

# TSA OVERSIGHT: EXAMINING THE SCREENING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
OF THE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT  
AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

JANUARY 14, 2014

**Serial No. 113-95**

Printed for the use of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.fdsys.gov>  
<http://www.house.gov/reform>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

87-353 PDF

WASHINGTON : 2014

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## **TSA OVERSIGHT: EXAMINING THE SCREENING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

**Tuesday, January 14, 2014,**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,  
*Washington, D.C.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:08 a.m. in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, the Honorable John L. Mica [chairman of the subcommittee], presiding.

Present: Representatives Mica, Turner, Amash, Meadows and Connolly.

Staff Present: Will L. Boyington, Majority Press Assistant; Daniel Bucheli, Majority Assistant Clerk; John Cuaderes, Majority Deputy Staff Director; Linda Good, Majority Chief Clerk; Mitchell S. Kominsky, Majority Counsel; Eric Cho, Majority Detailee; Jaron Bourke, Minority Director of Administration; Devon Hill, Minority Research Assistant; and Julia Krieger, Minority New Media Press Secretary.

Mr. MICA. Good morning, everyone.

Welcome to the Subcommittee on Government Operations' hearing this morning. The title of today's hearing is "TSA Oversight: Examining the Screening Partnership Program."

We are pleased to have several members join us today.

The order of business will be, first of all, we will have opening statements from any of the members attending. I will recognize Mr. Connolly in just a few minutes. Then we will turn to our panel of witnesses. We will hear from them and then go through a series of questions to the panel and witnesses who are participating today.

Mr. Issa always starts off with a colloquy that states how important our responsibility is which is to conduct oversight. We are the stewards of taxpayer dollars. We created these programs through legislation like TSA and from time to time, we have a responsibility to conduct oversight to make certain they are run as efficiently, economically and effectively as possible. That is the purpose of our being here today.

I have an opening statement the staff wrote and will insert that as part of the record.

Mr. MICA. I wrote my own at 3:00 a.m. this morning. It is a bit different but I had some time to think about it and I thought I would give my commentary.

First, I would say to Mr. Connolly, Mr. Meadows and the staff, in the last few weeks TSA has been fairly cooperative and provided

us with more information than we received in the past, and I appreciate the working relationship.

Other than that, the reason we are here is, as I mentioned to Mr. Meadows and Mr. Connolly, I was one of the people who helped create TSA. I actually picked the name myself and with other members of Congress, we enacted the legislation pretty rapidly after the events of 9/11. President Bush wanted the legislation on his desk by Thanksgiving and we did deliver it.

The country had been hit by the most significant terrorist attack since probably World War II when they struck us at Pearl Harbor. We needed to act, we needed an effective transportation security operation, and we tried to do that.

We made some mistakes and have tried to correct them. We have worked with a number of administrators and some outstanding people. I remember Michael Jackson, for example. We also lost jurisdiction for sometime. We started in Transportation and shifted the TSA over to Homeland Security. I think part of the problem is that it is an agency with 200,000 and some personnel. Combining 22 agencies and make it work does not always work well.

That being said, when we started to change the way we screen passengers, we never intended TSA to operate aviation passenger screening forever. As a compromise, we set up five initial airports with private screening under federal supervision.

Let me say at this juncture, I have never advocated going back to having the airlines do that or take away the government's responsibility. I think it is important that we maintain that. If you analyze the events of 2001 and the terrorist attack, it was the government that failed, not the private screening.

The government failed for several years to put in place standards for screening. The government failed for several years to put in rules governing what could be taken on a plane. For example, box cutters were not prohibited at that time, all of which led to the events of September 11.

When we set up the screening program, we had all federal screening for most of the airports. For the first two years, we initially created five airports, one in each size category, with private screening under federal supervision. We tested the performance of the two models after some two years and the GAO, which independently looked at them, came up with a report. The report said that private screening under federal supervision performed statistically significantly better—not my words, their words.

After that, as TSA saw applications for privatization, they began a campaign to make certain that airports did not opt out. They had a very hostile attitude toward taking that option which intimidated some of the airports right up to several years ago when one of my airports, the Sanford Airport, said they had enough of the way TSA was operating and wanted to opt out.

I got a call from the airport director who said he was never so disgusted. They tried to intimidate him, they were rude, offensive and threatening which prompted me to get re-engaged. Here we are today as a result of TSA's action, not mine.

I worked with other members when we passed the FAA reauthorization bill. President Obama signed it into law February two years ago next month. In that bill we went from the language in the

original law that said an airport can submit an application to opt out and TSA may accept it to language which said "TSA shall accept the application to opt out." Members of Congress, like myself and others, were frustrated with what was going on.

That was two years ago. Here we are at this oversight hearing this morning. Basically what happened in those two years is TSA has performed a clever, slow roll out of implementation of the provisions we requested. In fact, the January 2013 TSA report, "Screening Partnership Annual Report," says none of the three major goals towards implementing private screening were completed. That is their report, all top priorities and none of them were met.

As a result of this hearing, my airport which has been waiting now some two years finally got notification on Friday or some time soon that they are moving forward with an RFP which is almost two years later. That is not what we intended and that is not why we are here.

I might also say for the record that the United States is now one of the very few western countries with an all Federal passenger screening system. Bulgaria, Romania and Poland are a few of the western states that keep an all government force in place. Almost every other nation, including those hit hard by terrorist threats—Israel and the U.K.—use private screening under federal supervision which is the model we anticipated would be in place by now.

Unfortunately, TSA is both regulator, administrator, operator, auditor and contractor. That creates a conflict and there have been recent articles saying that model needs to be changed. I believe that TSA should set the rules, conduct the audits and get out of the personnel business.

The agency has grown from 16,500 screeners after 9/11 to 66,000 employees, 51,000 screeners and 15,000 administrative personnel. The personnel work hard and there are some very dedicated screeners and employees. They make, on average, \$38,000 apiece. We spend \$1.1 billion on 15,000 administrators and spend \$1.9 billion on the rest of the 51,000 personnel. Something is wrong in those numbers.

We only have about 457 airports. If you have 15,000 administrators—do the math—that means you have 30 administrators for every airport in the country. Thirty-five airports handle 75 percent of the passengers. There obviously is something wrong in our distribution of administration funding.

Also, most of the reports—I have just a few of them here—also prompted us to put into law the requirement they shall accept the application. In the past, when we had TSA perform a review of the cost of screening, private screening versus all federal screening, they cooked the books and did not include elements of costs that should be applied and tried to tell folks they cost more than the all federal program which defies logic. GAO came back and said they did cook the books.

One of the considerations we did put in the law was we should look at cost. They used that provision to slow roll and are not being transparent. Again, that is regrettable.

In most areas dealing with private screening partnership, they have unfortunately acted arbitrarily. The acquisition and contract

process has been a disaster. We have ended up in court and some of the awards have been delayed.

I was talking with Mr. Moran on the way over here and he talked about the delays at Dulles and some of the other airports and how they were having trouble recruiting people. You may know the history of recruitment in the Washington area by advertising for personnel on the top of pizza boxes or advertisements above discount gas pumps.

The retention, particularly in the metropolitan area, continues to be a problem. The solution for dealing with having people on the job, the national screening force and other costs incurred, as studies have all shown, continues to be a huge problem.

I will not get into all of the reports that have criticized TSA but as we know we have had horrible experience with acquisition of personnel, retention and training but also have had fiascos with purchase of the puffers for hundreds of millions of dollars and ended up destroying them and most recently taking out half a billion dollars' worth of backscatter equipment from the airport. Staff should track and see where those have gone.

These are not my reports. We have had reports on the Behavior Detection Program which recommends stopping that program because it is ineffective.

Today's focus is primarily on the Screening Partnership Program and trying to make that work. I will be introducing legislation sometime in the next month which will require all TSA to opt out all airports within 24 months of the President signing the bill and all airports have the model we intended—to get TSA out of the personnel and human resources business and into the security and intelligence business.

Even though we passed the law and said you must accept these applications, almost none have actually moved forward. Again, that is a slow roll purposely to ignore the intent of Congress.

I am also concerned that I have reports that the Screening Partnership Office in TSA is in disarray, that the major knowledgeable people have left and I think we may want to look at moving the contracting from TSA for the screening services to an agency like GSA which routinely does this.

We have private screening under federal supervision for our nuclear facilities, for our defense facilities and for a host of very sensitive operating positions. Yet, we have a disaster in a program intended to be crafted quite differently.

Those are some of my long opening comments. I have a bit more history than some of the other members but I wanted to share with you how we got to this stage and this oversight.

I have also asked staff from the Appropriations Committee to attend this hearing and staff from the authorizing committee because we can conduct oversight but they control the money and the policy. I am expecting them to also act so that we get to where Congress intended us to be on this issue.

Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you so much, Chairman Mica. Thank you for holding today's oversight hearing on the Transportation Security Administration's Screening Partnership Program.

Following September 11, Congress established TSA to safeguard our Nation's commercial aviation transportation system. Today, TSA is responsible for screening airline passengers and baggage at more than 450 airports throughout the United States.

In 2004, TSA created the SPP to enable commercial airport operators to apply to forego federal screeners in favor of qualified private sector screening contractors that meet federal standards and who operate under federal oversight.

There are currently 14 airports where passenger screening is performed by private contractors and 6 additional airports awaiting contract awards, which I understand will be announced later this year. Of these 20 airports, nearly half are small airports located in the State of Montana.

In 2012, the Government Accountability Office performed an assessment of the performance of SPP airports. While the details of that analysis remain classified, GAO did find that some SPP airports perform slightly above the national average on some measures, while others perform slightly below.

GAO also recommended in this report that TSA develop a mechanism to monitor performance of private screeners versus federal screeners. TSA concurred with the recommendation and has begun the long overdue process of evaluating private sector screening performance to ensure air travel remains secure.

Although the detailed results of these assessments are sensitive or classified, I nonetheless look forward to hearing what is being done to correct sub par performance where identified.

Proponents of the expanding the SPP program assert that private screeners improve efficiency and reduce costs compared to federal screeners. However, TSA's cost estimates have found the opposite concluding that private screening costs are generally between three to nine percent higher than federal screening.

In light of that discrepancy between cost saving claims and certainly the Chairman's legitimate concerns over the validity of the cost estimate methodology, I am interested in examining the matter closely to ensure that Congress and TSA utilize the most accurate performance and cost data available so that we can be properly informed about oversight, operations and the possibility of future legislation.

It is no secret that debates over TSA often elicit strong reactions from members and the public alike, often stemming from anecdotal yet very real instances of inconvenience and perceived poor customer service. Mr. Hoggan, I shared with you my own unhappy anecdotal experience most recently.

Security is our main focus but it cannot be our only focus. Given the fact we are interacting with the public to the tune of millions and millions and millions of passengers, it seems to me that some emphasis on training of proper customer interaction is very important. It is important how we treat the American citizen and it is important how we treat our foreign guests. Both deserve dignity at an airport.

