

On the evening of February 20, 2011, I departed to the airport with a sense of relief because I was returning to the important work of the Alaskan Legislature. Upon entering the security area of Seattle Tacoma's airport with my fellow passengers, I was upbeat. I had blocked from my mind the horror of my previous experience with TSA's new security policies three months earlier. Unfortunately, after the pleasant TSA agent checked my ticket and Driver's license, I found myself being directed to the airport's full-body image scanning machine. The horror experience began again. A female agent had placed herself in such a way that she blocked my passage causing me to feel confined, scared and threatened. I knew from my previous experience that the scanned image would display the irregularity from my mastectomy due to breast cancer. In order to resume my legislative duties, I would have to tolerate the invasive, probing hands of a stranger over my body.

Facing the TSA agent, memories of violation would consume my thoughts as my role as a public servant and elected representative disappeared. The TSA agent began to tell me what would soon happen regarding where she was going to touch me and the force-forgotten memory of the previous intensive physical search returned. I also remembered that my husband and I had spoken about what we would do if I found myself having to experience the intrusive policies again. It would be difficult, but I would never have to submit to that horror again! I had the choice to say, "No." This twisted policy and its traumatic results did not have to be the price of returning to Juneau or any other Alaskan community! I looked at the TSA agent and said, "No."

Once I uttered that powerful word, the process began that led to being encircled by more and more TSA agents, police, airline and airport employees. This act should have been very intimidating because of their positions of authority and the difference in height between me and those surrounding me. I listened to them while feeling proud that I was actively protecting myself. It was going to be difficult-but I believed I could have the strength to keep my right to refuse the mandatory, invasive procedure in order to fly.

As the TSA agents and other airport personnel repeatedly 'explained' why I must submit to being felt up, a feeling of peace grew with my repetitious response, "No. I will not be physically touched. I will leave the airport. There will be another way to return to the State House in Juneau."

For nearly fifty years I've fought for the rights of abuse survivors and it is this population that are the most harmed by unwanted physical touch. My wonderful state of Alaska depends on air flight as a mandatory means of transportation, both intra and interstate of our vast land. We also sadly rank first in the nation for both men and women who have been abused. Logic suggests that the recent introduction of the full body scan (itself a potentially harmful source of radiation) is the very last thing a molested person could deal with because it would result in yet more trauma from the groping of strangers. Most tragic of these policies are the silent masses that are traumatized and dishonored at the hands of their own government in the name of 'safety' policies. As a state lawmaker, I believe in government. I believe government must constantly protect the welfare and improve the wellbeing of its citizens. We can do better, we

the people must demand that our government meets its own moral and constitutional obligations for safety while maintaining the virtues of Democracy.

Part II.

My return trip to Juneau, Alaska after the February 20, 2011 incident required me to use a rental car, a small plane and the Alaska Marine Highway. It felt like a trip of pride as well. The TSA's threat of, "Do you want to fly?" means something very different to Alaskans. Flying in Alaska is not a choice, but a necessity. The freedom to travel should never come at the price of basic human dignity and pride.

I have received many emails from people across the country in support of my stance against the new TSA policies as well as personal stories of re-victimization they experienced. The following reflects the emails my office received during just the first three days after I declined TSA's offer of secondary screening.

From 30 states, a total of 402 emails:

Alaska: 111	Arizona: 10	California: 12
Colorado: 12	Connecticut: 4	Washington D.C.: 2
Florida: 3	Georgia: 5	Idaho: 2
Hawaii: 3	Illinois: 3	Indiana: 3
Kentucky: 3	Kansas: 2	Massachusetts: 6
Missouri: 5	Montana: 1	Mississippi: 5
North Carolina: 3	New Jersey: 3	Nevada: 2
New York: 3	Ohio: 3	Oregon: 3
Pennsylvania: 1	Tennessee: 1	Texas: 5
Virginia: 3	Washington: 38	Wisconsin: 1
Canada: 1	Europe: 1	Unknown: 46

