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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

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May 11, 2015

Mr. Melvin Carraway
Acting Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
601 12th Street South
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Mr. Carraway:

On March 17, 2015, we wrote to you regarding a series of incidents and security lapses involving the use of Secure Identification Display Area (SIDA) badges that can be used to gain access to secure areas at domestic airports. We asked you to provide, among other things, detailed information about SIDA badges that are lost, missing, or otherwise unaccounted for. Members of the Committee also discussed this issue at an April 14, 2015 hearing regarding reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration.

In your written response dated April 1, 2015, you stated that the TSA does not issue or manage identification media such as SIDA badges and that this responsibility falls to airport operators. According to your response, the role of the TSA is instead to set regulatory standards for the implementation of security measures at airports, including personnel identification systems, and to take civil enforcement actions such as the imposition of fines for violations of these standards. You also stated that the TSA does not maintain a record of airport identification media that are lost or unaccounted for.

In short, the response we received raises more questions than it answers, and we ask that you respond to the following questions:

1. Please explain further the requirements and procedures by which airport operators report to TSA pursuant to applicable regulatory requirements and security directives on personnel identification systems, and the mechanisms by which TSA conducts and maintains its oversight of airport operators under these regulations and directives. If the agency does not maintain a record of the number of badges unaccounted for at airports, how does TSA adequately monitor compliance and performance of airport operators, identify airports

with persistent problems, and initiate remediation efforts like additional training and random screening?

2. Has the TSA imposed any fines or conducted any enforcement actions pursuant to the rules discussed above in the last ten years? If so, for each enforcement action taken, describe the incident or incidents that justified enforcement at a particular airport(s) and the nature of the enforcement action taken, including the amount of any fines assessed.
3. TSA regulations, codified at 49 C.F.R § 1542.211(a)(3), require that airport operators' personnel identification systems include procedures to ensure accountability through reporting of lost or stolen identification media and auditing of the system at least once a year and maintenance of those records for one year.
 - a. What, if any, specific procedures does TSA require for airport operators to report lost or stolen SIDA badges to TSA?
 - b. Do airport operators submit the results of their comprehensive annual audits to TSA?
 - c. If not, how can TSA conduct effective oversight of the security of the SIDA badge system without this information?
4. TSA security directives require airport operators to reissue identification media if more than five percent of SIDA badges are lost or unaccounted for at the time of an audit.
 - a. How does TSA determine if airports reach this percentage threshold? Does the agency rely on airport operators to proactively report such an event?
 - b. Why is this five percent threshold appropriate from a security perspective and how did TSA arrive at this amount?
5. Has TSA ever required an airport operator to reissue SIDA badges because that operator reached the five percent threshold? If so, please provide a list of each instance in the last ten years in which an operator has reissued all identification media, as well as the information the operator provided to the TSA about the circumstances that triggered the badge reissuance.

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Please provide your responses as soon as possible, but by no later than May 21, 2015. The Committee is making this request pursuant to its authority under Senate Rules XXV and XXVI. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



JOHN THUNE
Chairman



KELLY AYOTTE

Chair

Subcommittee on Aviation Operations,
Safety, and Security



MARIA CANTWELL

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Aviation Operations,
Safety, and Security