It is a stressful enough situation for the passenger. It is also stressful for the TSA because they have an awesome responsibility. We do sympathize with that and we respect it but we also need to respect the passengers we are asking to cooperate. When we mis-

treat them by barking orders at them as if they are cattle, not people, we actually diminish the spirit of cooperation and do not enhance it.

As I indicated to you privately before this hearing, Mr. Hoggan, I do not understand why that cannot be a simple matter of training. I do not understand how hard it is to teach people to make sure you use the words “please” and “thank you” when interacting with our public and show that basic respect.

In my experience this last weekend—going out and I took the redeye back—I encountered 20 barked orders but never once the word “please” with any of the TSA people I encountered—take that off, move over there, back up, put your hands up, take your shoes off. Not once was the word “please” used.

That lack of courtesy shows a lack of respect for the public with whom you are dealing, a public that is unbelievably tolerant of how it is being treated. Maybe that has something to do with the culture of airports these days where many American airlines seem actually to resent having customers and that lack of respect has become part of the culture of air travel.

When we represent the Federal Government or are overseeing private sector entities taking over some of these responsibilities, we have to show a respect for the public understanding their cooperation is essential to our mission. I do not think it is a trivial issue. I do not think it is a nice thing to do if we have time. I think it is integral to the mission of security.

If I cannot get assurances that we are going to take that seriously and redouble our efforts to make sure TSA agents or the private sector analogs are properly trained in how to deal in customer service and show respect for the public we are serving, then we will have to do something legislatively about it. I am going to insist and I know I will not have any resistance on the other side of the aisle on that.

I am going to use this hearing today, Mr. Hoggan, to get some assurance from you because I have had it. I think a lot of the public has had it. There is no excuse for it. We have to take it seriously.

I am doubly grateful for this hearing because this is one of my pet peeves. I have mentioned it many times over the five years have been on this job. I see no improvement at all in my own experience in the airports.

If necessary, one thing we might do since my colleagues, unlike me—I live here, I do not have to travel as Mr. Bell knows—but my colleagues are on a plane at least twice a week going home and coming back. If we do not get some satisfaction, I am going to use my colleagues as a filter. Tell us about your experience and by the way, let us encourage the public to tell a member of Congress. We will feed it all to you, Mr. Hoggan, so then you will have to deal with it because we will make a big issue of it.

Either we deal with this and respect the public we are serving, understanding we have a stressful mission—by the way, enormous respect goes to TSA, to you, Mr. Hoggan, and your colleagues, for the fact that thank God, we have not had a recurrence of 9/11.

Cumbersome though it is, uncomfortable, stressful, we have been focused properly on the mission and so far, thank God, it has

worked. That does not mean we cannot make the process better and as I said, create a framework that fosters more cooperation, willingness and understanding from the public, not less.

Forgive the lecture but you can see I have enormous frustration with the experience I see the public experiencing. We have to do something about it. I hope we can do it collaboratively, I hope we do not have to do it legislatively. It is not really a complicated issue, but I can tell you what I witness the public going through is unacceptable behavior by federal civil servants.

I am one too and I do not like seeing my government represented that way with so many millions of the public who interact with these systems as they go to travel.

That is my plea and also it is going to be my insistence.

Thank you all for being here and I look forward to hearing your testimony.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing.

Mr. MICA. Thank you, Mr. Connolly.

Now to our Vice Chairman, Mr. Meadows.

Mr. MEADOWS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing and thanks to each of you for coming. I will be very, very brief.

Mr. Connolly has said it well. I guess part of the frustration you are hearing is that there is no federal agency that really is representative of the Federal Government to the vast majority of people where they actually come in contact with a federal employee other than TSA. You really are the face of the Federal Government. Your efficiencies or inefficiencies, your manners or lack thereof is a broad brush approach.

I think you have many very dedicated, capable, fine public servants. I appreciate the fact that we have safety, but as Mr. Connolly so eloquently put it, what happens is I get more complaints about TSA's efficiency but more importantly their rude behavior and how they treat passengers than almost anything else.

I challenge you to look from a customer service perspective on how we can effectively change this because if not, there will be great bipartisan support to find a private sector. We are talking about that partnership today but there will be great bipartisan support to find a private sector, more customer friendly way of doing it.

I do that in the spirit of saying the responsibility you have is great in terms of the viability long term of your particular agency.

I want to apologize because I am going to have to step out and be back and forth. I have a Transportation and Infrastructure hearing this morning going on right now for the highway bill but I will be back and forth.

Thank each of you. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. I thank the gentleman.

Now we will turn to our panel of witnesses. Today we have three witnesses. We have Mr. Kelly Hoggan, Assistant Administrator for Security Operations, TSA; Mr. Mark Bell, Acting Deputy Inspector General for Audits, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General; and Ms. Jennifer Grover, Acting Director, Homeland Security and Justice, Government Accountability Office.

I would like to welcome all of our witnesses. I am not sure if you have been before us before but if you have a lengthy statement or

some documentation you would like to be included in the record as part of the hearing, you can request that through the Chair or a member.

This is also an investigative subcommittee of Congress and we do swear our witnesses. Please stand and raise your right hand.

Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

[Witnesses respond in the affirmative.]

Mr. MICA. Thank you.

Let the record reflect that the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

As a matter of business, members may have seven days to submit opening statements for the record.

Mr. Connolly, I would like to keep the record open for two weeks because I think we are going to have additional questions. Without objection, we will take members' statements for seven days and keep the record open for addressing additional questions to our witnesses over the next several weeks.

With that, we will recognize and welcome Kelly C. Hoggan, Assistant Administrator for Security Operations of TSA. Welcome and you are recognized.

## **WITNESS STATEMENTS**

### **STATEMENT OF KELLY C. HOGGAN**

Mr. HOGGAN. Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Connolly and members of the subcommittee, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the Transportation Security Administration's Screening Partnership Program, SPP.

I am the Assistant Administrator for Security Operations at GSA and have been in this position for eight months. I have served in a variety of leadership roles in TSA since 2004.

Prior to joining TSA, I worked in the airline industry for 18 years. My experience covers many areas at TSA and airline operations including staffing allocation, resource management, technology development and capabilities and international aviation.

Congress, through the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, established TSA and required the establishment of pilot programs under which airports may apply to utilize private sector rather TSA employees to conduct front line screening.

As directed by ATSA, TSA selected five airports to participate in the pilot program representing five risk categories. SPP grew out of this pilot program which ended in 2004. Today, out of approximately 450 commercial service airports, 14 have contractors performing screening, including the original five pilot airports.

Of those 14 airports, 7 fall within the smallest classification meaning they emplane between 2,500 and 10,000 passengers a year. These 14 airports represent approximately four percent of the passenger screening positions across the system.

Applications from six additional airports have been approved and are currently in the contract solicitation process. I would note that since passage of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, all SPP applications received have been approved within the 120

day time limit. Once approved for admission to SPP, contract solicitation and selection are completed in accordance with federal acquisition regulations.

Over the past eight months in my position as Assistant Administrator for Security Operations I have taken steps to further streamline application processing, improve the level of experience and expertise assigned to the SPP Office and in collaboration with my counterparts in the Office of Acquisitions to establish a 12-month timeline goal for application receipt and contract award.

For airport operators interested in SPP, the TSA website includes the SPP application itself, an overview of the application process and contact information for appropriate TSA staff. TSA also utilizes the Federal Business Opportunities website to communicate with a wide range of vendors.

For instance, TSA advertised and held an SPP industry day on January 10, 2014. This event provided an overview of the program, the acquisitions process and provided a forum for questions and answers to the industry.

I believe the steps taken have strengthened the program and made the program and application process more transparent to interested parties.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear here today. I will be happy to answer any questions.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Hoggan follows:]

**Statement of  
Kelly Hoggan  
Assistant Administrator, Office of Security Operations  
Transportation Security Administration  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
before the  
United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
Subcommittee on Government Operations  
January 14, 2014**

Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Connolly and members of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Screening Partnership Program (SPP). TSA is a high-performing counterterrorism agency with a dedicated workforce executing our mission around the clock and across the globe, charged with facilitating and securing the travel of the nearly 1.8 million air passengers who fly each day. Our goal at all times is to maximize transportation security to stay ahead of evolving terrorist threats while protecting passengers' privacy and facilitating the secure and efficient flow of legitimate commerce. TSA's current security measures consist of a multi-layered system of transportation security that identifies, manages and mitigates risk. No layer on its own solves all our challenges, but, in combination, they create a strong and formidable system.

TSA has taken significant steps to focus its resources and improve the passenger experience at security checkpoints by applying intelligence-driven, risk-based screening procedures and enhancing its use of technology. To that end, TSA has several Risk Based Security (RBS) initiatives including TSA Pre✓™, Known Crew Member, Managed Inclusion, and modified screening procedures for passengers less than 12 years of age and over 75 years of

age, members of the military, and some members of the intelligence community - all designed to offer the most effective security in the most efficient way.

Last month, TSA announced the expansion of expedited screening benefits for all U.S. Armed Forces service members at more than 100 airports nationwide. TSA enjoys strong partnerships with industry stakeholders, which has enabled the successful implementation of a variety of new RBS procedures. On December 27, 2013, a high-volume day during the holidays, TSA provided expedited screening for 36.6 percent of the nearly 2 million passengers, and 98.9 percent of passengers waited less than 20 minutes to pass through security checkpoints. As TSA continues to integrate RBS into its approach to transportation security, we will work with current and new private sector screening partners to ensure that RBS is integrated effectively into SPP airports and the SPP program continues to be implemented effectively.

#### **Screening Partnership Program History**

Congress, through the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA) (P.L. 107-71), established TSA and determined that aviation security would be most effective by making passenger screening a predominantly Federal responsibility. ATSA also authorized a pilot program for privatized passenger screening (see 49 U.S.C. 44919). TSA selected five airports to participate in the pilot program, representing five airport security risk categories as defined by the TSA Administrator. Companies that met statutory qualifications were then selected to conduct screening services under contract with the Federal Government. These private sector employees were, and remain, subject to the qualification and compensation criteria of Federal Transportation Security Officers (TSOs). In addition, ATSA enabled the Administrator to continue private contract screening with qualified companies at other U.S. airports after completion of the pilot program (see 49 U.S.C. 44920).

*The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Modernization and Reform Act of 2012*

(P.L. 112-95) amended 49 U.S.C. § 44920 to provide standards for approval of an SPP application, a timeline for approving or denying applications, and specific actions to take in the event an application is denied. Acceptance into the SPP program also requires that the TSA Administrator “determine(s) that the approval would not compromise the security or detrimentally affect the cost-efficiency or the effectiveness of the screening of passengers or property at the airport.”

For airport operators interested in the SPP, the TSA website includes the SPP application itself, an overview of the application process, and contact information for the appropriate TSA staff. Additionally, the site provides a listing and map of SPP airports, recent news regarding SPP (such as contract awards), links to Requests for Proposals (RFPs) postings, and employment opportunities at SPP service providers. TSA also utilizes the Federal Business Opportunities website to communicate with a wide range of vendors. For instance, TSA advertised and held a SPP specific Industry Day on January 10, 2014. This meeting was attended by approximately 100 vendors and it provided a general overview of the program’s direction and goals, informed industry of the acquisition process, and also provided a forum for obtaining feedback and insight into industry’s capabilities.

