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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

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DAVID SCHWIETERT, STAFF DIRECTOR
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January 26, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

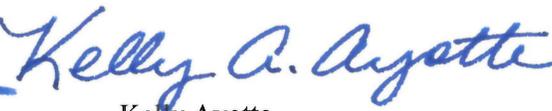
We write to urge you to prioritize the formal nomination of a qualified, experienced, and dedicated individual to serve as Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

As you know, TSA's mission is to secure and protect our nation's transportation systems from terrorist attacks, but perhaps its most visible and costly responsibility is that of protecting the traveling public at airports across the country. Our nation faces evolving terror threats that have recently resulted in enhanced TSA security screening and procedures at U.S. airports. In addition, Secretary Johnson has directed TSA to conduct an immediate, short term review to determine if additional action is necessary. Given this intensified terror threat and the vacancy set into motion when former Administrator Pistole announced his plans to retire over three months ago, it is critical that TSA have strong leadership now to set priorities, make tough decisions, and manage its large workforce.

TSA's mission to safeguard our nation's transportation systems is no small task. In fact, it is a mission that relies heavily on coordination with leaders of other agencies, including the intelligence community, federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, and multiple Department of Homeland Security components. For these reasons, a nominee with strong leadership skills is critical to TSA's ability to fulfill its mission.

We must continually strive to ensure the security of the traveling public while not impeding the ability of people and goods to move freely. Paramount to these twin goals is organization and accountability throughout TSA. For all these reasons, we urge you to nominate a strong and qualified candidate to be Administrator, and we commit to working to ensure your nominee receives full and fair consideration by our Committee and the full Senate.

Sincerely,

  
John Thune
Chairman
Kelly Ayotte
Chair
Deb Fischer
Chairman

 
Bill Nelson
Ranking Member
Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member