Additional comments were discovered by Rep. Cissna on FaceBook: 500

These emails were then catalogued by subject and the following issues were mentioned:

TSA's Policies were Ineffective: 26

Other/Better Methodology was Available: 10

Concern for Health Regarding the Scanner: 10
TSA's Policies Considered Bullying: 6
TSA's Policies Considered Humiliating/Indecent: 54
TSA's Policies were Illegal Intrusion: 26

The emails were also sorted by reason given for further scanning:

Mastectomy: Mother 5; Self 19; Wife 4
Implant/prosthetic: Spouse 2; Self 16; Co-Worker 1
Autistic son: 2
Rape/Assault Survivor: 9

Professions or trades specifically mentioned we heard from:

Physician: 2
Airline Pilot: 4
USMC Veteran: 4
USAF Major (Ret): 1
Military: 1
Military Reserves: 2
Airline: 1
Law Enforcement Officer: 1
Medical Nurse: 1
Air Force: 1
Travel for Work: 3
Railroad Personnel: 2
High Security Clearance (Vet): 1

The breakdown with gender specifically mentioned showed approximately 100 men, 93 Women and 9 of unknown gender contacted our office in the first three days.

The ages of who sent emails were between 20 years to 72 year old.

People that stopped flying because of TSA's scanning machines: 28

Below are some of the emails that I have received. They have been sanitized to preserve their privacy.

"I had two very aggressive TSA officers insist that they were going to rifle through my bandages to look for explosives. I finally just pulled up my shirt and let them look at the tubes, bandages and blood collectors, and felt completely humiliated. It had been less than a week since my double mastectomy and removal of my ovaries, (in fact I still had drains in, and my hospital ID bracelet on my wrist) and I was not in the mood for any of it. I just wanted to get home, as I was in soooo much pain from all of the traveling."

This was two years ago - before the new enhanced 'pat-downs.'"

Dr. Steven Aufrecht: "But why are the normal TSA workers willing to rub their hands in the groins and on the breasts of elderly women and men who clearly are not terrorists? I suspect that for the normally non-abuser TSA employee, the [Stanford Prison Experiment](#) is relevant here."

"In that controversial experiment, Dr. Philip Zimbardo set up a mock prison using Stanford students who had been chosen because of their emotional and psychological stability. They were divided into prisoners and guards. They very quickly got into their roles and the guards were soon abusing the prisoners so that six days into the two week experiment it had to be called off. Dr. Zimbardo explains what happened - with footage of the experiment - in the YouTube video I found posted by [mr1001nights](#)."

"I'd note there has been a lot of criticism about the ethics of this experiment which is addressed in the [Stanford Prison Experiment link](#)."

"The [Milgram experiment](#) have a similar result - where people off the street are found to give greater and greater electric shocks (or so they think) to learners who miss the questions. Unlike in the Stanford experiment, Milgram's 'learners' were actors who were not actually being shocked. But Milgram's experiment demonstrated how normal people would stray way beyond the bounds of appropriate behavior if told to do so by an authority. [YouTube has footage of the Milgram experiments too](#)."

"I think the TSA workers have similarly strayed way beyond acceptable behavior in their intrusive pat-downs of people who have absolutely nothing to link them to terrorism except that their artificial hips set off the metal detector or their mastectomies looked strange in the scanner."