**Program Size and Scope**

The SPP is a voluntary program whereby airports may apply for SPP status and employ private security companies to conduct airport screening according to TSA standards. Participation depends on interest from airport operators. To date, that interest has been limited. Since the creation of the program in 2004, 30 airports have applied to the program (including the original 5 pilot airports) and 14 airports have private contract screeners in place. Of those

14 airports, seven fall within the smallest airport classification (Category IV - which means they emplane between 2,500 and 10,000 passengers a year). The 14 airports currently participating in SPP represent approximately 1,849 or 3.9% of the passenger screening positions across the country.

Applications from six additional airports have been approved and determinations for entry are pending contract solicitation. These six airports represent approximately 276 TSO positions. The other 10 applications have been withdrawn, denied, or commercial air service was discontinued at that location.

Regardless of whether an airport has private or federal employees conducting passenger screening operations, TSA maintains overall responsibility for security. To fulfill our responsibility in this mission, it is important to maintain our flexibility—as new and emerging threats are identified, we must be able to adapt and modify our procedures quickly to protect the traveling public and promote the flow of legitimate commerce. Federal Security Directors oversee the contracted operations as well as the other airport security operations, such as air cargo and facility security compliance inspections, that continue to be conducted only by Federal employees in accordance with ATSA.

**Cost Efficiency**

To provide information to prospective bidders on SPP applications, TSA includes the federal cost estimate of the airport screening operations in the RFP. The estimates were refined to conform with changes to the law, as well as to incorporate all recommendations from audits conducted by the Government Accountability Office and the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General.

**Conclusion**

The SPP program continues to be a voluntary program. TSA adheres to the statutory requirements for considering applications and accepting companies into the program. As noted at the outset, we strive to maximize security not only by keeping ahead of current threats identified by intelligence, but by maintaining security systems that focus our resources on areas where they will yield the optimal benefit. This is consistent with our risk-based approach to security and critical in times of budget austerity. The SPP, no less than any other security program, must be implemented in a manner determined by cost as well as demonstrable benefits. We continue to work with SPP contractors to make adjustments required in an extremely dynamic security environment. Thank you for the opportunity to appear here today. I will be happy to answer your questions.

Mr. MICA. Thank you. We will hold questions until we have heard from all witnesses.

We will hear from Mr. Mark Bell next. He is the Acting Deputy Inspector General for Audits at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Inspector General. Welcome and you are recognized.

#### **STATEMENT OF MARK BELL**

Mr. BELL. Good morning, Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Connolly and members of the subcommittee.

Thank you for inviting me here today to testify on TSA's Screening Partnership Program, known as SPP. My testimony will focus on the results of our audit of this program which we published in June 2013.

We performed this audit in response to a request from Senators Roy Blunt and Bob Corker who had concerns about TSA's management of SPP and the procurement process at Kansas City International Airport.

In this program, TSA first reviews an airport's application to participate and then if approved, procures private screening services. At the time of our audit, 16 airports were in SPP. Since that time, two airports have opted out, which means 14 are now participating. TSA has accepted 6 more airports but has not yet awarded screening contracts.

We determined that although TSA administered SPP according to federal law, it could improve its program administration. Specifically, TSA did not adequately document its evaluation of applications in its procurement decisions, did not always use accurate information to determine program eligibility and did not verify the accuracy of data used in its procurement decisions.

As a result, TSA risked making incorrect decisions on SPP applications, not selecting the best contractor and may have missed opportunities to save money.

Until Congress passed the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, TSA had no criteria to use when considering applications to join the program. The 2012 Act including requirements for approving applications, a timeline for decisions and a requirement to report to applicants and Congress about rejected applications.

TSA complied with the Act's requirements in approving five applications submitted after its passage but some documents related to its decisions including incorrect cost estimates and other documents are not finalized.

We also identified missing details and inaccuracies in documents supporting four of the five SPP procurement decisions made between January 2011 and August 2012. For example, four procurement files contained a similar short paragraph noting the Source Selection Authority's decision and two of the eight cost estimates had slight a difference in labor hours and overtime rates.

In September 2011, a federal court concluded that TSA did not document its independent analysis of an SPP contract for Kansas City International Airport. Following this, TSA took steps to ensure it fully documented its proposal analysis, its decision rationale and the Source Selection Authority's independence.

It also began to require documented support for its final selection decisions. We reviewed the decision documentation for a subsequent contract and confirmed that it included the necessary details.

Under the 2012 Act, TSA must also consider cost efficiency in deciding on an airport's admission into the program, but TSA reported that none of the four applications approved since the Act's passage had reached the cost evaluation phase, so we were unable to determine TSA's compliance with this requirement.

However, in January 2013, the TSA Administrator directed that cost efficiency be evaluated when deciding on continued participation. TSA was also working on a methodology to estimate the cost of converting SPP airports back to TSA employee screening, but it had not yet determined the cost for any airport currently in the program.

In our audit, we also noted that TSA's screening cost estimates differed so they did not provide a consistent basis for deciding program participation.

As a result of our audit, we recommended that TSA fully document its decisions on program applications and procurements and that it use relevant and accurate information in determining eligibility in approving participation. TSA concurred with both recommendations.

We closed the first recommendation because TSA had already begun issuing policies and reminders and started revising the application process. We considered our second recommendation to be resolved because TSA is working to improve application document review and cost estimates. The recommendation remains open pending documented support of these actions.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. I welcome any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Bell follows:]

STATEMENT OF MARK BELL  
ACTING ASSISTANT INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR AUDITS  
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL  
*BEFORE THE*  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
*CONCERNING*  
THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION'S SCREENING  
PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

JANUARY 14, 2014



Good morning Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Connolly, and Members of the Subcommittee.

Thank you for inviting me here today to testify on the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Screening Partnership Program (SPP). My testimony will focus on the results of our audit of SPP, which were included in a report issued in June 2013. I will also briefly summarize the Government Accountability Office (GAO) audit report on SPP, which was issued in December 2012.

We performed this audit in response to requests from Senator Roy Blunt (Missouri) and Senator Bob Corker (Tennessee). The Senators had concerns about TSA's management of SPP, as well as the procurement process at Kansas City International Airport.

As of January 2013, 16 airports were participating in SPP, under which an airport operator may apply to use a private company to screen passengers and baggage rather than use Federal Government screening personnel. TSA reviews and approves applications to participate, awards contracts to private screening companies, and oversees the private screening workforce. We performed this audit to determine whether TSA administered SPP in accordance with Federal regulations.

TSA administered the program in accordance with the *FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012*, but could improve aspects of its administration. Specifically, TSA's files for its five most recent decisions to approve airports' applications to participate included documents that had not been finalized, as well as documents with inaccurate information. In addition, TSA did not document the rationale used to decide on four of the five contracts awarded during 2011 and 2012.

TSA had these issues because it did not develop and implement procedures to ensure that application evaluation and procurement decisions were adequately documented. The Component also did not have quality assurance procedures to ensure that the most relevant and accurate information was used to determine eligibility and approve participation in SPP. As a result, TSA risks making incorrect decisions on applications and procurements, and thus, may miss opportunities to save funds.

#### **Background**

SPP was established in 2001 under the *Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA)* (P.L. 107-71). Under SPP, airports can apply to TSA to use personnel from private companies to screen passengers and baggage. In 2002, five airports began participating in a 2-year pilot program; they elected to transition into the permanent program in 2004. In the same year, TSA began accepting applications from other airports.

Until 2011, TSA had no criteria when considering whether to approve airports' applications to participate in SPP. In 2012, under the *FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012* (P.L. 112-95), TSA was required to—

- Approve an application when determining that doing so would not compromise security or detrimentally affect the cost-efficiency or effectiveness of passenger and baggage screening at the airport;
- Decide on an application within 120 days of receipt; and
- Provide a written report to the applicant and Congress when rejecting an application, identifying why the application was rejected and recommending how to improve the application for future approval.

Once an application is approved, TSA contracts with a qualified company to provide screening at the airport. According to ATSA, to enter into a contract, TSA must conclude and certify to Congress that the level of screening services and protection will be equal to or greater than the level that Federal screeners provide. TSA considers a private screening company qualified if the company's screening personnel meet all ATSA requirements for Federal screening personnel. The company must provide at least the same level of compensation and benefits to its employees that Federal employees receive.

TSA Federal Security Directors are responsible for overall airport security, provide oversight of screening operations, and ensure effective and efficient security operations. As of January 2013, TSA provided oversight for screening operations at 450 airports, including 16 airports participating in SPP.

TSA developed a process to evaluate airports' SPP applications and award contracts, which TSA senior management approved after we concluded our audit work. According to TSA Office of Security Operations personnel, the application process begins when the Program Management Office (PMO) receives the airport application. The TSA Integrated Project Team analyzes the application and advises the Office of Security Operations Assistant Administrator on the effect of its acceptance on TSA's Federal screening.

The PMO's estimate of the cost of using private screeners at the airport and an Office of Security Operations estimate for using Federal screeners are given to the Integrated Project Team to review. TSA management personnel receive and review both estimates before they are presented to the TSA Administrator, who uses them to decide whether to approve or reject applications. Once approved, the TSA Office of Acquisition begins the procurement process. When an application is rejected, the PMO informs the applicant and Congress about the reasons for rejection and how the applicant might improve the application.

The procurement process includes solicitation, evaluation, selection, and contract award. During solicitation, TSA selects evaluation factors, develops a source selection plan, establishes evaluation standards, holds a pre-proposal conference, and visits and surveys sites. In evaluating proposals, evaluation teams independently review proposals and submit evaluation reports.

Following evaluation, the TSA Source Selection Authority selects a screening company and provides a written selection decision to the contracting officer. Contract award documentation is then finalized and approved.

### SPP Application Process

Prior to passage of the *FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012* (2012 Act), ATSA was in effect, and it did not include criteria for TSA in approving SPP applications; TSA could approve any SPP application submitted. Also prior to the 2012 Act, there were no criteria beyond defining a qualified private screening company and how private screeners would be compensated. TSA complied with the requirements of the 2012 Act in approving the five SPP applications submitted after its passage. However, TSA did not ensure that documents related to decisions on these five applications were finalized and accurate. Because decisionmakers rely on the information in this documentation, it should be as accurate and complete as possible.

From 2004 through 2008, TSA approved 19 SPP applications. During 2009 and 2010, five SPP applications were received, but none were approved. In 2011, the TSA Administrator decided that the Component would no longer approve SPP applications unless airports demonstrated “a clear and substantial benefit” to the Federal Government.

