

PATRICK MEEHAN
7TH DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA



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House of Representatives
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MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

April 4, 2013

John Pistole
Transportation Security Administration
601 South 12th Street, TSA-1
Arlington, VA 20598

Dear Administrator Pistole:

I am writing to express my concerns regarding the process the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) used to arrive at its announcement of March 5, 2013, that it will implement changes to the Prohibited Items List (PIL).

You announced that on April 25, 2013 folding knives with blades up to 2.36 inches long and a half inch wide would be permitted as carry-on items, in addition to sports equipment and souvenir items like miniature baseballs bats. Since then I have heard from pilots, flight attendants, law enforcement and passengers expressing their opposition to the change. They are concerned that, first, permitting weapons and items easily converted to weapons on board will remove a critical layer of our multi-layered aviation security strategy, and second, it unnecessarily increases the personal risk of injury or death to both cabin crew and passengers.

At a Transportation Security Subcommittee hearing last week, you acknowledged that you could have done a better job of engaging key stakeholders earlier in the decision process. As a member of the House Homeland Security, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Oversight and Government Reform Committees, I am writing to seek information regarding the process that led to this decision. I would appreciate a response with a detailed account of TSA's rationale, as well as your consultation with the public and the stakeholders who are on the frontlines securing our airways every day. My specific questions include but are not limited to: While I understand that TSA considers the PIL an interpretive rule exempt from requirements of notice and comment, may TSA seek comment before making such changes? Were the concerns outlined above relayed directly to the TSA, and what was TSA's response? Did TSA weigh any potential unintended consequences when drafting this change? What is the data you have cited in Homeland Security subcommittee hearings that show that allowing knives on board aircraft will make our skies safer?

I share your goal of strengthening the security of our aviation system and improving the travel experience for the flying public. I remain concerned, however, that the announced update to the PIL was done without adequate review and consultation. Thank you for your attention to this

matter. We look forward to continuing to work with you on responsible measures that strengthen and preserve the safety and security of the traveling public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrick Meehan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patrick Meehan,
Member of Congress