

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-5000**

January 30, 2024

The Honorable David Pekoske  
Administrator  
Transportation Security Administration  
6595 Springfield Center Dr.  
Springfield, VA 20598

Dear Administrator Pekoske,

As the lone Congressional representative for the state of Wyoming, I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) aviation worker screening National Amendment (TSA-NA-23-02) (National Amendment). While it is essential that we actively work to modernize and improve our aviation security posture, the components of the National Amendment are simply infeasible for many airports across my state and rural America.

The National Amendment, under its current interpretation, and within one year of its September 2023 enactment, requires airports across the country to bear the responsibility of performing random security screenings of aviation workers at certain facility entry points while also effectively mandating the future acquisition of explosive detection screening equipment. Rather than supporting airports in the adoption of these new policies or providing the resources to make such changes possible, TSA has opted to impose an unfunded federal mandate with little to no consideration for the unique resource challenges and limitations that each aviation facility faces. TSA must work to resolve the foundational flaws associated with the National Amendment before moving forward with such an edict.

For starters, since its founding in 2001, TSA has been charged with maintaining the security of airports and air travel throughout the U.S., which includes the screening of hundreds of millions of passengers annually. In doing so, TSA has acquired over two decades worth of experience in carrying out aviation screening procedures. With this in mind, should TSA desire to ramp up mandatory nationwide screening of airport personnel, the duty of carrying out such a protocol, including the provision of necessary financial resources, infrastructure, and manpower, should fall exclusively upon TSA. Moreover, TSA already has well-established insider threat programs, including the Advanced Threat Local Allocation Strategy (ATLAS). This program essentially mirrors what is being asked of airports. Unfortunately, the National Amendment as it is currently interpreted does not take any of this into account and simply shifts the burden of aviation workforce screening on the backs of America's airports, which was never intended when TSA was established by Congress.

Furthermore, TSA, through the National Amendment, has effectively grouped numerous airports across the country into one classification without giving any second thought to how this might impact the operations of specific facilities. The direct and indirect costs associated with the needed infrastructure, the acquisition, deployment, operation, and maintenance of advanced screening technology, and the hiring of new trained personnel to conduct these screenings, among other expenses, are substantial and, in many cases, exceed the capabilities of smaller, rural airports. Beyond the financial challenges associated with the National Amendment, several airports have also struggled to fill various professional roles throughout their facilities due to increased labor shortages. These enacted changes will only serve to exacerbate existing workforce scarcities. While these obstacles are difficult to overcome in any circumstance, such challenges are commonly amplified within our rural communities.

As a result of the aforementioned concerns, both chambers of Congress have included report language in their respective FY24 appropriations bills expressing apprehension and recommendations surrounding the implementation of the National Amendment. Specifically, the accompanying report for the House of Representatives FY24 Homeland Security Appropriations legislation "urges TSA to rescind the amendment and solicit a formal round of notice and comment to understand the full financial and operational impacts of this proposal on airports and the expected benefits to aviation security." Similar report language is mirrored in the Senate Appropriations legislation.

Ensuring that we provide for the safety of all Americans especially as the rate at which air travel continues to increase should always be a priority for both elected representatives and the federal agencies who are tasked with carrying out such responsibilities. However, this one-size-fits-all approach is massively flawed and will likely have countless negative consequences for airports across the state of Wyoming and the nation. For the reasons set forth above, I strongly urge you to respect the wishes of Congress by rescinding the National Amendment and reassessing the financial and operational impacts this regulation will have on both America's airports and air service reliability before moving forward with any substantially similar policy decisions.

Sincerely,



Harriet M. Hageman  
Member of Congress