Since the 2012 Act was passed, TSA approved five applications, two of which were submitted during 2009 and 2010. Although it approved these five applications, TSA indicated that actual program participation was conditional on private screening providers meeting the Act’s requirements of effective and cost-efficient screening. As of January 2013, 16 airports were participating in SPP, but TSA indicated that it had not yet awarded contracts for these 5 airports.

During our audit, we reviewed applications from the following five airports, which TSA approved since the passage of the 2012 Act:

- Orlando Sanford International Airport (Florida)
- Sacramento International Airport (California)<sup>1</sup>
- Glacier Park International Airport (Montana)
- Bert Mooney Airport (Montana)
- Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (Montana)

TSA made decisions on these applications within 120 days of receiving them, but TSA’s files included inaccurate documents.<sup>2</sup> For example, 14 of 25 (56 percent) of the documents that TSA used to evaluate these five applications were not finalized. We also identified errors in the documents. For example, we noted the following errors in two separate documents:

- A document included an incorrect figure, which resulted in a \$162,057 overstatement of the cost to use private screeners.
- A document used to compare the estimated cost of private screening to the estimated cost of Federal screening showed TSA understated an estimate of the cost savings of private screening by \$423,572. If the estimate had been correctly stated, the report would have shown a 7 percent increase in maximum potential cost savings from using private screening compared to Federal screening.

<sup>1</sup> After our audit work was completed, Sacramento International Airport withdrew its SPP application.

<sup>2</sup> Documentation reviewed included cost estimate briefings, integrated project team briefings, SPP application chair briefings, application determination briefings, and decision memorandums.

According to TSA, the errors may have been a result of using information from an earlier application file and not changing all of the required figures to reflect analysis of the new applications. TSA did not have quality control procedures that required a second review of the data in application files to ensure that all required documentation was finalized and accurate. Although in these two cases TSA correctly approved the applications, there is still a risk that inaccurate estimates could lead to incorrect decisions.

In a recent update provided by TSA, there are now 14 airports participating in SPP. Subsequent to the release of our audit report, Lewistown Municipal and Frank Wiley Field Airports opted out of the program. According to TSA, the following 6 airports have been accepted into the program, but TSA has not yet awarded contracts for these airports.

- Orlando Sanford International Airport (Florida)
- Glacier Park International Airport (Montana)
- Bert Mooney Airport (Montana)
- Bozeman Yellowstone International Airport (Montana)
- West Yellowstone (Montana)
- Sarasota Bradenton (Florida)

#### **SPP Procurement Process**

From January 2011 to August 2012, when documenting its award decisions on four SPP contracts, TSA did not comply fully with *Federal Acquisition Regulation* (FAR) Section 15.308. Specifically, in this time period, TSA's documentation on proposal evaluations and decisions related to these contract awards was missing details and included inaccuracies. TSA did not formalize and implement procedures to ensure that SPP procurements were fully documented, and it did not have quality control procedures to verify the accuracy of data used for contract decisions. As a result, TSA risks not selecting the best contractor offer and not ensuring that it provides the best screening services.

In four of the five procurement files for contracts awarded between January 2011 and August 2012, the rationale for TSA's final decisions on contractor selection was not fully described in supporting documentation. The DHS source selection guide requires the Source Selection Authority (SAA) to document its rationale separately. The guide further specifies that files should include a decision statement, a brief description of the product or service being procured, a brief description of the basis for the award, a list of competitive offerors, the rationale for business judgments and tradeoffs, and the reason that the selected offeror's proposal is the best overall value to the Federal Government.<sup>3</sup>

Rather than including all of this information, all four files contained a similar short paragraph noting the SSA's decision. For example, in the file for the contract awarded to the Kansas City International Airport, the final decision noted that the SSA had completed an independent review and assessment of the technical and price reports, but did not include other details on the rationale for its decision. According to TSA, the files were missing documentation on the

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<sup>3</sup> *A Practical Guide to Source Selection, Version 1.1*, September 2008.

rationale because staff members believed the final decision documentation met FAR requirements.

In September 2011, a Federal court ruled that TSA could not award a private screening contract to the contractor originally selected for the Kansas City International Airport, and it directed the Component to cancel or amend the solicitation. The Federal court concluded that the TSA SSA's decision did not include documentation on its independent analysis. According to FAR Section 15.308, the SSA may use reports and analyses prepared by others, but its decision shall represent its independent judgment.

Following the 2011 ruling, TSA developed lessons learned to ensure full documentation of its proposal analysis and the rationale for its decisions, as well as the SSA's independence. Although at the time of our audit the lessons learned had not been formalized as policy, TSA began requiring additional documentation to support final source selection decisions. We reviewed documentation for a decision on a contract to provide screening for three airports and confirmed that it included details on the rationale for procurement decisions and on independent analysis.

In reviewing the five contracts awarded between January 2011 and August 2012 for eight airports, we noted data discrepancies in TSA's proposal evaluation documentation.<sup>4</sup> In addition, we reviewed two of eight cost estimates that TSA prepared for the five procurements and identified discrepancies in both cost estimates. Specifically, there were differences in labor hours and overtime rates. Inaccurate cost estimates could affect TSA's evaluation of offerors.

#### **Cost Considerations**

Under the 2012 Act, TSA is required to consider cost efficiency in deciding on airports' admission into SPP. However, we were unable to conclude whether TSA was properly considering cost because TSA reported that none of the four SPP applications approved and in progress since the Act's passage had progressed to the contract evaluation phase in which cost would be evaluated.

A January 13, 2013, memorandum approved by the TSA Administrator directed that cost efficiency be evaluated when deciding on an airport's continued participation in SPP. TSA developed and continued to refine a methodology for estimating the cost of converting SPP airports back to screening by TSA personnel, but at that time it had not yet performed the cost determination for any airport in SPP.

The cost estimates consider factors such as labor costs, attrition, real estate costs, and overhead, which are partially based on the costs of using Federal personnel at two comparable airports. As TSA refines the cost estimates, the Component continues to adjust factors that result in several different cost estimates, some of which indicate TSA employee screening would cost more and others in which the contracted screening would cost more. Because different factors may be added and removed from the cost estimates, they do not provide a consistent basis for making decisions on SPP participation.

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<sup>4</sup> One contract covered three airports; another contract covered two airports.

**OIG Recommendations and TSA Response**

We recommended that TSA expedite developing and implementing procedures to ensure that decisions on SPP applications and procurements were fully documented according to applicable Department and Federal guidance. We also recommended that TSA establish and implement quality assurance procedures to ensure that the most relevant and accurate information is used when determining eligibility and approving airports' participation in SPP.

TSA concurred with both of our recommendations. In its response, TSA noted that our recommendations reflected program enhancements since passage of the 2012 Act, and that it had already made significant progress toward implementing our recommendations.

In December 2012, the TSA Office of Acquisition issued a policy letter, effective January 1, 2013, on SSA appointment and business processes, including a requirement for an independent SSA tradeoff analysis decision. In January 2013, TSA issued a policy reminder on source selection procedures, reiterating that the SSA must independently document its decision. According to the policy reminder, the Contracting Officer also needs to review in detail all source selection documents. On March 4, 2013, TSA revised and approved its SPP application process. Because of these actions, we considered this recommendation resolved and closed.

Early in fiscal year 2013, TSA began to improve quality assurance in application documents and completed part of the work in March 2013, when it finalized the revised application process. In the fall of 2012, the Component had begun including dates on Government cost estimates to track changes more accurately; it expected to finalize a cost estimating process in 2013. The SPP Program Management Office was finalizing a review process, which it planned to complete in 2013, to ensure that all application documents are final and accurate before being used to reach a final determination. For all future procurements, the office would formally confirm or revise the TSA "cost efficiency number" 1 week prior to releasing the Request for Proposals. TSA expected to document and finalize this standard in 2013. We considered TSA's planned corrective actions responsive to the recommendation, which would remain open and resolved until we received documented support that these processes and the standard were finalized. As of January 2014, this recommendation remains open.

We also included responses to the Senators' specific questions in an appendix to this report.

Specifically, the Senators asked whether, in administering SPP, TSA acted outside its own regulations and procedures; taken any actions that exceeded its statutory authority; or otherwise acted improperly, unethically, or unlawfully. In reviewing SPP application and procurement documents and processes and interviewing appropriate personnel, we found no evidence that TSA acted outside its regulations and procedures; exceeded its statutory authority; or acted improperly, unethically, or unlawfully.

The Senators asked whether TSA was not embracing SPP by pressuring airport officials not to participate. We responded that TSA had met the intent of ATSA. The Component implemented SPP and made it available to interested airports, and it had not pressured airport officials to not participate. We conducted telephone interviews with officials from 24 non-SPP airports, none of whom said they were pressured by TSA about the program. Specifically, officials at 20 airports said that they were satisfied with TSA screening at their airports, two had no comment or were

undecided, one airport was not interested in the SPP, and one airport planned to apply to the program. We reviewed documentation for the six airports whose applications to participate in SPP were rejected, including the four that subsequently resubmitted applications. The four airports that reapplied were subsequently accepted. Officials from the two airports that did not reapply said that TSA had not placed undue pressure on them about this decision.

The Senators asked whether TSA had taken full advantage of SPP to advance innovations and best practices in security and management, as well as cultivate positive relationships between screeners and passengers at airports. We replied that TSA had provided information on its web-based tool called the IdeaFactory, which collects information and suggestions from the workforce. SPP contractors can submit suggestions at the TSA website, but the website's terms leave it relatively unclear whether contractors' suggestions made through the website are desired. To develop a more detailed understanding of the process would have required lengthy discussions with SPP participant airports and TSA officials; and to draw a more complete conclusion would have required a review of innovations previously submitted and rejected. Time constraints did not allow the audit team to hold such discussions or review previously submitted innovations.

The Senators asked us to determine whether TSA resisted implementing GAO recommendations to accurately assess the costs of screening at SPP and non-SPP airports. We reviewed TSA's preliminary work and plans for doing so, but could not answer this question until TSA finalized the process. At the time of our audit, the Component was still updating its SPP cost estimate used to compare actual costs for SPP contracts with the costs of federalized screening.

The Senators asked us to determine TSA's rationale for starting the Kansas City International Airport procurement process over. We determined that TSA decided to re-procure the solicitation due to 1) errors in the original Request for Proposals (solicitation), which led to a Federal court ruling and 2) the length of time since TSA had issued the original solicitation. According to the ruling, TSA could either amend the solicitation to correct the price evaluation scheme, notify the sole offerors about the amendment to the solicitation, and engage them in discussions; or re-procure the solicitation.

The Senators inquired about any conflict of interest at Kansas City International Airport with a former TSA employee. TSA procurement files in the Office of Acquisitions at TSA Headquarters did not provide any evidence that the former TSA employee had any influence over the procurement.

