

**Statement of Charles M. Barclay, A.A.E.
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Before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security Travel Programs and Initiatives
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Senator Landrieu, Senator Coats, and members of the subcommittee, on behalf of the American Association of Airport Executives – the world’s largest airport organization, representing thousands of men and women across the country who manage and operate the nation’s airports – I want to thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important hearing on the Department of Homeland Security’s travel programs and initiatives. We appreciate the subcommittee’s continued focus on enhancing security, efficiency, and passenger satisfaction in air travel and look forward to working with you toward that end in the months ahead as you develop fiscal year 2013 Department of Homeland Security appropriations legislation.

Although airport operators do not have a direct role in screening passengers at airport checkpoints or in processing international air travelers, airport professionals are committed to enhancing security and efficiency at their facilities and serve as important partners to the Transportation Security Administration and Customs and Border Protection in meeting their respective missions in these areas. Airport executives remain strongly committed to working collaboratively with the federal government to expedite checkpoint screening and international facilitation, and we are encouraged by recent developments with the implementation by DHS of intelligence-driven, risk-based programs, including CBP’s Global Entry and TSA’s PreCheck trusted traveler programs.

On the international facilitation front, DHS and CBP leaders should be commended for initiating and growing the Global Entry program, which is showing demonstrable benefits at a number of international airports across the country. Continued expansion and utilization of Global Entry combined with additional CBP staffing at international airports are key to the timely processing of international travelers and ensuring that the United States remains a prime tourist and travel destination – a goal that has profound implications for the broader U.S. economy. A group of international gateway airports known as the G-10 have done extensive work on international facilitation issues and have a series of specific recommendations that I have included at the end of my testimony. I urge the subcommittee to give these recommendations careful consideration as well.

We also appreciate the Administration’s efforts to encourage international travel and tourism with recently announced initiatives, including the enhancement of the Global Entry and Visa Waiver programs. Notably, AAAE Airport Alliance Chair and Chicago Department of Aviation Commissioner Rosie Andolino has been appointed by the President to the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board and will play a key role in addressing travel facilitation, visa policy, improving the international travel experience, and other important topics as part of that group.

Domestically, airport executives are equally enthusiastic about the roll-out and announced expansion of the TSA PreCheck program. Administrator Pistole and his team deserve immense credit for their leadership in moving forward with the program and other risk-based initiatives. We also appreciate the support and funding the initiative received from this subcommittee and Congress in FY 2012, as you have highlighted previously, Madam Chair.

Airport executives anticipate great success with PreCheck and recognize that the next challenge will be moving from a largely airline-centric program in operation at merely a handful of airports to one that is operational for large numbers of travelers at airport facilities across the country. As you know, PreCheck in its current form is available only to certain elite travelers on specific airlines and participants in the CBP Global Entry program who fly on participating air carriers.

Airport executives would like to see the program expanded to accommodate as many additional, qualified travelers as possible through a community based, airport-centric approach that allows vastly larger populations of travelers to enroll and participate in PreCheck approved programs on an airport-by-airport basis and become trusted through government approved vetting protocols. While airline-based programs and Global Entry are good avenues in enrolling qualified participants, additional efforts will be needed to accommodate a broader range of qualified travelers – a goal that airports, the traveling public, and the government share.

Some have argued that the Global Entry process is sufficient in and of itself as an enrollment platform. It is worth noting, however, that only roughly one-third of the U.S. population currently holds a valid passport, based on recent statistics from the State Department. Since holding a valid passport is a requirement for Global Entry participation, some two-thirds of the American public is currently ineligible for participation through that process – a fact that highlights the need for a more robust approach.

Airports Are Eager to Partner with DHS to Expand Trusted Traveler Programs

AAAE and airports have long supported the trusted traveler concept that underlies both the Global Entry and PreCheck programs, and we are actively working with CBP and TSA in an effort to rapidly expand the population of passengers participating in these programs, which virtually everyone knowledgeable about the program acknowledges is necessary to maximize the efficiency and security benefits achieved by focusing limited DHS resources on higher risk passengers. We are also working collaboratively with DHS to address related issues affecting program expansion, including checkpoint configuration, queue management, modified LEO response expectations and public outreach and communication.

Airports long ago recognized that there was great potential value in terms of enhanced security and efficiency with the deployment of trusted traveler programs. Airports have also understood that they are uniquely situated to bring interested parties together to chart a course that would result in the successful deployment and operation of these types of programs.

