



TESTIMONY OF

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BEFORE

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Subcommittee on Homeland Security

ON

“Fiscal Year 2024 President’s Budget Request for the Transportation Security Administration”

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Good morning Chairman Joyce, Ranking Member Cuellar, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me to testify on the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 President's Budget Request, which includes a \$10.4B request for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). I am honored to be here and am grateful for the longstanding and constructive partnership TSA enjoys with this Subcommittee and all the support you have provided over the years.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Committee and Congress for the funding to support our workforce in the FY 2023 Omnibus Appropriations Act. This was not only the right thing to do by our workforce, but we believe it will help with retention and recruiting in ways that will have a measurable impact on mission performance.

I would also like to thank Congress for the authorities it has provided to TSA through the *TSA Modernization Act of 2018* as well as appropriations that have enabled us to execute our mission and make significant progress on our strategic priorities. Additionally, I would also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the superior efforts of the entire TSA workforce, convey what they have accomplished, and explain our future goals and objectives. During the last year, TSA:

- Screened 736 million travelers, an average of more than 2 million passengers per day, with 99.4 percent of passengers waiting less than 30 minutes at airport security checkpoints, and 99.4 percent of TSA PreCheck<sup>®</sup> passengers waiting less than ten minutes. We need to maintain our wait time standards while ensuring security in light of increasing passenger volumes.

- Deployed an additional 534 Credential Authentication Technology (CAT) units and 191 Computed Tomography (CT) X-ray scanners, which significantly improve security while reducing physical contact.
- Enrolled 9 new airlines and 3 million individuals in the TSA PreCheck® Application Program. Just this month, on March 2, 2023, we achieved the milestone of exceeding 15 million enrolled members in the TSA PreCheck Program and are working to onboard two additional enrollment vendors to expand enrollment options. Taking into account TSA's partners, such as U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Trusted Traveler Programs, there are over 30 million Known Traveler Number holders with access to TSA PreCheck expedited screening. These programs provide more efficient screening and a better checkpoint experience, while also maintaining the required level of security for passengers by allowing TSA to allocate resources to areas of the greatest risk. TSA also recurrently vetted over 30 million individuals across transportation worker populations on a daily basis.
- Prevented more than 6,542 firearms—a record number—from being carried into the secure area of airports or airplane passenger cabins, the majority of which (88 percent) were loaded. This is a testament to the security proficiency of our screening officers.
- Trained 4,409 flight crew members in Crew Member Self-Defense training to address increasing trends in unruly passengers and partnered with the Federal Aviation Administration to rescind TSA PreCheck eligibility for passengers who are disruptive aboard flights or during security screening. In especially egregious situations, TSA has taken action to limit individuals from flying in the future if they are assessed to pose a threat to aviation security.

- Expanded the Transportation Security Officer (TSO) new hire training from two to three weeks, providing additional instruction on image interpretation, TSA culture, enhancing the passenger experience, and improved cognitive performance. Additionally, TSA launched TSA Academy West adjacent to Harry Reid International Airport. With this additional training capacity, TSA trained over 9,000 TSO new hires in FY 2022, with almost 1,000 of them attending training at Academy West.
- Established the first outcome-focused cybersecurity-related Security Directives and Security Program Amendments that require mandatory incident reporting and the adoption of mitigation measures to the most critical owners and operators of transportation infrastructure. TSA is committed to enhancing and sustaining industry's resilience to cybersecurity attacks. TSA is working on a rulemaking that will permanently codify critical cybersecurity requirements for pipeline and rail modes.
- Published Information Circulars to Transportation Systems Sector stakeholders with recommended actions to reduce vulnerabilities associated with cybersecurity-related threats.
- Published the Innovation Doctrine—the first of its kind in government, which lays out agreed upon current best practices and establishes mechanisms like Local Innovation for TSA (LIFT) Cells across the country to foster a culture of innovation, provide resources and pathways to solve local-level problems, and expand the innovation ecosystem around transportation security. It also creates an Innovation Pipeline, a disciplined, repeatable, and scalable process for innovation across TSA to out-innovate those that threaten the traveling public, and leverages the TSA Innovation Task Force's expertise in the evaluation and demonstration of promising technologies.
- Continued several programs and initiatives to recruit and retain TSOs, including:

- A performance-based rewards program called the Model Officer Recognition that provided 19,478 monetary awards or pay increases to top-performing TSOs in FY 2022;
- Authorized TSO retention incentives at 143 airports, benefitting more than 10,000 employees nationwide. Although these are still needed in certain locations moving forward, the changes in TSA pay structure afforded by the FY 2023 enactment will dramatically reduce the need for these incentives.
- Expanded digital identity technologies that securely enhance the customer experience, including testing TSA PreCheck touchless identity solutions, collaborating with Apple and other private sector partners to incorporate mobile driver's licenses (mDL) into security checkpoint operations, and publishing an Identity Management Roadmap which lays out a comprehensive end-to-end strategy for identity management at TSA.
- Established two Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Test Bed Programs—one at Miami International Airport and the other at Los Angeles International Airport—to test and evaluate detection, tracking, and identification technology for UAS that enter restricted airspace. TSA continues to collect data on performance of these various technologies to share with industry and government partners.