#### **GAO Report on SPP**

In its December 2012 report, *Screening Partnership Program: TSA Should Issue More Guidance to Airports and Monitor Private versus Federal Screener Performance*, GAO noted that TSA had developed some resources to assist SPP applicants; however, it had not provided guidance to assist airports applying to the program. Consistent with the 2012 Act, TSA's revised SPP application requested that applicants provide information to assist it in determining if their participation in SPP would compromise security or detrimentally affect the cost-efficiency or screening effectiveness of passengers and property at their airport. TSA also developed responses to frequently asked questions and expressed a willingness to help airports needing assistance. However, TSA had not issued guidance for airports on completing applications and

information on how the Component would assess them. Three of five airport operators who applied using the application current at that time said they needed additional guidance to better understand how to respond to the new application questions. With improved guidance, airports could evaluate their candidacy for SPP better.

At the time of the GAO audit, TSA had improved its screener performance measures, but GAO concluded that it could benefit from monitoring private versus Federal screener performance. In April 2012, TSA added measures to better address the strategic goals and mission of screening in its assessments of screener performance at private and Federal airports. However, TSA did not separately monitor private screener and Federal screener performance. It made efforts to monitor screener performance at individual SPP airports, but these efforts did not provide information on SPP performance as a whole or across years, which made it difficult to identify program trends. GAO noted that consistent monitoring of SPP versus non-SPP performance would help ensure that the screening and protection at SPP airports matched or exceeded that at non-SPP airports, and would ensure that SPP airports were operating as intended.

GAO recommended TSA develop guidance for SPP applicants that included 1) TSA's criteria and process for assessing whether SPP participation would compromise security or detrimentally affect screening cost-efficiency or effectiveness; 2) how TSA would obtain and analyze cost information on screening cost-efficiency and effectiveness and the implications of airports not responding to related application questions; and 3) specific examples of additional information airports should consider providing to help TSA assess their suitability for SPP. GAO also recommended that TSA develop a mechanism to regularly monitor private versus Federal screener performance. TSA concurred with both recommendations.

#### **Conclusion**

Through our audit, we determined that TSA needed to improve some aspects of its administration of SPP to help avoid the risk of not selecting the best contractor to provide screening services. Because administration includes in-depth examination of airport applications and private contractor offers, which requires detailed calculations and analysis, TSA should ensure that decisionmakers have accurate information. TSA has taken steps to fully document its decisions on SPP applications and procurements and to improve its quality assurance procedures, including cost estimating and application document reviews.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. I welcome any questions you or other Members of the Subcommittee may have.

Mr. MICA. Thank you again, Mr. Bell. We will defer questions. We will hear next from our final witness, Jennifer Grover, Acting Director, Homeland Security and Justice, GAO. Welcome and you are recognized.

#### **STATEMENT OF JENNIFER GROVER**

Ms. GROVER. Good morning, Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Connolly and other members and staff.

I am pleased to be here today to discuss TSA's implementation and oversight of the Screening Partnership Program.

The Screening Partnership Program, SPP, provides airports a private alternative to federal screeners. As others have already noted, of the Nation's 450 or so commercial airports, 14 participate in SPP and another 16 are waiting in the wings for TSA to complete the contractor procurement process.

A year ago, GAO found weaknesses in TSA's implementation and oversight of SPP. Regarding implementation, we found that TSA was not providing clear guidance to airports on how to apply to SPP. This is important to ensure that all airports have a full and fair opportunity to participate.

Specifically, we found that TSA offered online FAQ's but little else. Airports told us that they needed help with several issues such as understanding whether or not they were good candidates for the program, how to complete the applications and specific guidance about what cost information they were required to submit.

Industry representatives echoed those concerns noting that airports were reluctant to invest in the application process when they were unsure about how they would be evaluated.

Since then, consistent with our recommendations, TSA has posted additional guidance on its website including examples of helpful information that previous applicants provided, information about how applications would be assessed and clarification about the requirements for submitting cost information.

Regarding oversight, we found that TSA did not evaluate the relative performance of federal and private screeners. This is important because private screeners must provide a level of service and protection that is equal to or greater than that provided by federal screeners. Therefore, we recommended that TSA regularly monitor SPP performance compared to the performance of federal screeners.

Specifically, we found that TSA used a scorecard performance system to regularly assess screeners on numerous performance measures at every airport. The result is a point in time snapshot of performance at that airport relative to its goals and national averages but not a comparison to all of the airports in its category.

To address the question of comparative performance, GAO reviewed several years of performance data for the then 16 SPP airports on foreign measures. We found that private screeners did slightly better than federal screeners on some measures and slightly worse on others. However, we could not attribute the differences in performance entirely to the use of private or federal screeners due to other factors that can affect performance.

Since then, TSA issued its first SPP annual report which, consistent with our recommendations, includes comparative performance information for each SPP airport relative to other airports in

its category. TSA also began verifying annually that the level of screening services provided by private airports is equal to or greater than the level that would be provided by federal screeners.

We are pleased that TSA's changes address our recommendations on SPP. These changes also may help TSA in making future improvements to the program. For example, with greater clarity and transparency in the application process, additional airports may be encouraged to apply.

Greater clarity and transparency may also help ensure that the application process is carried out in a uniform and consistent manner.

With the new comparative performance information, TSA may be better equipped to identify best practices as well as to identify specific SPP airports that require additional attention to improved performance.

Finally, a better understanding of how well SPP airports operate could inform future decision-making about the program.

Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Connolly, thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning and I look forward to your questions.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Grover follows:]

United States Government Accountability Office

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Testimony  
Before the Subcommittee on  
Government Operations, Committee on  
Oversight and Government Reform,  
House of Representatives

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For Release on Delivery  
Expected at 10:00 a.m. EST  
Tuesday, January 14, 2014

## SCREENING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

### TSA Issued Application Guidance and Developed a Mechanism to Monitor Private versus Federal Screener Performance

Statement of Jennifer Grover, Acting Director,  
Homeland Security and Justice

## GAO Highlights

Highlights of GAO-14-269T, testimony before the Subcommittee on Government Operations, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

### Why GAO Did This Study

TSA maintains a federal workforce to screen passengers and baggage at the majority of the nation's commercial airports, but it also oversees a workforce of private screeners at airports who participate in the SPP. The SPP allows commercial airports to apply to have screening performed by private screeners, who are to provide a level of screening services and protection that equals or exceeds that of federal screeners. In recent years, TSA's SPP has evolved to incorporate changes in policy and federal law, prompting enhanced interest in measuring screener performance.

This testimony addresses the extent to which TSA (1) has provided guidance to airport operators for the SPP application process and (2) assesses and monitors the performance of private and federal screeners. This statement is based on a report GAO issued in December 2012 and selected updates conducted in January 2014. To conduct the selected updates, GAO reviewed documentation, such as the *SPP Annual Report* issued in January 2013, and interviewed agency officials on the status of implementing GAO's recommendations.

### What GAO Recommends

GAO is making no new recommendations in this statement.

View GAO-14-269T. For more information, contact Jennifer Grover at (202) 512-7141 or GroverJ@gao.gov.

January 2014

## SCREENING PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

### TSA Issued Application Guidance and Developed a Mechanism to Monitor Private versus Federal Screener Performance

#### What GAO Found

Since GAO reported on this issue in December 2012, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has developed application guidance for airport operators applying to the Screening Partnership Program (SPP). In December 2012, GAO reported that TSA had not provided guidance to airport operators on its application and approval process, which had been revised to reflect requirements in the Federal Aviation Administration Modernization and Reform Act of 2012. Further, airport operators GAO interviewed at the time generally stated that they faced difficulties completing the revised application, such as how to obtain cost information. Therefore, GAO recommended that TSA develop application guidance, and TSA concurred. To address GAO's recommendation, TSA updated its SPP website in December 2012 by providing general application guidance and a description of the criteria and process the agency uses to assess airports' SPP applications. The guidance provides examples of information that airports could consider providing to TSA to help assess their suitability for the program and also outlines how the agency will analyze cost information. The new guidance addresses the intent of GAO's recommendation and should help improve transparency of the SPP application process as well as help airport operators determine whether their airports are good candidates for the SPP.

TSA has also developed a mechanism to regularly monitor private versus federal screener performance. In December 2012, GAO found differences in performance between SPP and non-SPP airports based on its analysis of screener performance data. However, while TSA had conducted or commissioned prior reports comparing the performance of SPP and non-SPP airports, TSA officials stated at the time that they did not plan to conduct similar analyses in the future, and instead stated that they were using across-the-board mechanisms to assess screener performance across all commercial airports. In December 2012, GAO found that these across-the-board mechanisms did not summarize information for the SPP as a whole or across years, which made it difficult to identify changes in private screener performance. GAO concluded that monitoring private screener performance in comparison with federal screener performance was consistent with the statutory provision authorizing TSA to enter into contracts with private screening companies and recommended that TSA develop a mechanism to regularly monitor private versus federal screener performance. TSA concurred with the recommendation. To address GAO's recommendation, in January 2013, TSA issued its first *SPP Annual Report*, which provides an analysis of private versus federal screener performance. Further, in September 2013, a TSA Assistant Administrator signed an operations directive that provides internal guidance for preparing the *SPP Annual Report*, including the requirement that the report annually verify that the level of screening services and protection provided at SPP airports is equal to or greater than the level that would be provided by federal screeners. These actions address the intent of GAO's recommendation and could assist TSA in identifying performance changes that could lead to improvements in the program.

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Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Connolly, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss our work on the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Screening Partnership Program (SPP). TSA, a component of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is responsible for ensuring the security of the traveling public through, among other things, screening passengers traveling by aircraft for explosives and other prohibited items. To fulfill this responsibility, TSA maintains a federal workforce of screeners at a majority of the nation's commercial airports, but also oversees a smaller workforce of private screeners employed by companies under contract to TSA at airports that participate in TSA's SPP.<sup>1</sup> The SPP, established in 2004 in accordance with provisions of the Aviation Transportation Security Act (ATSA), allows commercial airports an opportunity to "opt out" of federal screening by applying to TSA to have private screeners perform the screening function.<sup>2</sup> At airports with private screeners, TSA continues to be responsible for overseeing airport screening operations and ensuring that the private contractors provide effective and efficient security operations in a manner consistent with law and other TSA requirements; however, the screening of passengers and baggage at these airports is performed by private screening contractors selected and approved by TSA.<sup>3</sup> As of January 2014, there are 14 airports participating in the SPP, as well as 6

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<sup>1</sup>For purposes of this report, a "commercial airport" is any airport in the United States that operates pursuant to a TSA-approved security program in accordance with 49 C.F.R. pt. 1542 and at which TSA performs or oversees the performance of screening services, of which there are approximately 450 as of November 2013. We refer to airports that are participating in the SPP as SPP airports and the screeners in those airports as private screeners. We refer to airports not participating in the SPP as non-SPP airports and the screeners in those airports as federal screeners.

<sup>2</sup>See Pub. L. No. 107-71, § 108, 115 Stat. 597, 611-13 (2001) (codified as amended at 49 U.S.C. §§ 44919-20). TSA established the SPP in 2004 after concluding a 2-year pilot program through which four private screening companies performed screening operations at 5 commercial airports (one contractor served 2 airports).