Over the past decade, AAAE and individual airports have worked closely with TSA and the technology community to implement other specific trusted traveler programs, including Registered Traveler. In roughly one year, the RT program enrolled more than 250,000 travelers at 24 airports, proving the security and efficiency benefits that adoption of these programs provides. As you may know, CLEAR is actively working to build upon the earlier RT program and is currently in operation at several key airports, including Orlando and Denver with plans to expand to San Francisco and Dallas/Fort Worth later this year. AAAE is encouraged by and supportive of those initiatives and others aimed at facilitating the wide-scale utilization of the trusted traveler approach at airports across the country.

Based on our prior success with trusted traveler initiatives, AAAE has encouraged TSA and CBP to utilize community based, airport-centric enrollment options to facilitate the flow of additional information to the agencies on a significantly expanded number of low-risk passengers for eligibility in the PreCheck and Global Entry programs. In addition to providing the volume of

passengers necessary for TSA and CBP to realize the operational efficiencies for which the programs are designed, airport specific, public enrollment options will allow airport operators to proactively and directly participate in the risk-based programs that they support.

By playing such a key role, airport operators will also benefit from local implementation of national programs that enhance security. Airport involvement will also bolster the relationship between airport operators and local DHS staff, increase affinity to airports, and assist DHS in reducing the complexity while enhancing the customer experience at passenger screening checkpoints and international arrivals areas. The success of DHS' efforts to advance intelligence driven risk-based security approaches is a top priority for AAAE and its airport leadership.

Airports are confident that in partnership with TSA and CBP they can help facilitate the deployment of robust trusted/known traveler programs that focus on enhanced security above all else in addition to expediting the travel experience. These two pillars are the primary values that air travelers want and that each of you as policymakers rightly will demand. By bringing efficiency back into the nation's airport screening checkpoints and the international facilitation process, TSA screeners and CBP personnel will be able to better focus their limited resources on the critical task of providing more rigorous screening to individuals about whom we know less than those who use the system the most and have voluntarily submitted background information for extensive vetting and clearance.

***Recommendation:** In addition to providing adequate funding to support the Global Entry and PreCheck programs in FY 2013, AAAE recommends that the subcommittee and Congress encourage CBP and TSA to continue working with airports to expand these critical trusted traveler programs to additional populations and airport facilities through community-based, airport-centric enrollment approaches.*

TSA Efforts to Upgrade Airport Baggage Systems Must Continue With Federal Support

In addition to the wide-scale deployment of trusted traveler programs, efforts to upgrade outdated and inefficiency technology to screen checked baggage for explosives must continue with federal support if we are to successfully reduce lines and headaches for passengers at the nation's airports. While good progress has been made over the past decade in upgrading checked baggage systems at airports of all sizes thanks to the good work of this subcommittee and Congress, a number of airports remain in need of improved, in-line baggage screening systems.

Adding to the complexity of the ongoing problem is the fact that much of the explosives detection (EDS) equipment placed in airports to screen checked baggage in the wake of the 9/11 attacks is at or near the end of its useful life, necessitating a costly recapitalization. In an effort to address this issue, the Administration in fiscal year 2012 requested and Congress granted to the TSA limited flexibility to utilize for the purchase of EDS equipment funds designated under permanent law for facility modification at airports to accommodate optimal EDS solutions. The FY 2013 budget requests similar authority for TSA.

While airports recognize and support efforts to purchase necessary equipment, we are concerned that resources intended to help make necessary facility modifications at airports to accommodate optimal EDS solutions – the precise purpose of the Aviation Security Capital Fund – are being diverted to pay for equipment. Since terminal modifications are necessary in most instances to install updated EDS equipment, diverting funding from the Aviation Security Capital Fund could stall necessary projects at airports as has been the case in the past. Many airports simply don't

have funding readily available for costly terminal modifications and must rely on the federal government to meet its obligations in this area.

Recommendation: Congress should provide TSA with the resources it needs to purchase EDS equipment and reject requests to divert resources from the Aviation Security Capital Fund designated for airport infrastructure upgrades for purposes beyond the scope of current law. As past experiences with technology deployment in airports prove, important projects can become stalled or slow significantly in instances where resources are not available for necessary airport facility upgrades. AAE further asks that Congress ensure the agency pays for all appropriate costs associated with EDS installation projects, including “bricks and mortar” infrastructure upgrades necessary to accommodate mandated screening systems.

