



PRESS RELEASE
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TSA's Lax Screening Protocols Are Jeopardizing Airport Security

This week, an airline passenger relayed how [she was able to inadvertently take a loaded gun](#) onto an airplane. In this stunning event, the woman went through TSA security, got to her gate and realized her loaded revolver was still in her purse. She has anonymously spoken out to illustrate the ease with which she was able to breach security. The American Alliance of Airport Police Officers (AAAPO) calls on TSA to commit to focusing on screening bags and passengers to ensure prohibited items do not make their way through to the sterile area. Only then can the flying public be assured of the TSA's ability to them safe.

This story is just one of numerous frightening incidents that occur on a regular basis in which passengers have been able to bring banned items past the screening area. In fact, a 2015 report from the Department of Homeland Security found that undercover investigators were able to pass through TSA checkpoints with banned weapons in a shocking 95% of trials.

While the woman in this instance claims to have made a mistake, had an individual with bad intentions been able to bring a loaded gun through to the sterile side of the airport, the consequences could have been dire.

AAAPO supports reported efforts by the new administration to cut funding for the TSA's Behavior Detection Officer (BDO) and Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) programs, both of which divert valuable screening resources. In particular, the BDO program has proven to be ineffective in that it has failed to identify one single terrorist, despite multimillions of dollars being spent on this effort.

"Over the last several years, the TSA has wasted millions of dollars and has done nothing to promote safety, so we are pleased to see the new administration taking action to rein in TSA in the areas where things are not working," said Marshall McClain, president of the Los Angeles Airport Peace Officers Association and co-founder of AAAPO. "That said, we hope the administration will support the areas that *have* proven to be effective, such as local law enforcement efforts at airports."

"TSA must go back to its core function of screening passengers and baggage and get that 100% right, instead of delving into other ancillary functions that they are clearly not prepared to be doing," said Paul Nunziato, president of the Port Authority Police Benevolent Association, and co-founder of the AAAPO. "Until they can effectively accomplish their primary mission of screening, TSA needs to stay in their lane."

The American Alliance of Airport Police Officers (AAAPO) is composed of rank-and-file airport police officers (including many dual police/aircraft rescue firefighters) who stand as the first line of defense against terrorist attacks, hijackings and other criminal activity at our nation's airports. We seek to promote security and safety for the traveling public, visitors and airport employees by highlighting best practices and identifying areas for improvement and proposed solutions for our nation's airport security deployment. AAAPO focuses on regulatory issues that promote our efforts to provide the most advanced and cutting-edge service innovations and security processes in our nation and the world. Our organization represents thousands of sworn law enforcement officers across the United States beholden only to this mission. We are unencumbered by neither political nor managerial constraints that would prevent us from promoting sound public safety policy.

The founding members of the American Alliance of Airport Police Officers are composed of numerous rank-and-file airport police officers from John F. Kennedy International Airport; LaGuardia Airport; Los Angeles International Airport; Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport; LA/Ontario International Airport; Newark Liberty International Airport; Van Nuys Airport; Stewart International Airport; and Teterboro Airport.