

October 24, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

We are writing in support of S. 1872, the TSA Modernization Act. The proposal includes several positive reforms to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) that would advance the deployment of new technologies at security checkpoints, mitigate risks to public areas at airports, and reduce delays in air travel. Additionally, the TSA Modernization Act would give TSA more tools to expand the PreCheck Program, a valuable known traveler program that increases security at the checkpoint while providing for expedited screening.

PreCheck is an expedited screening program that enables low-risk travelers to enjoy a more convenient and efficient screening experience. Travelers using the TSA PreCheck lane do not need to remove shoes, belts, light jackets, laptops or 3-1-1 liquids from their carry-on bags. PreCheck also helps TSA fulfill its mission to “protect the nation's transportation systems to ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce” as an integral component of TSA’s intelligence-driven, risk-based security approach. It is an important tool that allows the agency to segregate travelers based on a risk assessment that balances current threats and vulnerabilities.

Air travel continues to grow. In 2016, TSA screened more than 100 million more travelers than it did in 2013. In the last year, TSA has experienced two out of ten of its busiest days in the agency’s history. Since December 2013, TSA has enrolled five million travelers in the PreCheck Program. It is clear that the rate with which air travel continues to grow outpaces the PreCheck’s current rate of enrollment. The risk to aviation security continues to evolve as terrorists continue to look for new ways to carry out deadly attacks on our nation’s aviation system. New threats continue to emerge. While PreCheck does not necessarily allay these threats, it is an important tool for TSA that removes risk from aviation security and is an important part of the agency’s risk based approach to aviation security. More than ever, it is important to build on the success of the PreCheck program.

The TSA Modernization Act would meet those challenges by giving TSA new authority and tools to expand on PreCheck’s success. Rather than dictating how travelers should be vetted for the PreCheck program or how enrollment should occur, the bill would give the agency new authority to explore alternative options and expand enrollment with third parties. These new tools would allow TSA more flexibility in meeting the challenges of future threats while at the same time driving enrollment through the use of different technologies and vendors.

Expanding PreCheck is a goal for all sectors of the travel industry. It is an important tool that provides increased security and convenience. The TSA Modernization Act would build on the success of the program by giving TSA more tools to expand enrollment and meet future threats. We urge you to support enactment of the TSA Modernization Act.

Sincerely,