TSA Must Remain Focused on Its Primary Mission of Passenger and Baggage Screening

While not the prime focus of today’s hearing, we also wanted to bring to the subcommittee’s attention our concern with proposals that continue to emerge to expand TSA’s authority beyond its primary mission of passenger and baggage screening. Expanding the agencies reach and responsibilities – particularly to areas already in capable local hands – threatens to dilute already scarce resources.

As you know, airports play a critical role in aviation security, serving as an important partner to TSA in helping the agency meet its core mission of passenger and baggage screening. The significant changes that have taken place in airports over the past decade with the creation of the TSA and its assumption of all screening duties have been aided dramatically by the work of the airport community, and we will serve as a critical local partner to the agency as it continually modifies its operations, including some of the risk-based security initiatives that are under discussion today.

In addition to partnering with TSA to meet its core mission, airports as public entities provide a critical local layer of security, performing a number of inherently local security-related functions at their facilities, including incident response and management, perimeter security, employee vetting and credentialing, access control, infrastructure and operations planning, and local law enforcement functions. These important duties have long been local responsibilities that have been performed by local authorities in accordance with federal standards and subject to federal oversight. Airport operators meet their security-related obligations with a sharp focus on the need to protect public safety, which remains one of their fundamental missions. The professionals who perform these duties at airports are highly trained and have the first responder authorities and responsibilities that we all value immensely.

Recommendation: From a security and resource perspective, it is critical that inherently local security functions – including incident response and management, perimeter security, employee vetting and credentialing, access control, infrastructure and operations planning and local law enforcement – remain local with federal oversight and backed by federal resources when appropriate. We urge the subcommittee and Congress to reject efforts to federalize local security functions at airports.

Airport Credentialing and Access Control Should Remain With Local Airport Control

One area of particular concern for airport executives that we are compelled to highlight for the subcommittee is an ongoing effort to “harmonize” or “modernize” various aspects of existing transportation worker vetting programs. In the aviation environment, the background check process for workers operates successfully as a federal/local partnership with the federal

government holding sole responsibility for security threat assessments and other necessary government checks for prospective workers and with local airport authorities operating and managing enrollment, credentialing, badging, criminal history background check adjudication and access control systems in accordance with strict federal standards.

The current system for aviation ensures the highest level of security by combining the unique local experience, expertise, and knowledge that exists at individual airports with federal standardization, federal oversight, and federal vetting assets. Local involvement provides a critical layer of security and gives airports the operational control they require to ensure that qualified employees receive the credentials they need to work in the airport environment.

In contrast to the long-standing locally controlled credentialing and access control apparatus that exists in the aviation environment, the credentialing/access control system in place in the maritime environment with the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program is relatively new. Under the TWIC model, the federal government or its contractors are responsible for virtually all aspects of the process, including worker enrollment, applicant vetting, credential issuance and some elements of access control. In our view, the early results of TWIC have been uneven at best despite hundreds of millions of dollars in federal investments. The existing system in aviation operates at no cost to the federal government.

Some have suggested abandoning the successful local systems and processes already in place at airports with badging and access control to expand TSA and the federal government's control over more of the process as is the case with TWIC in the maritime environment. Airport executives oppose any move to shift any additional functions in aviation to the federal government and believe that such a move would diminish security by reducing or eliminating a critical, extra layer of security that is already in place in airports and absent with the TWIC approach.

Pursuing such an approach would scuttle a successful local/federal model that has worked well for decades, eliminate local operational control, stymie significant efforts already under way at airports across the country to upgrade and biometrically enable existing airport badging and access control systems, and significantly increase costs to the aviation industry with no demonstrable security benefit.

While the desire to centralize and federalize the process for all transportation worker vetting programs in the name of modernization or harmonization may be understandable from the federal government's perspective, airport executives are concerned about federal intrusion into existing processes that have worked well for decades. Airports are also very concerned about having to help foot the bill for these initiatives – estimated at \$633 million through 2025 in appropriations and new fees as part of the TTAC Infrastructure Modernization (TIM) program – for changes that provide them with no demonstrable security or operational benefit. The current system in aviation operates efficiently and effectively at a fraction of the cost of other transportation vetting programs and at no cost to the federal government. We want to ensure that remains the case.

