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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <http://commerce.senate.gov>

March 17, 2015

Mr. Melvin Carraway
Acting Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
601 12th Street South
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Carraway:

We are concerned about a number of recently reported incidents involving the Secure Identification Display Area (SIDA) badges used to access secure areas of domestic airports. In December 2014, it was revealed that a Delta ramp agent in Atlanta allegedly used his SIDA badge to bypass Transportation Security Administration (TSA) security and facilitate an interstate gun smuggling operation over a number of months via commercial aircraft. In January 2014, an Atlanta-based Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Aviation Safety Inspector reportedly used his SIDA badge to bypass TSA security checkpoints and transport a firearm in his carry-on luggage. Most recently, a local news investigation found that thousands of SIDA badges at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport were unaccounted for, having apparently been lost or stolen.

In response to these reported incidents and security lapses, we understand that TSA is currently considering or implementing a range of measures, and the Department of Homeland Security has requested that the Aviation Security Advisory Committee conduct a review of issues related to the security of airport sterile areas nationwide. We ask that TSA report to the Committee any new or recent actions taken to address potential vulnerabilities related to the access of an airport's secure areas or perimeter. We also ask that TSA provide a full accounting of the number of SIDA badges lost, missing, or otherwise unaccounted for at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, as well as the percentage of SIDA badges unaccounted for in each of the last five years at each airport where TSA conducts or oversees security operations.

Senate Commerce Committee to Acting Administrator Carraway
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Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



John Thune
Chairman



Bill Nelson
Ranking Member



Kelly Ayotte
Chair
Subcommittee on Aviation Operations,
Safety, and Security



Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Aviation Operations,
Safety, and Security