

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

1100 Connecticut Avenue NW ▪ Suite 900 ▪ Washington, DC 20036

Phone: 202-293-1550 ▪ www.fleoa.org



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April 7, 2016

Chairman John Thune
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Thune:

As you are aware, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA) is a strong supporter of S. 911, The Saracini Aviation Safety Act. This legislation would fulfill the promises made after the September 11th, 2001 attacks to secure our airlines by mandating secondary barriers aboard all aircraft.

In the aftermath of September 11th and, as pointed out by the bipartisan 9/11 Commission, those terrorist attacks were permitted to be carried out due to a "failure of imagination" among our national security apparatus. At that point no one could imagine high-jacking planes and using them as "weapons of mass destruction" against the American people.

In the years since 9/11, this failure of imagination has begun to resurface in some sectors and among certain elected officials as they fail to comprehend the need for comprehensive security efforts, involving layered approaches, across our national security structure and especially within the airline industry.

To wit, our Federal Air Marshals (FAMs) are facing staggering budget cuts and there is talk of downsizing their force structure. Our FAMs have encountered difficulty in procuring equipment and an overall apathy to their important national security mission.

As pointed out by several studies – including those by the FAA and TSA – a cockpit breach is still a reality since our FAMs are not staffed to cover every flight. Studies have shown that a breach could occur in as little as five seconds when the door is opened for the crew to transit. A flight attendant positioned in front of the door with a beverage cart is not the level of security the American people deserve. On 9/11/01, the flight attendants were targeted by the terrorists.

FLEOA points out this reality in the video "Two seconds to Breach" which depicts a less than two second breach of a cockpit with a flight attendant and beverage cart positioned as stipulated

by the airlines industry. The video is disturbing as it truly highlights how vulnerable our aircraft remain and how quickly a cockpit can be breached.

FLEOA hopes these facts prompt Congress, and specifically your Committee, to act and not endorse more study of a known threat.

The Saracini Aviation Safety Act, S.911 should move forward to become law which would better protect the American people and fulfill the promises made after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Our citizens deserve your support.

Respectfully,

Nathan Catura

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FLEOA National President

CC: Senate Committee on Science, Commerce and Transportation