<sup>3</sup>The SPP contractor's responsibilities include recruiting, assessing, and training screening personnel to provide security screening functions in accordance with TSA regulations, policies, and procedures. SPP contractors are also expected to take operational direction from TSA to help ensure they meet the terms and conditions of the contract.

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airports approved for participation and awaiting the selection of a screening contractor.<sup>4</sup>

The standard by which TSA evaluates airport applications for participation in the SPP has changed since the program's inception in 2004. First, in January 2011, the TSA Administrator announced his decision not to expand the SPP beyond the 16 airports that were participating in the program at that time "unless a clear and substantial advantage to do so emerges in the future." In so doing, the Administrator cited his interest in helping the agency evolve into a "more agile, high-performing organization that can meet the security threats of today and the future" as the reason for his decision. Of the 6 airports that submitted applications from March 2009 through January 2012 and that were evaluated under the "clear and substantial advantage" standard, TSA approved the application of 1 airport and denied the applications of the other 5. Second, according to TSA officials, the Federal Aviation Administration Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 (FAA Modernization Act), enacted in February 2012, prompted TSA to change the standard by which it evaluates SPP applications and requires, among other things, that the TSA Administrator approve an SPP application submitted by an airport operator if the Administrator determines that the approval would not compromise security or detrimentally affect the cost-efficiency or the effectiveness of the screening of passengers or property at the airport.<sup>5</sup>

My testimony today addresses the extent to which TSA (1) has provided guidance to airport operators for the SPP application process and (2) assesses and monitors the performance of private and federal screeners. This statement is based on our December 2012 report and selected

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<sup>4</sup>According to TSA, in July 2013, the Department of Transportation ended the Essential Air Service subsidy to two of the SPP airports in eastern Montana. The loss of the subsidy resulted in the discontinuation of air service to and from those airports that required the implementation of TSA-required screening measures. Therefore, the total number of airports in the SPP was reduced from 16 to 14. Between January and August 2012, TSA approved the applications of six airports. One of these airports, Sacramento International Airport, CA, withdrew its application in January 2013. Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport, FL submitted its application for participation to the SPP in February 2013 and was approved for participation in May 2013, bringing the total number of airports approved for participation and awaiting selection of a screening contractor back to six.

<sup>5</sup>See Pub. L. No. 112-95, § 830(a), 126 Stat. 11, 135 (2012) (codified at 49 U.S.C. § 44920(b)). The term airport operator means a person that operates a "commercial airport," as that term is used in this report. See also 49 C.F.R. § 1540.5 (defining the term "airport operator").

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updates on the status of recommendations made in our December 2012 report.<sup>6</sup> For our December 2012 report, we analyzed past and current SPP application forms and instructions and interviewed airport operators, screeners, SPP contractors, SPP applicants, TSA headquarters officials, and Federal Security Directors (FSD).<sup>7</sup> We also compared TSA's process for reviewing applications and monitoring performance of private and federal screeners against Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government to determine if any improvements were needed.<sup>8</sup> To determine how screener performance compares at SPP and non-SPP airports, we compared screener performance for the 16 SPP airports that were participating in the SPP at that time to the average performance of other airports in their category, as well as nationally, from fiscal year 2009 through 2011.<sup>9</sup> More detailed information on the scope and methodology appears in our December 2012 report. To update our work, we obtained related documentation, such as the *SPP Annual Report* issued in January 2013, and interviewed agency officials in January 2014 on progress made to implement the recommendations from our December 2012 report related to application guidance and monitoring of private versus federal screener performance. We conducted the work on which this statement is based in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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<sup>6</sup>GAO, *Screening Partnership Program: TSA Should Issue More Guidance to Airports and Monitor Private versus Federal Screener Performance*, GAO-13-208 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 6, 2012).

<sup>7</sup>FSDs are TSA officials that provide day-to-day operational direction for security operations at the airports within their jurisdiction, including those participating in the SPP.

<sup>8</sup>GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 1999).

<sup>9</sup>TSA classifies commercial airports in the United States into one of five security risk categories (X, I, II, III, and IV) based on various factors, such as the total number of takeoffs and landings annually, and other special security considerations. In general, category X airports have the largest number of passenger boardings, and category IV airports have the smallest.

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## Background

On November 19, 2002, pursuant to ATSA, TSA began a 2-year pilot program at 5 airports using private screening companies to screen passengers and checked baggage.<sup>10</sup> In 2004, at the completion of the pilot program, and in accordance with ATSA, TSA established the SPP, whereby any airport authority, whether involved in the pilot or not, could request a transition from federal screeners to private, contracted screeners. All of the 5 pilot airports that applied were approved to continue as part of the SPP, and since its establishment, 21 additional airport applications have been accepted by the SPP.<sup>11</sup>

In March 2012, TSA revised the SPP application to reflect requirements of the FAA Modernization Act, enacted in February 2012.<sup>12</sup> Among other provisions, the act provides that

- Not later than 120 days after the date of receipt of an SPP application submitted by an airport operator, the TSA Administrator must approve or deny the application.
- The TSA Administrator shall approve an application if approval would not (1) compromise security, (2) detrimentally affect the cost-efficiency of the screening of passengers or property at the airport, or (3) detrimentally affect the effectiveness of the screening of passengers or property at the airport.
- Within 60 days of a denial, TSA must provide the airport operator, as well as the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives, a written report that sets forth the findings that

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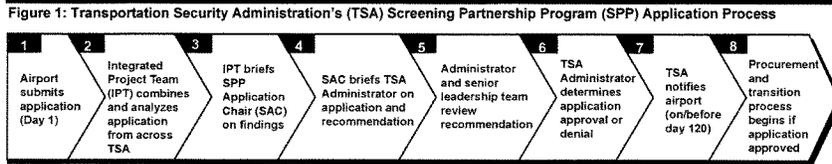
<sup>10</sup>See 49 U.S.C. § 44919. The pilot program was to assess the feasibility of having qualified private screening companies provide airport security screening services in lieu of federal screeners. The following airports from each security risk category were selected to participate: (1) San Francisco International Airport—category X, (2) Kansas City International Airport—category I, (3) Greater Rochester International Airport—category II (now a category I airport), (4) Jackson Hole Airport—category III, and (5) Tupelo Regional Airport—category IV.

<sup>11</sup>A total of 26 airports have been approved to the SPP since its inception in 2004, including the 14 airports currently participating in the SPP and the 6 airports approved for participation and awaiting the selection of a screening contractor. Of the remaining 6 approved airports, 4 airports had participated in the SPP but left the program after commercial air service was discontinued at the airport and 2 withdrew their applications after being approved. For more information on the history of application to the SPP, see GAO-13-208.

<sup>12</sup>See generally Pub. L. No. 112-95, § 803, 126 Stat. at 135-36.

served as the basis of the denial, the results of any cost or security analysis conducted in considering the application, and recommendations on how the airport operator can address the reasons for denial.

All commercial airports are eligible to apply to the SPP. To apply, an airport operator must complete the SPP application and submit it to the SPP Program Management Office (PMO), as well as to the FSD for its airport, by mail, fax, or e-mail. Figure 1 illustrates the SPP application process.



Source: GAO analysis of TSA information.

Note: The IPT is made up of TSA staff from various offices across TSA, including offices related to human capital, information technology, security capabilities, and acquisitions.

Although TSA provides all airports with the opportunity to apply for participation in the SPP, authority to approve or deny the application resides in the discretion of the TSA Administrator. According to TSA officials, in addition to the cost-efficiency and effectiveness considerations mandated by FAA Modernization Act, there are many other factors that are weighed in considering an airport's application for SPP participation. For example, the potential impacts of any upcoming projects at the airport are considered. Once an airport is approved for SPP participation and a private screening contractor has been selected by TSA, the contract screening workforce assumes responsibility for screening passengers and their property and is required to adhere to the same security regulations, standard operating procedures, and other TSA security requirements followed by federal screeners at non-SPP airports.

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**TSA Has Developed Program Application Guidance to Help Improve Transparency of Its Process and Assist Airports in Completing their Applications**

Since our December 2012 report, TSA has developed guidance to assist airport operators in completing their SPP applications, as we recommended. In December 2012, we reported that TSA had developed some resources to assist SPP applicants, but it had not provided guidance on its application and approval process to assist airports. As the application process was originally implemented in 2004, the SPP application process required only that an interested airport operator submit an application stating its intention to opt out of federal screening as well as its reasons for wanting to do so. In 2011, TSA revised its SPP application to reflect the "clear and substantial advantage" standard announced by the Administrator in January 2011. Specifically, TSA requested that the applicant explain how private screening at the airport would provide a clear and substantial advantage to TSA's security operations.<sup>13</sup> At that time, TSA did not provide written guidance to airports to assist them in understanding what would constitute a "clear and substantial advantage to TSA security operations" or TSA's basis for determining whether an airport had met that standard.

As previously noted, in March 2012 TSA again revised the SPP application in accordance with provisions of the FAA Modernization Act, which became law in February 2012. Among other things, the revised application no longer included the "clear and substantial advantage" question, but instead included questions that requested applicants to discuss how participating in the SPP would not compromise security at the airport and to identify potential areas where cost savings or efficiencies may be realized. In December 2012, we reported that while TSA provided general instructions for filling out the SPP application as well as responses to frequently asked questions (FAQ), the agency had not issued guidance to assist airports with completing the revised application nor explained to airports how it would evaluate applications given the changes brought about by the FAA Modernization Act. For example, neither the application instructions or the FAQs addressed TSA's SPP application evaluation process or its basis for determining whether an airport's entry into the SPP would compromise security or affect cost-efficiency and effectiveness.

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<sup>13</sup>For more on the specific wording of this and other questions from the application, see GAO-13-208.

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Further, we found that airport operators who completed the applications generally stated that they faced difficulties in doing so and that additional guidance would have been helpful.<sup>14</sup> For example, one operator stated that he needed cost information to help demonstrate that his airport's participation in the SPP would not detrimentally affect the cost-efficiency of the screening of passengers or property at the airport and that he believed not presenting this information would be detrimental to his airport's application. However, TSA officials at the time said that airports do not need to provide this information to TSA because, as part of the application evaluation process, TSA conducts a detailed cost analysis using historical cost data from SPP and non-SPP airports. The absence of cost and other information in an individual airport's application, TSA officials noted, would not materially affect the TSA Administrator's decision on an SPP application.

Therefore, we reported in December 2012 that while TSA had approved all applications submitted since enactment of the FAA Modernization Act, it was hard to determine how many more airports, if any, would have applied to the program had TSA provided application guidance and information to improve transparency of the SPP application process. Specifically, we reported that in the absence of such application guidance and information, it may be difficult for airport officials to evaluate whether their airports are good candidates for the SPP or determine what criteria TSA uses to accept and approve airports' SPP applications. Further, we concluded that clear guidance for applying to the SPP could improve the transparency of the application process and help ensure that the existing application process is implemented in a consistent and uniform manner. Thus, we recommended that TSA develop guidance that clearly (1) states the criteria and process that TSA is using to assess whether participation in the SPP would compromise security or detrimentally affect the cost-efficiency or the effectiveness of the screening of passengers or property at the airport, (2) states how TSA will obtain and analyze cost information

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<sup>14</sup>For our December 2012 report, we interviewed 4 of the 5 airport operators that applied to the SPP since TSA revised its application after enactment of the FAA Modernization Act. All 5 of the applications were subsequently approved by TSA. We reported that 3 of the 4 operators we interviewed struggled to answer the application questions related to the cost-efficiency of converting to the SPP because they did not have data on federal screening costs, while the fourth airport operator did not need additional information or guidance to respond to the question. Further, 3 of the 4 airport operators we interviewed said that additional guidance would have been helpful in completing the application and determining how TSA evaluates the applications. See GAO-13-208 for more information.