Recommendation: *TSA can and should continue with its efforts to modernize and harmonize its internal vetting programs without the need to expand the federal government's responsibilities to include credentialing and access control in the aviation environment. As the subcommittee and Congress consider the TIM program, we urge you to exempt aviation from any new fees or requirements in recognition of the existing, successful, locally controlled credentialing and*

access control model and the significant investments that have been made locally over the years to those systems. Efforts to federalize any of these processes or functions are unnecessary and wasteful and should be rejected.

Conclusion

With federal resources under severe constraint and with more than 700 million passengers traveling through the U.S. aviation system each year – a number that is expected to grow significantly in the years ahead – it is imperative that TSA remain focused on its primary mission of passenger and baggage screening while pursuing risk-based approaches to enhance security and efficiency. AAAE and airport executives are encouraged by recent efforts to move forward with trusted traveler programs with Global Entry and PreCheck and are eager to partner with CBP and TSA to expand those programs to additional populations and airports through community based, airport-centric approaches.

I appreciated the opportunity to be here today and look forward to any questions you have.

G-10 Airports Coalition

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Facilitation Talking Points

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Efficient facilitation of internationally arriving travelers at the gateway airports is vital to ensuring the continued growth of the U.S. economy. According to U.S. Travel Association, improving the inbound air travel experience could add \$85 billion in air traveler spending which would support 900,000 jobs nationally. Doubling spending by visitors from Brazil, China and India specifically could result in an additional \$15 billion to the U.S. economy, creating another 105,000 jobs in the travel and tourism industries. The following recommendations to CBP and DOS would significantly improve the international traveler experience, encouraging the continued growth of tourism (business, medical, academic and leisure) to the U.S.

CBP Issues

Airport Processing Wait Time

- Adopt a 30 minute goal of processing all international arriving passengers through Primary Passport Control, which would illustrate the need for additional offers, revised scheduling and queue management and/or new technology/programs.
 - 80% of all passengers by end of 2012, 90% by end of 2013, 100% by end of 2014.
- Provide all G-10 airports with daily actual wait times logged per FIS, for greater transparency and communication, as well as the ability to monitor progress towards a goal.

Airport Staffing Levels

- Provide additional staffing to provide adequate service to accommodate the growing number of international passengers
- Institute a Staffing Model/Standard to increase efficiency of operations and scheduling at current levels to maximize the number of officers in booths during peak periods, effectively reducing wait times for passengers.

Global Entry Program (GE)

- Negotiate International Reciprocal Agreements to increase the number of eligible travelers in the Global Entry Program. The GE program works to reduce overall wait times for arriving passengers by reducing the number of passengers needing to be processed by an officer.
- Provide G-10 airports with GE data relative to numbers of enrollments and kiosk usage (broken down by US citizens and foreign nationals) nationally and in our respective airports to gauge the effectiveness of promotional efforts and media outreach.

User Fees

- Funds generated (\$55 million) from the elimination of the user fee exemption for Mexico/Canada/Caribbean should be directly applied to increase resources/staff for airport passenger processing.
- Consolidate the CBP user fees, currently at \$17.50 for Customs, Immigration and USDA inspection services per arriving international passenger, into one fee and increase to a level that reflects 50% of CBP personnel costs (currently user fees account for 37% of CBP's staffing budget of \$2.98 billion), with the additional revenue to be used to expand CBP staffing at U.S. international gateway airports.

In-Transit Visa Passengers

- Institute a pilot program to provide easier processing for in-transit (international-to-international connecting) passengers at the G-10 airports. This would provide a better service to passengers - guaranteeing connections, and would eliminate these travelers from the general processing queue.

Visa (DOS) Issues

- Reduce the time of visa processing for all applicants (especially China and Brazil). Extended wait times (avg. 50 days in Brazil) hinder the ability for travelers to enter the U.S., which results in billions of \$ lost. The average international visitor spends \$4,000 in the U.S. per visit.
- Implement a pilot to waive in-person interviews for certain low-risk applicants (visa renewals, full-time students, etc.). The elimination of unnecessary interviews would allow officers to put greater focus on high-risk or first-time applicants and ease the burden for legitimate travelers to the U.S.
- Expansion of the Visa Waiver Program to key target countries such as Brazil, Argentina and Chile, would significantly increase business and tourism to the U.S. and deploy consular officers to high-risk/volume countries.
- Extend the duration of visas issued to Chinese nationals, from the current one-year period to a longer period (two, five or ten years). This would significantly reduce the number of travelers re-applying at the limited number of Embassies/Consulates in China. While DOS cites reciprocity and lack of repatriation as reasons, the Secretary of State has the authority under the Immigration and Nationality Act.