



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Statement of Transportation & Maritime Security Subcommittee

Ranking Member Shri Thanedar (D-MI)

Organizational Oversight: Examining TSA's Post-Modernization Efforts

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The Transportation Security Administration was established in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, making it one of the Federal government's youngest agencies. Over the past two decades, TSA has experienced numerous changes in leadership and restructurings as it has matured into an efficient and effective agency.

Most recently, in 2018, Congress passed the *TSA Modernization Act*, which provided high-level direction for TSA's organizational structure, set a five-year term for the position of the TSA Administrator, and required TSA to conduct an efficiency review to streamline its operations. In addition, TSA Administrator David Pekoske directed a realignment of agency functions concurrent to the development and passage of the *TSA Modernization Act*.

Under this restructuring, TSA aligned functions under four "pillars," which are represented by the witnesses present today. Though there is always room for improvement, I believe this structure is serving TSA well. I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses about how Congress can best support TSA as it continues to mature.

Conducting oversight of TSA's long-term priorities and growth as an agency is important, but as we sit here today, TSA faces dire short-term problems. Yet again, we find ourselves on the verge of an unnecessary government shutdown due to Republicans' failure to govern. A lapse in appropriations would be devastating for TSA workers, almost all of whom would be required to work without pay during a shutdown. However, even a funding solution that continues at 2023 levels for the rest of 2024 would be hugely problematic for TSA, as the agency faces a major funding shortfall.

In 2022, Democrats in Congress provided significant resources in the omnibus funding bill to increase pay and collective bargaining rights for TSA workers, finally putting them on equal footing with other Federal employees. It is imperative that Congress dedicate additional funding to this effort. Pay increases began last July, with workers seeing 30 percent raises on average—a difference that is truly lifechanging for workers who were previously living paycheck to paycheck.

The workforce has also negotiated a tentative collective bargaining agreement under a new framework allowing for negotiation on an expanded set of topics. These workforce initiatives are already having a remarkable impact, as TSA's attrition rates have dropped nearly in half. Higher retention will improve security as TSA develops a highly skilled, experienced workforce, while also saving millions of dollars on hiring and training efforts.

Going forward, we must provide TSA with the funding to continue these critical workforce initiatives without needing to reduce staffing levels. Last May, Ranking Member Thompson introduced the *Fund*

the TSA Act, which would raise passenger security fees by a modest \$2 per trip to provide TSA with the resources it desperately needs. This bill would allow TSA to invest in its workforce, screen increasing numbers of travelers, purchase additional advanced technology, and fund critical airport law enforcement and canine programs.

It is long past time for this Committee to consider legislation to address TSA's funding challenges, and I hope the Chairman will join me in pushing for a solution. I look forward to discussing these issues further, and I yield back.

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Media contact: Adam Comis at 202-225-9978