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regarding screening cost-efficiency and effectiveness and the implications of not responding to the related application questions, and (3) provides specific examples of additional information airports should consider providing to TSA to help assess an airport's suitability for the SPP.

TSA concurred with our recommendation and has taken actions to address it. Specifically, TSA updated its SPP website in December 2012 by providing (1) general guidance to assist airports with completing the SPP application and (2) a description of the criteria and process the agency will use to assess airports' applications to participate in the SPP. While the guidance states that TSA has no specific expectations of the information an airport could provide that may be pertinent to its application, it provides some examples of information TSA has found useful and that airports could consider providing to TSA to help assess their suitability for the program. Further, the guidance, in combination with the description of the SPP application evaluation process, outlines how TSA plans to analyze and use cost information regarding screening cost-efficiency and effectiveness. The guidance also states that providing cost information is optional and that not providing such information will not affect the application decision. We believe that these actions address the intent of our recommendation and should help improve transparency of the SPP application process as well as help airport officials determine whether their airports are good candidates for the SPP.

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Performance between  
SPP and Non-SPP  
Airports Varied; TSA  
Recently Developed a  
Mechanism to  
Monitor Private  
versus Federal  
Screener  
Performance

**Performance Varied between SPP and Non-SPP Airports for Some Measures, but Differences Cannot Be Entirely Attributed to the Use of Private or Federal Screeners**

In our December 2012 report, we analyzed screener performance data for four measures and found that there were differences in performance between SPP and non-SPP airports, and those differences could not be exclusively attributed to the use of either federal or private screeners. The four measures we selected to compare screener performance at SPP and non-SPP airports were Threat Image Projection (TIP) detection rates, recertification pass rates, Aviation Security Assessment Program (ASAP) test results, and Presence, Advisement, Communication, and Execution (PACE) evaluation results (see table 1). For each of these four measures, we compared the performance of each of the 16 airports then participating in the SPP with the average performance for each airport's category (X, I, II, III, or IV), as well as the national performance averages for all airports for fiscal years 2009 through 2011.<sup>15</sup>

**Table 1: Performance Measures Used to Compare Screener Performance at Screening Partnership Program (SPP) and Non-SPP Airports, December 2012**

Performance measure	Description
Threat Image Projection (TIP) detection rates	TIPs are fictional threat images (guns, knives, improvised explosive devices, etc.) superimposed onto carry-on baggage as it passes through the X-ray machine. While screening carry-on baggage, screeners identify that a potential threat has been spotted by selecting a "threat" button. If the identified image is a TIP, the X-ray machine informs the screener that the threat was fictional. Otherwise, a screener will search the bag, as the threat object may be real.
Recertification pass rates	In order to maintain their certification to screen passengers and baggage, all screeners (at both SPP and non-SPP airports) must pass several recertification tests on an annual basis. These tests include assessments of threat detection skills on carry-on and checked baggage X-ray machines as well as role-playing scenarios to assess other job functions, such as physical bag searches, pat-downs, and screening passengers with disabilities.
Aviation Security Assessment Program (ASAP) tests results	ASAP tests are covert performance assessments conducted at both screening checkpoints and checked baggage screening areas. Tests are implemented locally by unrecognizable role players who attempt to pass standard test items, such as knives, guns, or simulated improvised explosive devices, through the screening checkpoints or checked baggage screening areas.
Presence, Advisement, Communications, and Execution (PACE) evaluations	PACE evaluations are used to assess screener performance on various elements that may affect security and a passenger's overall traveling experience. PACE evaluators visit a checkpoint covertly and assess the screening personnel on a variety of elements, such as whether the officers provide comprehensive instruction and engage passengers in a calm and respectful manner when screening. Because PACE evaluations began as a baseline assessment program in fiscal year 2011 and had only been implemented only at category X, I, and II airports, our analysis for this measure was limited to the 6 SPP airports in those categories during fiscal year 2011. <sup>9</sup>

Source: GAO analysis of TSA information.

<sup>15</sup> Additional information on these performance measures and how we selected them can be found in our December 2012 report. See GAO-13-208.

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<sup>15</sup>The six category X, I, and II SPP airports in fiscal year 2011 are San Francisco International Airport (X), Kansas City International Airport (I), Greater Rochester International Airport (I), Key West International Airport (II), Joe Foss Field (II), and Jackson Hole Airport (II).

As we reported in December 2012, on the basis of our analyses, we found that, generally, certain SPP airports performed slightly above the airport category and national averages for some measures, while others performed slightly below. For example, SPP airports performed above their respective airport category averages for recertification pass rates in the majority of instances, while the majority of SPP airports that took PACE evaluations in 2011 performed below their airport category averages.<sup>16</sup> For TIP detection rates, SPP airports performed above their respective airport category averages in about half of the instances. However, we also reported in December 2012 that the differences we observed in private and federal screener performance cannot be entirely attributed to the type of screeners at an airport, because, according to TSA officials and other subject matter experts, many factors, some of which cannot be controlled for, affect screener performance. These factors include, but are not limited to, checkpoint layout, airline schedules, seasonal changes in travel volume, and type of traveler.<sup>17</sup>

We also reported in December 2012 that TSA collects data on several other performance measures but, for various reasons, the data cannot be used to compare private and federal screener performance for the purposes of our review. For example, passenger wait time data could not be used because we found that TSA's policy for collecting wait times changed during the time period of our analyses and that these data were not collected in a consistent manner across all airports.<sup>18</sup> We also

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<sup>16</sup>For recertification pass rates, the term "instance" means performance by an airport during a particular year or fiscal year, while for TIP detection rates, the term means performance by an airport during a particular fiscal year for a specific type of screening machine.

<sup>17</sup>DHS deemed the details of our analyses of the four performance measures we used for comparing SPP with non-SPP screener performance as classified or sensitive security information; thus, these details are not included in this testimony.

<sup>18</sup>TSA's policy for measuring wait time changed in March 2010. Instead of collecting precise wait times every hour, TSA began only recording instances in which the wait time was more than 20 or 30 minutes. Further, through our site visits conducted for the December 2012 report, we learned that airports collect wait time data in different ways. For example, some airports calculate the wait time from the end of the queue until the passenger reaches the travel document checker podium; other airports calculate the time from the end of the line until the passenger passes through the walkthrough metal detector after being screened or the advanced imaging technology. See GAO-13-208.

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considered reviewing human capital measures such as attrition, absenteeism, and injury rates, but did not analyze these data because TSA's Office of Human Capital does not collect these data for SPP airports. We reported that while the contractors collect and report this information to the SPP PMO, TSA does not validate the accuracy of the self-reported data nor does it require contractors to use the same human capital measures as TSA, and accordingly, differences may exist in how the metrics are defined and how the data are collected. Therefore, we found that TSA could not guarantee that a comparison of SPP and non-SPP airports on these human capital metrics would be an equal comparison.

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**TSA Has Developed a Mechanism to Monitor Private Screener Performance Separately from the Performance of Federal Screeners**

Since our December 2012 report, TSA has developed a mechanism to regularly monitor private versus federal screener performance, as we recommended. In December 2012, we reported that while TSA monitored screener performance at all airports, the agency did not monitor private screener performance separately from federal screener performance or conduct regular reviews comparing the performance of SPP and non-SPP airports. Beginning in April 2012, TSA introduced a new set of performance measures to assess screener performance at all airports (both SPP and non-SPP) in its Office of Security Operations Executive Scorecard (the Scorecard). Officials told us at the time of our December 2012 review that they provided the Scorecard to FSDs every 2 weeks to assist the FSDs with tracking performance against stated goals and with determining how performance of the airports under their jurisdiction compared with national averages.<sup>19</sup> According to TSA, the 10 measures used in the Scorecard were selected based on input from FSDs and regional directors on the performance measures that most adequately reflected screener and airport performance.<sup>20</sup> Performance measures in

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<sup>19</sup>Although FSDs provide day-to-day operational direction for security operations at the airports within their jurisdiction, including those participating in the SPP, FSDs have responsibility for overall security at SPP airports but do not have direct control over workforce management. Rather, the SPP contractor is contractually obligated to effectively and efficiently manage its screening workforce.

<sup>20</sup>Prior to the Scorecard, from 2006 through April 2012, FSDs used three performance measures in the Management Objective Report (MOR) to assess screener and airport performance. The MOR included three measures that assessed screener performance, including TIP detection rates, Advanced Imaging Technology checkpoint utilization, and layered security effectiveness. For more on these performance measures, see GAO-13-208.

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the Scorecard included the TIP detection rate, and the number of negative and positive customer contacts made to the TSA Contact Center through e-mails or phone calls per 100,000 passengers screened, among others.<sup>21</sup>

We also reported in December 2012 that TSA had conducted or commissioned prior reports comparing the cost and performance of SPP and non-SPP airports. For example, in 2004 and 2007, TSA commissioned reports prepared by private consultants, while in 2008 the agency issued its own report comparing the performance of SPP and non-SPP airports.<sup>22</sup> Generally, these reports found that SPP airports performed at a level equal to or better than non-SPP airports. However, TSA officials stated at the time that they did not plan to conduct similar analyses in the future, and instead, they were using across-the-board mechanisms of both private and federal screeners, such as the Scorecard, to assess screener performance across all commercial airports.

In addition to using the Scorecard, we found that TSA conducted monthly contractor performance management reviews (PMR) at each SPP airport to assess the contractor's performance against the standards set in each SPP contract. The PMRs included 10 performance measures, including some of the same measures included in the Scorecard, such as TIP detection rates and recertification pass rates, for which TSA establishes acceptable quality levels of performance. Failure to meet the acceptable quality levels of performance could result in corrective actions or termination of the contract.

However, as we reported in December 2012, the Scorecard and PMR did not provide a complete picture of screener performance at SPP airports because, while both mechanisms provided a snapshot of private screener

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<sup>21</sup>The TSA Contact Center handles these customer contacts for all of TSA, not only those related to passenger and baggage screening. For more on the Scorecard performance measures, see GAO-13-208.

<sup>22</sup>Bearing Point, Inc. *Private Screening Operations Performance Evaluation Report* (Apr. 16, 2004); Catapult Consultants, LLC, *Private Screening Operations: Business Case Analysis, Transportation Security Administration, Screening Partnership Program* (Arlington, VA: Dec. 14, 2007); and TSA, *A Report on SPP Airport Cost and Performance Analysis and Comparison to Business Case Analysis Finding* (Arlington, VA: Feb. 1, 2008).