TSA's vision is to remain agile, embodied by a professional workforce that engages its partners and the American people to address current and future challenges and threats to the Homeland. To that end, within the first year of my term as Administrator, I issued the "TSA Strategy" and established three strategic priorities to guide the agency's workforce through its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary: (1) Improve Security and Safeguard the Nation's Transportation System; (2)

Accelerate Action; and (3) Commit to Our People. I have twice published Administrator's Intent documents delineating and updating the short and medium-term goals and objectives to achieve those strategic priorities. I will publish the third iteration of the Administrator's Intent, in close consultation with your staff and our stakeholders, which will focus on the 20 most critical cross-cutting issues that require collaboration across the entire agency with senior executive accountability. The Administrator's Intent 3.0 is aligned with the Department of Homeland Security's priorities as well as national strategies and directives including the National Security Strategy, the National Cybersecurity Strategy, and the Executive Order on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government.

We have also strengthened our partnerships across the spectrum—from private industry, to foreign partners and international organizations, advisory committees, academia, state and local governments, and our federal partners—in order to increase collaboration, security, information sharing, and maximizing the customer experience in the new travel environment while minimizing negative impacts on travelers and commerce.

Securing and safeguarding the Nation's transportation system requires innovative tactics to address cybersecurity threats and risks associated with the continued integration of advanced electronic and networked systems. The FY 2024 President's Budget includes an increase of \$10.4M for cybersecurity staffing, as well as the development and implementation of enhanced cybersecurity-related measures to improve cyber resiliency across the U.S. Transportation Systems Sector. Across the transportation sector, TSA continues to help partners build cyber resilience and improve incident response, focusing on the surface, rail, and aviation sub-sectors. With those stakeholders, TSA hosts a variety of planning meetings, intelligence briefings, and

tabletop exercises to ensure partners are aware and prepared to respond to emerging issues. I have personally visited pipelines and other critical infrastructure operators to discuss the evolving cybersecurity threat, and to understand the challenges and successes of implementing the current security directives and program amendments.

This year, as required by Congress, TSA will deliver for the first time an unconstrained Capital Investment Plan that describes an ideal future state in which TSA is able to buy down more risk to the transportation sector with additional resources. It is imperative that TSA continues to invest in, acquire, and field new technologies to strengthen transportation security.

The transportation sector will remain a top target for malicious actors including international and domestic terrorists due to the prevalence of soft targets within the sector, the public accessibility of many transportation modes, and the importance of transportation infrastructure to the Nation. The agency carefully monitors this evolving threat environment and the need to strategically manage risks. Risk-based decision making is inherent to the TSA mission of protecting the Nation's transportation systems to ensure the freedom of movement for people and commerce. The challenges and risks TSA encounters will foreseeably become more complex, and the agency needs to position itself to be both more strategic in responding to risks and in developing solutions. A critical dependency in risk mitigation is sufficient funding that would allow TSA to continue to evolve transportation security in high-risk areas.

In conjunction with the FY 2024 President's Budget, the Administration offers two proposals to increase availability of funding to resource TSA's strategic priorities and help TSA address emerging threats. First, it includes a legislative proposal to terminate TSA's deficit reduction contributions from Passenger Fee collections, which, if enacted, will provide an

additional \$1.6B to directly offset TSA's appropriated funding and return the funds to use for their intended purpose. Second, the Budget includes a legislative proposal to transition access control at exit lanes to airport authorities and commercial airports under federal regulatory authorities, which will result in a projected savings of \$111.0M. If approved, TSA will work with airports to integrate exit lane security into their perimeter security plans and assess those plans regularly. The proposal will enable TSA to better focus its resources on screening functions and risk-based security measures.

TSA's level of success is influenced by the help of Congress as well as our professional, vigilant, and engaged workforce. That is why "Commit to Our People" is one of our three strategic priorities. The initial funding the Committee provided in FY 2023 to TSA allows for that continued commitment. The FY 2024 President's Budget includes \$1.4B to fully support the TSA workforce pay initiatives started in FY 2023.

The strategic priority of "Commit to Our People" also entails ensuring that we provide our workforce with the necessary advanced technology to be successful. Today's evolving threats require a dynamic and responsive TSA. Access to greater technology enables our passenger screening workforce to assess potential threats quickly and efficiently and also supports a more seamless experience for the traveler. To that end, the FY 2024 President's Budget includes \$70.4M and \$11.0M to procure additional systems within the Checkpoint Property Screening System (CPSS) and Credential Authentication Technology (CAT) programs, respectively, to address capability gaps to detect new and evolving threats to civil aviation in current property screening technology reliably and efficiently, while improving the customer experience. Our field officers have done a tremendous job being diligent by monitoring the

threats at the checkpoint. However, it is imperative that we equip them with the necessary tools to combat those persistent threats. As of today, TSA needs a total of 3,585 CAT and 2,263 CT machines to reach Full Operational Capability (FOC). Currently, CPSS procurements are an estimated 35 percent of FOC, which puts deployments at approximately 28 percent for CPSS and 57 percent for CAT. Based on past, present, and current projected funding, TSA will meet FOC for CAT machines and CPSS in FY 2049 and FY 2042, respectively. Full and dedicated funding for CPSS and CAT are imperative for our nation's security at the checkpoint.

