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May 9, 2012

The Honorable John S. Pistole
Administrator
U.S. Transportation Security Administration
601 South 12th Street
Arlington, Virginia 20598

Dear Administrator Pistole:

I am writing to express my ongoing concerns about the effectiveness and professionalism of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). I last contacted you in November of 2011 in response to a news report featured on WSB-TV, Atlanta's local ABC affiliate, which detailed potentially lax security standards at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. Unfortunately, numerous other allegations have since surfaced across the country which indicate that a number of TSA agents lack either proper training or simple professionalism when dealing with airline passengers. Even worse, recent news reports have even alleged outright corruption within TSA's ranks. It is clear that the TSA has become nothing more than a bloated, broken bureaucracy which uses its extensive power to violate traveling Americans' civil liberties while doing little to ensure their safety.

Since the beginning of 2012, rarely has a day gone by without at least one report of over-the-top behavior by TSA agents. Some of the more noteworthy incidents include:

- A complaint that a TSA agent in Wichita, Kansas patted down a scared four-year old girl after she hugged her grandmother at the security checkpoint;
- A video shot by a fellow passenger depicting a woman in Madison, Wisconsin sobbing as she was roughly patted down;
- A complaint that TSA workers in San Diego administered an invasive pat-down to a 95-year old, wheelchair-bound Air Force veteran and his 85-year old female companion, during which they also allegedly stole \$300 in cash from his possessions;
- A complaint that a TSA agent in Kauai, Hawaii forced a nursing mother to openly demonstrate her breast milk pump in a public restroom to prove that it was real;

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- A report that a woman traveling through Dallas-Fort Worth was forced by TSA agents to walk through the full-body scanner three times, while they remarked on her “cute figure”; and
- The indictment of two current and two former TSA agents in Los Angeles stemming from allegations that they took bribes to allow narcotics to pass through security checkpoints at the Los Angeles International Airport.

As you know, these incidents are far from isolated. In past years, the media has covered an alarming number of incidents in which TSA agents have forced passengers to submit to humiliating near-strip searches, where prostheses, colostomy bags, and other personal medical items have been put on full display. But despite violation after violation of travelers’ civil liberties, TSA continues to fall short of its mission to keep us safe. Just last week, it was reported that TSA has cleared a number of U.S. airports to hire employees without giving them complete background checks. This is clearly a step in the wrong direction, and it is evidence that TSA has strayed dangerously off course.

TSA’s web site states that integrity is among the agency’s core values. However, the incidents above, as well as the countless other public complaints which are brought to light nearly every day, indicate that the agency is far more interested in patting down children and the elderly than it is in focusing on terrorists who may be attempting to board commercial flights. Unfortunately, this puts Americans at terrible risk – in fact, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently found that 17 known terrorists flew on 24 separate occasions using airports at which TSA operates its vaunted SPOT program, which uses behavior detection to single out “suspicious” passengers. Although SPOT has resulted in hundreds of innocent Americans being forced to submit to invasive, and sometimes humiliating, screening procedures, not one terrorist has been caught as a result of this costly program.

Americans can no longer tolerate the flagrant violations of their civil rights which are occurring at airports nationwide in the name of “security.” More importantly, the corruption and continued lack of security among TSA’s own personnel puts our country at extreme risk of another terrorist attack. The time has come for serious action to be taken. As such, I request your immediate resignation from the position of TSA Administrator. The safety of our country’s travelers requires drastic change, and the time for that change is now.

Sincerely,



Paul C. Broun, M.D.

Member of Congress