

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER CEDRIC L. RICHMOND (D-LA)
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION SECURITY

**“TSA’S EFFORTS TO ADVANCE RISK-BASED SECURITY: STAKEHOLDER
PERSPECTIVES”**

April 11, 2013

First, I want to welcome all of the witnesses today. As stakeholders in TSA’s risk based screening effort, I look forward to hearing your thoughts. Last month, Administrator Pistole testified before the Subcommittee and presented his vision for TSA as an intelligence driven, risk-based, counterterrorism agency. I appreciate the Administrator’s efforts to implement policies that reject a “one-size fits all” security philosophy.

He has modified several screening processes to accommodate passengers with disabilities, children, and the elderly. He continues to work on expanding a trusted traveler program which will hopefully expedite screening operations and reduce lines at checkpoints.

I was very happy to learn of the Administrator’s recent announcement that TSA will allow active duty members of the military to participate in the Pre-Check program. And he has also agreed to establish a program that will ease screening for injured members of the military and veterans.

These efforts demonstrate a commitment to engaging in a rigorous risk analysis and making common-sense changes to policies impacting the flying public. In addition to being common-sense changes, these new policies are entirely consistent with TSA’s mandate—to ensure the safety and security of the traveling public “against acts of criminal violence.”

The successes of these risk-based strategies are a direct result of the active engagement and involvement of stakeholders. That is why it is important that we hear from those stakeholders today— those who work in the airports, with the traveling public, and the contractors who supply services to TSA. As we all know, the people working “in the trenches” are the first to know and understand when something will not work. We need to understand the issues they face and how they believe TSA can better secure the flying public.

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, in recent weeks there has been much controversy surrounding the Administrator’s announcement to remove certain knives from the Prohibited Items List. There is no doubt in my mind that the process of bringing in stakeholders and soliciting their advice could have been handled a whole lot better. As I said at the hearing last month, I do not believe that decisions like these can be made in a vacuum, without conversation, or advance warning to stakeholders -- especially those implementing the changes and those most affected by them.

Moving forward, as we must be deliberative in our efforts to institute risk-based policies, and utilize existing mechanisms, like the Aviation Security Advisory Committee, to engage all stakeholders before making final policy decisions.

So I am glad we are here today to have an open exchange with stakeholders about TSA, and I hope we use the information we learn to chart the path forward for this subcommittee.