



PRESS RELEASE
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New Report Highlights Airport Security Gaps; AAAPO Urges Lawmakers to Fix Them

A [new report](#) by the House Homeland Security Committee finds that current vetting procedures for airport employees are insufficient. The American Alliance of Airport Police Officers (AAAPO) has long called for stronger vetting of airport employees, particularly 100% screening of all airport employees, including TSA, and encourages lawmakers to help fix these gaps by enacting legislation.

Most major airports allow employees to enter airport grounds without any screening of the employee or their belongings. This lax security posture has led to numerous instances of airport employees smuggling drugs and guns aboard aircraft and conducting other criminal activities. Without a nationwide standard for the screening of airport employees at major airports, such security gaps will continue to pose dangers to the traveling public.

As AAPO noted in its [2012 letter](#) to then TSA Administrator John Pistole, one of most effective ways to keep the public safe is by conducting total screening of every airport employee and their property. Given that passengers are already subject to these screening procedures, it is within reason to expect the same security standards for TSA and airport employees.

The world's busiest airport, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport — which served nearly 105 million passengers in 2016, has more than 63,000 employees and has a 6.8 million square-foot terminal complex — conducts full screening of employees and their property. Two other major airports, Miami International Airport and Orlando International Airport, also screen all of their employees. So, not only is employee screening at airports feasible, it is essential.

Further, the report highlights the need to reduce the number of employee access points at airports, something AAPO supports.

“This report highlights several security gaps, and I call upon lawmakers to put pen to paper and enact legislation to close these gaps,” said Marshall McClain, co-founder of the AAPO and President of the Los Angeles Airport Peace Officers Association. “We are hopeful that the new administration will re-evaluate the security posture of our nation's airports and make sure agencies like TSA are focused on their core mission of screening passengers and baggage. Noncore functions like the TSA's behavior detection officer (BDO) and Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) programs, for which its agents are not adequately trained, have been shown to not be successful, while K-9 teams should be the responsibility of airport law enforcement. Given the current heightened threat environment, we must take all reasonable and necessary steps to protect the traveling public.”

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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.