 2003.

At many larger facilities that face costly and complex in-line projects, the LOI approach is one of the few viable options that exists for getting those systems in place. Yearly grants from TSA simply don't offer enough funding or enough certainty to allow larger airports to move forward.

Despite the strong support of this approach from Congress and the very clear direction provided in existing law, the Administration has proposed ignoring current law and has instead asked for authority in its budget request to distribute funding approved by Congress "in any manner deemed necessary to ensure aviation security."

If approved, this language – which seeks to circumvent an important provision that was signed into law less than a year ago with broad bipartisan support – will result in further delays in moving forward with critical in-line systems and miss the opportunity to immediately begin projects at airports across the

country. We urge Congress to reject this request and insist on the issuance of multi-year LOIs to airports for in-line projects as soon as possible. This issue is too important to improving aviation security and efficiency to allow OMB to thwart the will of the Congress.

Improving the Efficiency and Accuracy of Checkpoint Operations

Moving to passenger screening checkpoints, there are two programs aimed at enhancing efficiency and accuracy and that merit the continued support of this subcommittee and the Congress.

The first is the Registered Traveler program, which holds tremendous promise in allowing the TSA to more effectively focus scarce resources on those individuals who pose the greatest threat to the aviation system. We appreciate the fact that TSA has supported the deployment of the program to this point. Nearly 20 airports serving more than 15 percent of all enplaned passengers in the U.S. currently participate in the program.

The growth of the RT program and its popularity with the traveling public make it all the more important that TSA reevaluate its future. It is important to note that the program operates at the highest levels of security, adhering to all applicable federal security standards. Additionally, the Registered Traveler program is the first interoperable, biometric-based network of its kind, and could pave the way for other opportunities, including biometric-based access control systems. AAAE is taking a proactive role – as it did with the establishment of the RT program itself – in working with airports and TSA to make some of those promises a reality for the betterment of airport security across the country.

The second program that merits additional support is the “Checkpoint of the Future” effort that is well underway within TSA to deploy explosives detection equipment at screening checkpoints. As is the case with checked baggage, airport professionals fully support the expedited deployment of new technology at passenger screening checkpoints because of the promise new technology holds in improving security and efficiency and reducing TSA personnel requirements.

We do, however, offer a word of caution on this effort. Airport professionals must be involved in the roll-out of technology at the checkpoints as soon as possible. As the experience with the agency’s initial improper deployment of checked baggage screening systems at airports proved, a lack of consultation with airport operators will increase long-term costs to the federal government and potentially hamper the efficient deployment of critical technology.

I would also point out there is a high level of concern airport executives have about the possible expansion of the passenger screening footprint as part of this effort. As you know, many existing checkpoints at airports across the country are incredibly space constrained, meaning that expansion would likely necessitate major and costly terminal modifications. As TSA develops its deployment plan, the agency must be prepared to either factor in those space constraints to its modeling or be prepared to step up to the plate immediately with any resources that may be required for airport terminal modifications. As past experiences prove, the agency has a healthy appetite for space in airports, an appetite that can be kept in check only by requiring TSA to pay for its construction and utilization.

Again, airport professionals have a unique understanding of their facilities and should be counted on as a resource as TSA seeks to deploy technology at checkpoints or other areas of an airport. In addition to our expertise as facility managers, airport professionals share the same public safety mission as the federal government and should be relied on as a full partner in these efforts.

TSA Must Remain Focused on Core Mission of Passenger and Baggage Screening

As is evident by today’s hearing, TSA has an enormous mission with passenger and baggage screening and has many future challenges to tackle. Unfortunately, there are many who would like to grow TSA’s

already daunting mission into areas of local responsibility that I've mentioned such as perimeter security, access control, and airport employee credentialing. For many reasons, airport executives believe that it would be a grave mistake to continue the push to federalize key local security functions. Chief among those reasons is security.

Given the complexity of its existing security-related tasks, it is difficult to imagine how the federal government could possibly be in a better position than local law enforcement to perform inherently local security duties. Airport personnel are trained professionals with more than three decades of history, operational expertise and local knowledge at their disposal. The best approach moving forward from a security perspective is to maintain local control backed by federal standards, federal oversight, and federal resources.

The existing local/federal model ensures the highest levels of security and efficiency by empowering and providing responsibility to local airport operators, which can make use of their unique local experience and expertise to manage their facilities and the complex operations of their tenants. Who better than the local airport operator to police the nearly 23 miles of fence line that exists at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport or the nearly 12,000 acres at Washington Dulles International? Who better than the local airport operator to understand the nature of multiple, complex, and ever-changing construction projects at their facilities; to know intimately the population of employees working in sensitive areas at a particular facility; or to respond to an incident at a perimeter gate? Who better than the local airport operator to understand unique local security challenges and develop tailored solutions to solving those issues?

