

**Wednesday, June 30, 2010**

**Opening Statement of Chairwoman Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX) as prepared**

**Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection  
Committee on Homeland Security**

**Hearing:**

**100% Air Cargo Screening: Remaining Steps to Secure Passenger Aircraft**

Today, the Subcommittee will continue its commitment to robust oversight of one of the most important issues addressed by Congress in the 9/11 Act: the screening of cargo on commercial passenger aircraft.

This is my third hearing on this issue as Chairwoman of this Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over TSA. Without doubt, the cargo screening mandate is critical to aviation security, and our interest and oversight into TSA's progress in establishing this system will be continuing – until and after we reach 100%.

I would like to welcome my colleagues on the Subcommittee and also thank them for their strong commitment to this issue.

TSA is nearly three years into developing and implementing the Certified Cargo Screening Program, known as the CCSP, and has also negotiated key international harmonization agreements with the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada on 100% cargo screening measures.

On both the domestic and international fronts, TSA has made progress, but the law is clear: By August 3rd of this year, TSA must be able to report to Congress that 100% of cargo traveling on commercial passenger aircraft is being screened for explosives.

Today, we will ask TSA the hard questions concerning the status of the implementation of Section 1602 of the 9/11 Act.

The Subcommittee needs to understand that TSA has the necessary resources to educate, certify, inspect and oversee the CCSP and its thousands of private sector participants.

We need assurance that TSA is properly verifying the private sector screening.

And finally, TSA must inform the Subcommittee of its plan, with milestones and deadlines, for implementing its system for screening all cargo on passenger aircraft originating at foreign airports.

If you ask why are we pushing TSA so hard? Why is Section 1602 so important? For cargo screening, the logic is clear: If we screen passengers and their checked baggage, we must screen the cargo onboard the very same aircraft.

Our commitment as Members of this Subcommittee and full Committee has never waived as we oversee the Department's implementation of the provisions contained in the 9/11 Act.

If enacted properly, fulfillment of the cargo screening mandate will be a major milestone in aviation security, building upon previous mandates to conduct 100% screening of checked bags, fortify cockpit doors, deploy federal air marshals, secure airport checkpoints and perimeters, and improve the way we check passengers against the terrorist watchlist.

100% cargo screening on passenger aircraft is the next step in improving aviation security, and the deadline is upon us.

The scope of this hearing includes reviewing the cargo screening programs and regulations TSA has established; exploring TSA's compliance and verification standards for ensuring that screening is effective; and evaluating the Department's progress in certifying new screening technologies. In addition, we want to know whether TSA has adequate resources and personnel to accomplish this mission.

As we review TSA's efforts to meet the screening deadline, we also want to understand the impact this is having on industry partners, including air carriers, freight forwarders, and manufacturers, many of whom have made significant investments in purchasing cargo screening technology and in training their employees.

GAO has completed its review of TSA's efforts and is releasing its report today. The issues raised in GAO's report bring us concern, and during the first panel of this hearing we will examine GAO's assessment and hear TSA's response.

The second panel consists of representatives from the private sector involved in cargo transportation logistics. Private sector stakeholders certified to screen and securely transport cargo are the critical lynchpin in TSA's plan to ensure 100% screening.

Finally, let me say that any statement I make about cargo screening must include a call for the Department to continue its outreach to scientists, researchers and small businesses to develop new technologies and processes to help industry reach and maintain 100% cargo screening without supply chain dislocations and delays.

I would like to thank our witnesses for coming before us today and helping us to shed light on this critical endeavor. I would like to welcome Mr. Doug Britton, General Manager for Air Cargo at TSA, who is in the audience. As we all know, Mr. Ed Kelly, former General Manager for Air Cargo, passed away last Fall. Mr. Kelly's considerable contributions to air cargo security will not be forgotten.