Back in my office I read and am including parts of some of the emails:

"Thank you for standing up for your privacy rights and those of other women" - Daughter of a Breast Cancer Victim, Connecticut

"I would like to visit Alaska this year, but at this time I decline to fly. Please do what you can to push back against the TSA, and to beat back this obtrusive and unconstitutional procedure"
Colorado

"How can any legislator in any state or any of our US Senators and Congressional members allow this stupidity to continue?" Fairbanks, Alaska

"With two titanium knee joints, I am a 'victim' every time I fly, which has been four to eight times a month" unknown

"Good for you standing up against the thugs at TSA!" Juneau, Alaska

"It's not acceptable, it simply defies common human decency." Seattle, Washington

"I have two young children who should never be touched as these TSA people touch them!"
Juneau, Alaska

"I regret for you what must surely have been an embarrassing and upsetting incident; not to mention the publication of your personal health matters! But that is what we all face these days." North Carolina

"I was always told that the terrorists only won if they forced us to change the way we live and altered the freedoms Americans enjoy. What goes on today in US airports leads me to believe they won. By the way, I am a retired US Air Force Master Sergeant that was once cleared to work on Air Force One. Yep. I'm a real threat." Washington State

"I'm an Oregon conservative and registered nurse who wants to thank you for standing up to TSA. . . However, you may not be aware that the scanning you underwent is dangerous to your health." Oregon

"If more of us refused and chose other forms of transportation, this rubbish would end. Thanks for standing up for your rights and dignity and by doing so, the rights and dignity not only of Alaskans but of all Americans." Arizona

"It's a very sad state of affairs we have reached when TSA has to subject a traveler to a pat down because the nude-o-scope reveals that the passenger had major surgery." New Jersey

"It is utterly obscene that so many elderly, disabled and medically challenged people are disproportionately subjected to repeated enhanced physical searches at the hands of this out of control and wasteful government agency. It is my fervent hope that there are more people like you who are willing to step up and say "enough is enough". Florida

"I am a retired law enforcement officer with both domestic and foreign experience. I find these procedures to be largely a waste of resources and time." unknown

"For many of us who travel frequently this so-called "Security Theater" has finally gone too far. . . This should be a bipartisan issue on which we can agree as Americans that these latest search "procedures" have gone too far, from the X-Ray scanners to the euphemistically and inaccurately named "pat-downs," which in truth are groping and invasive searches to which my wife and I have already been subjected a total of three times in 2011, including once each at SEA-TAC." unknown

"Is there ANYTHING myself, friends, family, and colleagues can do to stop this disgusting intrusion into our personal privacy?" unknown

"American women such as myself, and I am 60 years of age, need a spokeswoman to cut off the balls of the TSA and DHS. I'm not asking you to do it single-handedly, but your sisters across the country are going to stand with you if you decide to go viral on all the news media with the truth about the outrageous procedures which made you cancel your flight plans." unknown

"I live in California and am almost embarrassed to have my daughters fly in to visit us from Kansas. By simply declining the search you have taken a stand and I for one appreciate it."
California

"My wife is now disabled and has had neck surgery. As a result, she has plates and screws in her neck. We are pretty sure that they would want to do an enhanced pat-down screening as a result of her medical situation. So. . .we have decided to not fly anymore. I just can't believe that our country has come to this. It is so degrading, humiliating, and really unnecessary. Bless you and take good care." unknown

"I just made myself space out and pretend I was on another planet while having this woman poke in my crotch from front and back, run circles with her hands around both of my breasts, make me lift my blouse so she could put her hands inside my waistband. . . I traveled through several airports in Europe all through the month of October and not once did I have to endure this humiliating experience." unknown

"[After having a bad experience with TSA, she writes] That next month, I showed up to fly, and stripped down to nothing but my speedo swimsuit at 6 am so they could get a better look. NEVER regretted my decision! I am a survivor of cancer and sexual abuse, and being touched sends me to the deep end." unknown

"You should be ashamed of yourself and the way you represent the State of Alaska." unknown and only negative email received

"I travel with a co-worker with a prosthetic leg, he experiences similar personal invasion and loathes the experience." Georgia

"When I (a chubby grandmother) have been pulled out for extra observation it burns me up."
Unknown

"Like you, I have decided not to endure this anymore. If I never fly again, so be it." Kentucky

