

Statement of Ranking Member Cedric L. Richmond (D-LA)

Subcommittee on Transportation Security
For Markup of H.R. 2719 and H.R. 1204

July 24, 2013

Mr. Chairman, thank you for ensuring that this Subcommittee's first markup of the 113th Congress includes a bipartisan roster of bills. The two bills we will consider today, the *Transportation Security Acquisition Reform Act* and the *Aviation Stakeholder Participation Act* have three common themes transparency, accountability; and bipartisan support. I was pleased to join you, Chairman McCaul, and Ranking Member Thompson in introducing H.R. 2719, the *Transportation Security Acquisition Reform Act* last week.

H.R. 2719 addresses longstanding concerns that I and other Members of this Committee have raised about TSA's stewardship of taxpayer funds when pursuing, acquiring, and deploying technology. Importantly, the bill also seeks to address TSA's lackluster record of contracting with small businesses. I thank the Chairman for his willingness to include small businesses in the discussion as we improve TSA's acquisition practices. During our hearing with industry stakeholders last week, we heard from representatives of both small and large businesses on how to improve TSA's acquisition practices to more effectively engage with small businesses.

I will be offering two amendments to H.R. 2719 that will incorporate those recommendations into the bill. I trust that these amendments will be met with the Chairman's support. As I said last week, soliciting input from stakeholders is critical to developing effective policies.

H.R. 1204, a bill introduced by Ranking Member Thompson that we will also be considering today, codifies that sentiment by making permanent the Aviation Security Advisory Committee. Soon after 9/11, industry representatives from all corners of the transportation sector gathered to support TSA's efforts to develop an efficient, effective, and workable security program. Unfortunately, TSA allowed the ASAC to become inactive for several years when it let the charter lapse. Although ASAC's charter was renewed in 2011, it was only in response to Congressional pressure following repeated complaints about a lack of dialogue between TSA and industry stakeholders.

The ASAC is a valuable asset to both TSA and industry stakeholders because it helps ensure that the policies that TSA develops are not only responsive to security challenges but can be effectively integrated into security operations. Just this year, we saw what can happen when TSA fails to solicit stakeholder input on proposed modifications to aviation security protocol. I am, of course, speaking of the proposed changes to the "prohibited items list."

I am confident that I speak for all of my colleagues on the Committee when I say that nobody wants to see a repeat of that episode. Simply put, the ASAC is too valuable to both government and industry to risk it becoming inactive again. I applaud Ranking Member Thompson for introducing legislation to make the committee permanent and Chairman Hudson for seeing the wisdom of scheduling the bill for consideration.

Before yielding back Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate my appreciation for the bipartisan manner in which you have approached the work of this Subcommittee.