Airport professionals have a duty and responsibility to the communities they serve to constantly enhance public safety and security, and not a day goes by that airport professionals aren't actively working to achieve that goal. In the past year, for example, airport professionals have been at the forefront of efforts to promote the deployment of biometric-based access control systems, to more effectively screen airport workers, and to improve the employee background check and badging process.

Growing the mission of the federal government to areas traditionally performed by local governments also threatens to divert attention from the agency's primary mission and further dilute scarce resources. How can TSA be expected to invest in technology to improve the efficiency and accuracy of its existing passenger and baggage screening responsibilities if its mission is further expanded to include costly and complex tasks such as securing airport perimeters, physically screening all workers and goods at airports prior to their entry into secure areas, or credentialing the million-plus employees who work at the nation's airports?

Airports Have Taken Lead in Effort to Deploy Biometrics for Credentials and Access Control

It is important to recognize the proactive role airports are taking to enhance security in these areas as well. With regard to the deployment of biometric-based access control systems, AAAE and a number of airport executives from key airports across the country are working to create, through a detailed Concept of Operations, a biometric-based solution for the next generation of aviation worker credentialing and access control. The effort – known as the Biometric Airport Security Identification Consortium or BASIC – is aimed at utilizing the experience and expertise of the airport community to ensure that ongoing efforts to deploy biometric-based systems in airports come to fruition as quickly as possible in a manner that does not disrupt airport operations or diminish security.

Along those lines, participating airports have identified several key principles that must be part of future biometric-based credentialing and access control systems, including safeguards on local control and issuance of credentials; leveraging of existing capital investments and resources; open architecture and local determination of qualified vendors; and a phased implementation that migrates over time.

Airports have a robust history of credentialing and access control experience that spans more than two decades. In addition, a significant number of airports have already implemented biometric-based systems at their facilities. The goal of the BASIC working group is to take the pieces of the puzzle that already exist and build on the necessary components for the next generation of credentialing and access control in such a way that make sense for airports.

Airport executives from a number of key airports are involved with the BASIC effort, including Portland, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Denver, San Francisco, the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Jacksonville, Miami, San Diego, Phoenix, Los Angeles, Dallas/Fort Worth, Orlando, Roanoke, Albany, New Bern Regional, Grand Rapids, Freidman Memorial, Seattle, Pittsburgh, Louisville, Houston, Anchorage, and Charleston.

Airports Have Taken a Proactive Approach to Address Employee Screening

On the employee screening front, AAAE brought together more than a dozen airport directors from across the country along with the leadership of other industry groups and the TSA recently to develop a plan to address airport employee screening. The result of that initial meeting and a number of subsequent meetings was a well thought out and multi-faceted plan that we believe will lead to the implementation of sustainable measures to effectively screen airport workers through behavior recognition programs, security awareness training for employees, targeted physical inspection of airport workers, enhanced access control, increased vetting of employees, and the deployment of additional technology.

The goal of these efforts, which were conducted in close collaboration with TSA, was to develop sustainable approaches to screening workers at airports. In our view, it is simply not realistic nor effective from a security perspective to physically screen all employees at all airports prior to their entry into secure or sterile areas – a requirement that Boeing, through the United States Civil Aviation Partnership, estimates would cost anywhere from \$60 billion to \$130 billion, not to mention the far-reaching operational implications of such a move.

While the \$60 billion to \$130 billion figure may sound extreme, we believe it accurately reflects the immense infrastructure changes that would have to be made at U.S. airports in order to meet a 100 percent physical screening mandate. At many airports, a move to require the 100 percent physical screening of all airport workers would require significant investments for additional employee screening checkpoints and other infrastructure. Washington Dulles airport, for example, would likely have to design a separate and costly transportation system exclusively for airport employees who travel to and from the secure areas of the airfield.

Without those types of investments in necessary infrastructure for employee screening, the more than one million workers at airports – many of whom travel from secure to non-secure areas multiple times daily in order to perform their jobs – would be forced to utilize existing passenger screening checkpoints. With checkpoints already struggling to accommodate the two million passengers who utilize the U.S. aviation system in a given day, it is not difficult to image what would happen if TSA's workload were to double or triple as airport employees were added to the mix. Such a move would undoubtedly overwhelm the workload of screening checkpoints system-wide, cripple their operation, and result potentially in a less secure environment.

We believe 100 percent physical screening of airport workers would result in the diversion of scarce resources with little security benefit – a fact long ago recognized by DHS and TSA as they rejected efforts to implement a European-type system of physical screening of airport workers. They did so because of the unique nature of the U.S. aviation system and the astronomical costs associated with doing so. The European model would be difficult to replicate without billions of dollars in investment and thousands of

new TSA employees. I would also hasten to note that the Europeans are very interested now in replicating the work we do in this country to perform vigorous background checks on potential employees at airports.

