



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Statement of Transportation & Maritime Security Subcommittee Ranking Member LaMonica McIver (D-NJ)

America on the Global Stage: Examining Efforts to Secure and Improve the U.S. Travel System and Prepare for Significant International Events

April 8, 2025

The travel and tourism industry is a vital part of the U.S. economy.

In November 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law, providing a \$1.2 trillion investment in American transportation and infrastructure. In December 2022, President Biden signed an omnibus spending package into law, funding pay raises and an expanded collective bargaining framework for TSA employees.

These historic investments have helped spur continued growth in U.S. travel and tourism and helped secure our transportation networks. In 2024, travel in the United States produced an economic output of \$2.8 trillion and supported more than 15 million American jobs, and record numbers of passengers traveled through TSA security checkpoints.

To continue to grow the U.S. travel system and prepare for upcoming international events, any sane Administration would continue to invest in our infrastructure, update our security technology, and support our federal workforce. Unfortunately, President Trump and Republicans in Congress are doing the exact opposite. Take, for example, making investments in cutting-edge security technology.

To fund new CT scanners and other equipment at TSA checkpoints at the necessary scale and pace, Congress must stop using Passenger Security Fee collections as a slush fund and return that money to TSA. But instead, House Republicans are considering increasing Passenger Security Fees and using that money to help pay for tax cuts for billionaires, according to a document showing their reconciliation plans. Republicans want to charge airline passengers more and then put that money in billionaires' pockets.

The Passenger Security Fee was created to help fund TSA and prevent another 9/11—but Republicans care more about giving tax cuts to billionaires. That's despicable. Let's turn to workforce issues.

Transportation Security Officers are the backbone of our transportation security system, as they screen millions of passengers and pieces of luggage every day to keep our skies safe. Yet over the past month, President Trump and Security of Homeland Security Kristi Noem have taken the first steps in dismantling the professional aviation security workforce we have worked so hard to build over the past two decades.

On March 7th, Secretary Noem ended TSA's seven-year collective bargaining agreement and dismantled union rights in a blatantly political and illegal move to advance President Trump's union busting agenda. I am glad this move is being challenged in the courts, but in the meantime it undermines the TSO workforce just as it had finally stabilized after decades of high attrition.

Worse yet, the termination of TSA's collective bargaining agreement may pave the way for Project 2025's goal of privatizing the agency—an effort Republicans in Congress are already trying to advance.

Privatizing more than 400 airports and over 50,000 screening officers would throw the entire aviation security system into chaos and return us to the pre-9/11 model that failed to prevent the largest terrorist attack in U.S. history. Democrats will fight tooth and nail to prevent Republicans from sacrificing our national security at the altar of corporate greed. Unfortunately, the problems the Trump Administration is creating for the travel and tourism industry go well beyond the TSA.

In 2024, the International Trade Administration reported a 9 percent increase of international visitors to the United States. Under the Biden Administration, U.S. tourism was booming and open for business. However, in just the two months since President Trump took office, he has managed to throw that all away by detaining tourists, attacking allies, and tanking the economy. The list of countries that have changed their advisories to warn travelers to the United States of potential risks is growing longer by the day.

That list now includes the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Belgium, and Canada. Canadians, who visit the U.S. more than anyone, are now canceling their trips, as flight bookings from Canada have dropped by 70%. Since Trump took office, several travelers trying to enter the U.S. have been turned away or detained for days or weeks with little to no explanation.

A French scientist scheduled to attend a conference in Houston was turned away reportedly because his personal device contained opinions criticizing Trump's research policies. A Canadian citizen was put in a jumpsuit and chains and detained for over two weeks as she legally went through the process to obtain a work visa. A German tourist spent more than six weeks in a detention center, including eight days in solitary confinement, because she was traveling with tattooing equipment.

Through these cases and others, Donald Trump is sending the message that visitors to the U.S. may be arrested without explanation. Trump is sending the message that the United States is closed for business. Trump's policies put at risk trillions of dollars in tourism spending and millions of American jobs. Let me be clear: Donald Trump is tanking the economy.

I look forward to discussing with our witnesses how this dire situation will impact our national security and the success of upcoming high-profile events like the World Cup and the Olympics.

#

[Media contact](#)