

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
Statement of
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Before the
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION SECURITY AND
INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Good afternoon Chairwoman Jackson-Lee, Ranking Member Dent, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today to discuss the recent website posting of an improperly redacted version of a 2008 Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Screening Management Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). I appreciate the Subcommittee's continued involvement in the security operations of TSA, and look forward to working closely with Congress in fulfilling our ongoing mission to safeguard all sectors of transportation on behalf of the American people.

Let me begin by assuring the Members of the Subcommittee and the traveling public that our aviation security procedures remain strong. The duties performed by TSA's dedicated workforce of Transportation Security Officers (TSOs), Federal Air Marshals, canine teams, and others have not been adversely impacted by this incident. TSA will continue to ensure the same high standard of security during the upcoming holiday season that was evident throughout the Thanksgiving Day travel period. Our workforce is responsive, accountable, and dedicated to safeguarding the traveling public, and neither our capability nor our resolve has been diminished by this incident.

Those who seek to infiltrate airport security will find no roadmap from the redacted text that was improperly released. This document, which was outdated, provides procedural information for managers. It is not the SOP used by our TSOs at airport checkpoints to screen members of the traveling public. Because we continually adjust our SOPs and our security protocols based on the receipt of intelligence information and the testing of our security regimen, there have been six newer versions since this SOP was drafted. Our TSO screening procedures have not been compromised, and our multi-layered transportation security system remains intact. Nonetheless, out of an abundance of caution, we have undertaken an operational assessment of any potential vulnerabilities that this disclosure may have caused, and have taken swift action to prevent the information from the SOP from being used to defeat a single point in our multi-layered security system.

That being said, TSA, and I personally, take this incident very seriously. This was a mistake and we are very sorry it occurred. I would like to provide a brief summary of the events surrounding this incident. On Sunday, December 6, TSA's Blog Team learned that a 2008 Screening Management SOP posted on the General Services Administration's (GSA) Federal Business Opportunities website contained redacted information that had not been properly protected. The

SOP had been posted by TSA on the GSA contracting website for a contract solicitation under TSA's Screening Partnership Program. Such documents- when properly redacted- are used in contract solicitations to guarantee fairness in the procurement process. Unfortunately, the redaction on this particular document had been performed incorrectly, enabling readers to view the redacted portions as well as the headers and footers indicating that the document contained Sensitive Security Information (SSI).

TSA takes any breach of its security programs very seriously, and we reacted swiftly. I convened a Sunday evening senior staff conference call as soon as I learned of the improperly redacted document, notified the Department of Homeland Security's Headquarters, and ordered that GSA be notified and immediate steps be taken to remove the document from the GSA website. Although this happened promptly and GSA cooperated fully with our request within two hours, outside individuals had already downloaded the document and made it available on their websites.

We initiated an extensive internal review through the TSA Office of Inspection and placed the employees who were involved with the redacting of the document on administrative leave pending completion of the review. Secretary Napolitano also asked the Department's Inspector General (IG) to conduct a thorough investigation of the matter, which we are currently engaged in now.

Since this incident, we have also instituted even more stringent new safeguards for all sensitive operational documents to ensure that no SSI is improperly released.

In closing, I deeply regret that this incident occurred. We have taken immediate actions and look forward to working with the IG on implementing any recommended actions in the future. I am confident that through an exhaustive review of the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, TSA will emerge a stronger agency.

Thank you for your continued assistance to TSA and for the opportunity to discuss this matter with you today. I would be pleased to respond to your questions.