"My husband has an artificial hip, carries a card stating such, but every time he flies the TSA attendant says "I'm not interested in your card, please step over here for a more thorough search." He has to unbutton his slacks and turn the waist band out and the attendant runs his hands around his waist and down his groin on both sides, and down the insides of his legs. My husband is 71 yrs. old." Washington

"Our family is in [the prosthetic business]. . . Due to HIPPA regulations, we could lose our

Medicare accreditation if we were to tell 'anyone' the private medical diagnosis of a client. So why is TSA allowed to "out" passengers' medical conditions for all the world to hear and know about?" unknown

"I have a leg amputation . . . I had a female TSA agent literally shove her hand aggressively up between my legs. I am not a person who has a big personal space issue, but this went way beyond anything decent. If I had been outside the airport I could have had this woman arrested. I was so shaken that I asked the TSA supervisor if this was standard procedure. I was given a very abrupt "yes" and sent on my way." unknown

"Thanks for your willingness to stand up against the charade." Virginia

"Since Gov. Parnell is so keen on thumbing his nose at the federal government over the health care law perhaps you could introduce a resolution or bill urging him to do the same over the TSA:s invasive and probably unconstitutional procedures." unknown

"I am a rape survivor and have PTSD and can't imagine what kind of state I might be in when groped by these thugs." unknown

Meanwhile there was a lively forum at flyertalk.com Here's a post that apparently was also sent to Rep. Cissna:

"Dear Rep. Cissna,"

"I wish to congratulate you on your bold stand against the TSA at SEA as recently reported in the Seattle press. Please know that a number of your fellow Americans stand behind you, and we, too, are tired of the ongoing abuse leveled by this agency. No one wants less security. What we do want is security that is safe, sane, effective, respectful, and doesn't make people like Michael Cherthoff richer. Instead what we have at the hands of the TSA are expensive machines that can't detect guns (recently reported in Dallas), thieves who have stolen a combined total of nearly \$300,000 from innocent travelers (Newark and New York - JFK), and people who are literally sticking their hands in our pants. The images created by the full body scanners would make decent people blush, and as you are unfortunately aware do not protect anyone from an invasive body search demanded under threat of authority. I wish you good health, and as a fellow Democrat hope for your continued political success."

The Alaska State House passed a "Sense of the House" resolution on February 24th, while I was in transit to the Capitol by ferry. The resolution was offered by Rep. Chris Tuck:

His introduction was:

“Last weekend the long-time member of this body from District 22 chose respect. She stood up for her rights, her sense of decency, and her prior commitments to herself at the Seattle airport by not submitting to an intrusive search of her body.”

The Sense of the House that passed stated:

"It is the Sense of the House that efficient travel is a cornerstone of the economy and our quality of life, especially in Alaska, and that no one should have to sacrifice their dignity in order to travel."

There are three basic questions that I have developed to discuss with TSA:

1. With the present methods of airline screening, are all passengers suspect without more screening than mechanical, or hand searches to insure airline safety?
2. Are the threats to airline safety as severe as we are told?
3. Are there methods of securing planes that are as effective as what we have now that do not involve protocols whose outcomes humiliate many of the responsible and safe American travelers being scanned?

We have progressed from being able to physically see our friends coming off a plane, to security zones just for passengers. After the shoe bomber, everyone was required to remove their shoes. After the underwear bomber, they installed the strip-search scanners and the ‘enhanced pat-down.’ Other countries use different methodology with higher effectiveness without an invasive element. These countries rely on passenger non-racial and cultural profiling. The airport security divisions gather information about passengers by looking for factors that raise suspicions.

The TSA has a rule oriented system that does not receive the critical oversight to protect American citizens from poorly developed process. Present rules cannot be deviated from judging all passengers as threats. So we won’t be prepared for the next twist until it’s been tried - hopefully unsuccessfully.

