

H.R. 2431, “The False Travel Documents Prohibition Act of 2011”

As Introduced By Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security

FACT SHEET

- The June 30, 2011 arrest of an individual, who had successfully boarded a flight from John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) after presenting invalid boarding pass and identification documents at the airport security checkpoint, brought into focus a troubling vulnerability in the security of our commercial aviation system.
- The individual, who was arrested in LAX for being a stowaway on the JFK to LAX flight, was apprehended as he attempted to board another flight and, according to media reports, had at least 15 invalid boarding passes in his possession.
- Under current law, it is unlawful to knowingly produce, possess, or transfer a false identification document but there is no legal prohibition against using or trafficking in false travel documents such as aircraft boarding passes, airline tickets, and rail tickets.
- H.R. 2431, the “False Travel Documents Prohibition Act of 2011,” seeks to take an important step in eliminating travel document fraud by (1) subjecting individuals to criminal penalties for knowingly producing, using, or transferring false travel documents, including airline boarding passes; and (2) requiring recurring training on the identification of false travel documents and identification credentials for Transportation Security Officers at our nation’s airports.

H.R. 2431, “THE FALSE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS PROHIBITION ACT OF 2011”

The “False Travel Documents Prohibition Act of 2011” seeks strengthen aviation security by:

- (1) Amending Federal law to make it a crime for an individual to knowingly possess, produce, or transfer a false travel document¹—e.g. a boarding pass, rail ticket, or airplane ticket. This will ensure that an individual that presents a false boarding pass is subject to the same criminal penalties as an individual who knowingly presents a false driver’s license, passport or other identification to a Transportation Security Officer. The bill amends section 1028 of title 18, U.S. Code which, at present, only covers offenses associated with knowingly possessing, producing and transferring a false identification. An individual convicted of an offense under section 1028 of title 18, U.S. Code, is subject to a fine and, depending on the specific nature of the criminal offense, between five and 30 years of imprisonment per violation.
- (2) Directing the Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to provide recurring training to the Transportation Security Officer workforce on methods to identify both false travel documents and false identification documents.

¹ The bill defines “false travel document” as “a document issued for the use of a particular, identified individual and of a type intended or commonly accepted for the purposes of passage on a commercial aircraft or train, including a ticket or boarding pass, that (A) was not issued by or under the authority of a commercial airline or rail carrier, but appears to be issued by or under the authority of a commercial airline or rail carrier; or (B) was issued by or under the authority of a commercial airline or rail carrier but was altered.”