Furthermore, there are a number of investments in Operation and Support that require sustained funding to ensure the transportation sector stays secure. Some of these investments include:

- \$251.0M to provide the TSA workforce a 5.2 percent pay raise.
- \$39.0M for Transportation Security Equipment Maintenance to fund anticipated maintenance costs of TSA's checkpoint and checked baggage screening technologies based on current contractual requirements.
- \$19.0M and 24 Positions for the implementation and expansion of the REAL ID Program.
- \$11.3M for maintenance, technical support, and engineering contracts for Credential Authentication Technology.
- \$10.0M to properly support the National Deployment Office Travel increases.
- \$4.5M and 45 Positions to establish a dedicated pipeline security assessment team to conduct inspections and assessments on the Surface Transportation System.
- \$3.8M to enhance TSA's Insider Threat Program.

- \$2.7M and 6 Positions to support Executive Order 14058 to enhance Customer Experience Strategic initiatives.

As you know, TSA was established by the *Aviation and Transportation Security Act* in the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and was given the urgent task of protecting our nation's transportation systems. Since that day, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to provide the highest level of security across all modes of transportation and work with our partners to stay ahead of evolving threats. In the years since 9/11, and specifically over the past fiscal year, TSA has not only had to address ever-present physical threats to aviation, but also dynamic and emerging cybersecurity threats to our nation's aviation, rail, as well as hazardous liquid and natural gas pipeline infrastructure. TSA works closely with the transportation industry to provide agile and responsive security across all modes of transportation through passenger and cargo screening, vetting and credentialing personnel in critical transportation sectors, law enforcement, regulatory compliance, and international cooperation.

Today, within the aviation network, TSA is responsible for the security of over 430 federalized airports, with screening services forecasted this summer for over 22,000 domestic flights (at pre-pandemic levels) and nearly 2,300 outbound international flights per day. With travel volume rebounding, TSA routinely screens more than 2 million passengers, 5 million carry-on bags and 1.4 million pieces of checked baggage daily for explosives and other dangerous items, and in many locations across the nation. TSA expects passenger volume to eventually exceed our pre-pandemic FY 2019 levels, which averaged up to 2.3 million per day. The FY 2024 President's Budget includes \$197.1M to enable TSA to continue to recruit and retain a workforce able to meet increasing demands of passenger travel volume and maintaining

security effectiveness. In addition to these core security functions, we also ensure regulatory compliance in aviation through the work of more than 1,285 aviation, cargo, and surface transportation security inspectors.

In the surface realm, TSA works closely with transportation system owners and operators to protect the critical surface transportation systems that connect cities, manufacturers and retailers and power our economy through more than 4 million miles of roadways; nearly 140,000 miles of railroad track; more than 470 tunnels; and over 2.8 million miles of pipeline. TSA's security inspectors conduct approximately 8,000 surface inspections annually in pursuing a risk-based approach for securing a large and complex network of transportation systems and critical infrastructure.

Since TSA's creation, the modes and methods of terrorist attacks have become more decentralized and opportunistic, and aviation and other transport hubs remain high-value targets. Threats to aviation and surface transportation are persistent and constantly evolving. To meet these challenges, we must continue to be responsive, innovate, rapidly deploy new solutions, and maximize the impact of our resources.

The FY 2024 President's Budget aligns with TSA's strategy to improve security and safeguard the nation's transportation system, accelerate action, and reinforce TSA's commitment to advancing its strategy. Thanks to Congress' support for TSA through the FY 2023 enactment, the FY 2024 President's Budget honors commitments to our workforce by providing appropriate compensation and other benefits while addressing capability gaps to ensure that the nation's transportation security remains the safest in the world.

Securing our nation's transportation system is a complex task that requires robust partnerships and a well-trained, dedicated workforce. Funding in the FY 2024 President's Budget will have a positive impact on all TSA employees—from Transportation Security Officers, Federal Air Marshals, inspectors, canine handlers, analysts, and management to administrative and professional employees—as well as on transportation security and the passenger experience. To achieve the priorities reflected within the FY 2024 President's Budget, we will continue to engage with industry and stakeholders, invest resources in our employees and technology, and encourage the public to be part of the solution. Finally, through constructive oversight and dialogue, we seek to continue to partner with Congress as we work to secure all modes of transportation for the public.

Chairman Joyce, Ranking Member Cuellar, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I strongly believe that the TSA priorities outlined in the FY 2024 President's Budget are not only necessary but timely and vital to our economy. As always, we will be very responsive to addressing any questions that you might have throughout this budget process and I look forward to this discussion and your questions. Thank you.