We tolerate about 40,000 automobile related deaths a year, about 360,000 deaths since 9/11. We tolerate about 3,000 firearm related deaths a year, about 247,000 since 9/11. We tolerate about 5,000 work related deaths a year, about 47,000 since 9/11. Yet, we tolerate zero deaths from potential terrorists blowing up airplanes.

We accept risk in all other aspects of our lives, (people can buy guns with no questions asked at gun shows for example), but when it comes to airplanes we hire people to humiliate elderly women by touching their breasts and crotches to prevent terrorism. Do these ‘procedures’ make us safer?

The Constitutional standard of 'reasonable search" is not being followed.

**STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE**

2011

Source
HCR 8

**Legislative
Resolve No.**
4



Urging the Transportation Security Administration to reconsider its use of pat-down search procedures adopted on October 28, 2010, and to conduct pat-down searches using less invasive but equally effective procedures; and urging the United States Congress to exercise greater oversight of the Transportation Security Administration.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS efficient air travel is a cornerstone of Alaska's economy and quality of life, and no one should have to sacrifice his or her dignity in order to travel; and

WHEREAS many Alaskans can access urban centers only by air travel; and

WHEREAS Alaska is not adjacent to any other state, and those who want to travel by land to another state must travel through another country, which requires a passport; and

WHEREAS, as a result of a change in nationwide policy, the Transportation Security Administration, on October 28, 2010, began implementing new pat-down procedures that involve a more intrusive, full-body search, during which Transportation Security Administration personnel make inappropriate physical contact with sensitive or private areas of the body; and

WHEREAS the Transportation Security Administration is an agency of the federal government charged with protecting the nation's transportation systems to ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce; and

WHEREAS the Transportation Security Administration is responsible for screening airline passengers and personnel for weapons, explosives, and other contraband that pose a threat to airport security and is responsible for the safety of the general public; and

WHEREAS current Transportation Security Administration screening policy involves airline passengers and personnel passing through advanced-image technology scanners or undergoing a pat-down search administered by Transportation Security Administration employees, or both; and

WHEREAS the advanced-image technology scanners used by the Transportation Security Administration capture images that depict the shape and outline of a person's full body as it appears underneath the person's clothing; and

WHEREAS, finding advanced-image technology scanners to be overly invasive, many airline passengers and personnel choose the option of undergoing a pat-down search; and

WHEREAS the new procedures are offensive and humiliating to many individuals on whom they are imposed and are egregious whether imposed in public or private; and

WHEREAS, for survivors of physical and sexual abuse, invasive physical searches may cause revictimization; and

WHEREAS, for individuals with medical conditions, including those with prosthetics, joint replacements, drainage tubes, pacemakers, or other physical evidence related to a medical condition, invasive physical searches may be particularly traumatic and demeaning, may cause physical harm, and may endanger the person's health; and

WHEREAS reports have indicated that, in some instances, overzealous Transportation Security Administration employees have carried out the new procedures in a manner sufficiently aggressive to rise to the level of an inappropriate invasion of personal privacy from which an individual would ordinarily be protected under the laws of Alaska; and

WHEREAS travelers who refuse the new screening procedures are not free to proceed beyond security checkpoints to continue their travel; and

WHEREAS encouraging travel by ensuring the right of individuals to move about

without fear of undue invasions of privacy is essential to preserving a free society, safeguarding the flow of commerce, and promoting and sustaining goodwill among nations; and

WHEREAS the advanced-image technology scanners and new pat-down search procedures may discourage air travel, causing significant economic and personal hardship to Alaskans;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Transportation Security Administration to reconsider the new pat-down search procedures that were adopted on October 28, 2010, and adopt less invasive but equally effective procedures; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States Congress to exercise a greater degree of oversight of the Transportation Security Administration, including investigation of policies that may violate the privacy rights of law-abiding individuals and a scientific study of the harmful effects of full-body scanning.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Janet A. Napolitano, United States Secretary of Homeland Security; the Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable John S. Pistole, Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.