In our view, the best approach to employee screening as we move forward is one that enhances and builds upon the existing system of background vetting for workers at airports, increases the random physical screening of employees at airports across the country, and encourages the deployment of new technology including the utilization of biometrics for airport access control. We are confident that the pilot program that the TSA has undertaken at seven airports across the country will verify that view, and we look forward to continuing our work with Congress and TSA to implement necessary changes.

AAAE and the Transportation Security Clearinghouse: Partnering with TSA to Improve Security

Before closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to take a moment to bring to the subcommittee's attention a success story that has greatly enhanced the security of the aviation system while saving the industry hundreds of millions of dollars. The Transportation Security Clearinghouse (TSC), which operates as a non-profit arm of AAAE, was established in the wake of 9/11 to quickly facilitate background checks for aviation workers and has since grown to become the largest civilian clearinghouse in the nation, having successfully processed more than 3.2 million biometrically based background checks and more than 1.4 million name-based threat assessment checks.

The TSC operates in partnership with TSA and the federal government, which performs the actual vetting of individuals. Specifically, the TSC provides a number of critical functions, including expedited processing and resolution of fingerprint-based and name-based checks through required federal channels; cutting edge quality assurance processes ensuring efficient, accurate and complete fingerprint and data submissions; centralized billing tied to record submittals; enabling regulated entities to submit fingerprints either electronically or physically on "inked cards"; ensuring the secure handling of investigation results; permitting only air carriers and airports to view investigation results; providing accounting reconciliation services; standardization of airport interface with federal databases; facilitating access to training expertise and assisting the industry in purchasing electronic fingerprinting equipment; and facilitation the resubmission of fingerprints for regulated parties.

Since its inception in 2001, the TSC has:

- ✍ Reduced the average response for aviation worker background checks from 52 days to 40 minutes, with many checks occurring even quicker.
- ✍ Reduced the fee per record for the aviation community to \$27 (of which, \$17.25 goes to the FBI). By comparison, HAZMAT truckers utilize a federally contracted system provided by private industry and pay more than \$55 of the total program fee to accomplish virtually identical background check services. In the maritime environment, fees run more than \$60 for these same vetting services out of the total \$130-plus federal charge under the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program.
- ✍ Implemented the first high-speed secure network for fingerprint transmissions to the TSA.
- ✍ Successfully achieved an industry low error rate for fingerprint transmissions to FBI of 2 percent through value-added processing prior to the submission (the average government error rate is 8 percent).

The reduction in time from months to minutes to process background checks in aviation has produced personnel cost savings of hundreds of millions of dollars for an industry struggling to achieve financial success. The TSC has developed a highly flexible, open platform capable of accepting multiple forms of identity and vetting information via secure network from more than 400 enrollment centers around the nation and abroad.

Additionally, the TSC has proven critical in ongoing efforts to quickly and effectively modify processes and procedures to address emerging security threats. In the wake of the foiled U.K. bombing in August of 2006, for example, TSA issued a number of new requirements for background checks of airport employees that airports working through the TSC quickly implemented. Additionally, utilization of the TSC ensures that the TSA is able to conduct a number of additional, critical security checks such as terrorist watch list checks, immigration status checks, and others in a thorough and efficient manner that is quickly modified and implemented. Other similar federal programs have taken months and in some cases years to accomplish a fraction of the program functions and benefits that the TSC has frequently implemented in a matter of days.

In addition to the aviation worker vetting program, the TSC, in partnership with TSA, also supports background record checks for other key programs including:

- ✍ General aviation crews operating aircraft over 12,500 lbs;
- ✍ General aviation crews and armed security officers flying into Reagan Washington National Airport;
- ✍ Commercial charter pilots;
- ✍ Foreign applicants under the Alien Flight School Program;
- ✍ Contract screeners at private screener airports; and
- ✍ Background checks and application elements for federal Transportation Security Officer screener candidates.

The TSC also operates the world's most advanced interoperable information management system of traveler's biometric data – the Central Information Management System (CIMS). The CIMS is necessary to ensure interoperability, security and efficiency in the Registered Traveler program. The CIMS is responsible for several key functions, such as processing all records, interfacing with TSA for background checks, ensuring a chain of trust from vetted enrollments and issued credentials, and sending alerts to all service providers regarding revoked credentials.

AAAE is very proud of the incredible record of the TSC to this point. We look forward to partnering effectively with TSA in other areas to enhance security in the future, including efforts to utilize biometrics for access control systems at airports.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I look forward to your questions.