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performance at each SPP airport, this information was not summarized for the SPP as a whole or across years, which made it difficult to identify changes in performance. Further, neither the Scorecard nor the PMR provided information on performance in prior years or controlled for variables that TSA officials explained to us were important when comparing private and federal screener performance, such as the type of X-ray machine used for TIP detection rates. We concluded that monitoring private screener performance in comparison with federal screener performance was consistent with the statutory requirement that TSA enter into a contract with a private screening company only if the Administrator determines and certifies to Congress that the level of screening services and protection provided at an airport under a contract will be equal to or greater than the level that would be provided at the airport by federal government personnel.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, we recommended that TSA develop a mechanism to regularly monitor private versus federal screener performance, which would better position the agency to know whether the level of screening services and protection provided at SPP airports continues to be equal to or greater than the level provided at non-SPP airports.

TSA concurred with our recommendation, and has taken actions to address it. Specifically, in January 2013, TSA issued its first *SPP Annual Report*. The report highlights the accomplishments of the SPP during fiscal year 2012 and provides an overview and discussion of private versus federal screener cost and performance. The report also describes the criteria TSA used to select certain performance measures and reasons why other measures were not selected for its comparison of private and federal screener performance. The report compares the performance of SPP airports with the average performance of airports in their respective category, as well as the average performance for all airports, for three performance measures: TIP detection rates, recertification pass rates, and PACE evaluation results. Further, in September 2013, the TSA Assistant Administrator for Security Operations signed an operations directive that provides internal guidance for preparing the *SPP Annual Report*, including the requirement that the SPP PMO must annually verify that the level of screening services and protection provided at SPP airports is equal to or greater than the level

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<sup>23</sup>See 49 U.S.C. § 44920(d) (providing further that private screening companies must be owned and controlled by a citizen of the United States, subject to a waiver of this requirement by the TSA Administrator in certain circumstances).

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that would be provided by federal screeners. We believe that these actions address the intent of our recommendation and should better position TSA to determine whether the level of screening services and protection provided at SPP airports continues to be equal to or greater than the level provided at non-SPP airports. Further, these actions could also assist TSA in identifying performance changes that could lead to improvements in the program and inform decision making regarding potential expansion of the SPP.

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Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Connolly, and members of the subcommittee, this completes my prepared statement. I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have at this time.

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**GAO Contact and  
Staff  
Acknowledgments**

For questions about this statement, please contact Jennifer Grover at (202) 512-7141 or GroverJ@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this statement. Individuals making key contributions to this statement include Glenn Davis (Assistant Director), Stanley Kostyla, Brendan Kretzschmar, Thomas Lombardi, Erin O'Brien, and Jessica Orr. Key contributors for the previous work that this testimony is based on are listed in the product.

Mr. MICA. Thank you. We will start with some questions.

Mr. Hoggan, it is now two years in February since the President signed the bill that said TSA shall accept these applications. How many airports have you accepted applications for since then?

Mr. HOGGAN. There were two, Sarasota-Bradenton and Sanford-Orlando; four that were in Montana, Boozman.

Mr. MICA. As I told the Ranking Member, the decision on Sanford was to put out an RFP last week. It has taken two years to put out an RFP?

Mr. HOGGAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. MICA. That is not acceptable. That is a slow roll, dragging your feet as I described in the beginning. Congress said you shall accept these.

The other thing we have is the question of cost. Again I go back to some of the initial costs we looked at. Currently, you have 51,000 screeners?

Mr. HOGGAN. I have 48,000 screeners from a D-ban, part-time, TSO to an I-ban transportation security manager.

Mr. MICA. But we have 66,000 employees. I don't know if you have 20,000 administrators—that would floor me—but it is estimated you have about 15,000 administrative positions.

Mr. HOGGAN. I don't have 15,000. TSA, by my understanding and allocations, has under 10,000, closer to 9,000.

Mr. MICA. We will go with your 9,000 figure. We have 450 airports divided by two. That is an average of 20 administrative positions for every airport in the country. Some of these airports have two and three flights a day and just a handful of passengers.

Mr. HOGGAN. Out of the approximately 454 airports I have right now, I have little over 2,100 administrative staff at the airports. The rest in that allocation include the surface, cargo, aviation inspectors.

Mr. MICA. I will give you an anecdotal experience at Orlando where we pay on average, across the board, \$38,000 for screening personnel?

Mr. HOGGAN. The exact average.

Mr. MICA. That is the information we got from you all.

I am leaving on one of the concourses and one of the employees takes me aside and says, see those four TSA employees, they are all making in the range of \$100,000 sitting on their butts. That is not efficient operations. That is paying these people what amounts to almost minimum wage. We still have in the very large airports very significant turnover—not only in the large airports, you have some airports in the Midwest where you have a boom right now—the difficulty of finding personnel and you are sending in people.

We have the cost of sending in people for the national screening force. They send them in, put them up in hotels, pay them per diem—the screeners they have to employ to fill those positions. The whole thing, if you add up the cost, there is absolutely no way it can be more cost effective to run the model you currently are operating.

Can we put up one of the slides. We went to Quebec City. To be fair, we did emplanements. We got Rochester, one of the original SPP airports. You still have 16 personnel there making \$80,000-\$100,000 apiece. In Quebec City, they have one federal person,

probably UD2 if you use that to calculate. Again I see the same thing.

At San Francisco, one of the original SPP airports, you have 84 TSA personnel and you are spending \$16 million, \$190,000 on average for those personnel. Not all that cost, to be fair, is personnel cost in San Francisco, but it is very similar. I used San Francisco and Toronto because Toronto has huge international traffic in addition to San Francisco. Again, you have 84 personnel at that airport and huge personnel costs.

I could go on through this. Your smaller airports, even Jackson Hole, which has been private, the airport does its screening, and you have six personnel. Some of those personnel may cover some other airports at a cost of \$763,000. Are you counting this in your cost of the SPP operation?

Mr. HOGGAN. For clarification, the numbers in San Francisco, I know that was 2010 and in 2013, it was 64.

However, in the federal cost estimate we used, we take the fully loaded cost for the FSD and staff. There are certain positions which will stay in the federal government domain even in an SPP, as you well know, as relates to compliance inspectors and coronation centers and certain positions inside the FSD staff.

When we look at an airport and look at their model between federal and private, the difference between the fully loaded that we calculate with federal and what we have with the private SPP, there is an incremental difference between the two. The difference is put into the federal cost estimate with the FTE allocations and the total cost to support the contract work at a manageable level.

The net is exactly the same between the two, whether it is the federal or whether it is federal and the SPP contractor.

Mr. MICA. Again, you calculate some of those costs. You could dismantle a great deal of your Washington personnel if you have the private sector. Most of our costs in some of these operations are personnel.

Mr. HOGGAN. Absolutely correct.

Mr. MICA. Again, there is no discounting for the number of personnel you do not need when you have a private operation. There are models all over. I used Canada. I would be glad to take you to the UK or Israel—again, highly impacted terrorist threat. Yet we go on with the most expensive model with people in some of these positions.

The other thing is we may need to get you out of this whole contracting business. You are one of the few agencies that does contract for these services. We may look at moving that over to GSA and have them look at the contract.

Again, you can conduct oversight and audit and set the rules and regulations. I have no problem with the Federal Government setting standards. That is what they failed to do on 9/11 and that is what they need to responsibly continue to do and audit the performance.

If the private screening is not working as well in some instances, you get rid of them or it is corrected, but you cannot tell me for a minute that it costs less for the Federal Government to do this.

I was also telling Mr. Connolly one of the things private screening has done is actually pay the screeners more—you are aware of that—in some instances to retain them?

Mr. HOGGAN. Perhaps they need to pay the commensurate amount.

Mr. MICA. First, the conversion to private screening, now we still have 16 waiting.

Mr. HOGGAN. Six, sir.

Mr. MICA. She said 16.

Mr. HOGGAN. I know she did. I would have to talk with her. I have six.

Ms. GROVER. I apologize, six.

Mr. MICA. If you have six waiting and have had several drop out, the intimidation program is very effective. Now I understand people who ask to opt out are also given old equipment and also harassed.

Mr. HOGGAN. That is not true, sir.

Mr. MICA. I know it is true. Do not tell me it is not true because I know it is true. I know also that they are the last for service of some of that equipment, for answers from TSA which never come. I met with all the screening companies and found out some of the things you do.

Where airlines change and come into an airport, you do not allow a reasonable means of changing out the terms of the contract. You are one of the few to put some caps on the way you do and do not have a cooperative method of adjusting the contract for additional responsibilities that are incurred.

Some airlines are new and some service airports but I am just telling you what we are learning about your operations. Again, we have several models you can look at.

One of the questions I also have is we have asked on several occasions to disclose some of your operating costs. I was given information that is termed procurement sensitive?

Mr. HOGGAN. Correct.

Mr. MICA. I intend to release some of this information at some time to those who are going to compete. We are going to have to sit down and decide what is going to be disclosed so that those who are competing have a transparent and open process to know what your costs are and what they have to compete against. I am just giving you advance warning.

Mr. HOGGAN. I would appreciate the opportunity to have that discussion with you about procurement sensitive information. I will have our legislative office work with you on that.

Mr. MICA. Because I want them to be able to compete honestly but they cannot do that unless they get honest answers and the public should be able to see your exact costs.

Mr. HOGGAN. I believe we have our exact costs.

Mr. MICA. And what they are going to have to compete for now that you have set caps.

We are looking again and I appreciate your cooperation. This is the first time we have gotten some of the information. We are trying to decipher what costs should be attributed to TSA as far as the federal screening and what costs should be attributed to pri-

vate screening under federal supervision so we get a very clear picture.

The mandate by Congress was pretty clear. It should not take two years to get this moving, which it has done.

I will come back. Let me go to Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all of our panelists for being here.

Mr. HOGGAN, in looking at the omnibus continuing resolution, which we anticipate we will be voting on tomorrow, it cuts \$336 million from DHS' budget, mostly for TSA, and it caps the number of screeners at 46,000. If I heard you correctly, you said right now you have about 48,000?

Mr. HOGGAN. Yes, sir, but that also includes transportation security managers and supervisors. They are in the same PPA count but they are not screening officers.

Mr. CONNOLLY. You could live with this cap?

Mr. HOGGAN. I live with whatever my administrator submitted.

Mr. CONNOLLY. How disruptive are these limits or cuts from your point of view in terms of your ability to fulfill your mission?

Mr. HOGGAN. I will be able to fulfill my job at the level the Administrator supported.

Mr. CONNOLLY. You will?

Mr. HOGGAN. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Could you walk us through, I would like to better understand the process of hiring, career fulfillment and so forth. How do we recruit someone to be a TSA screener?

Mr. HOGGAN. A multitude of ways. The primary way is posting on USA Jobs in the different locales where we have the vacancies. We end up having job fairs and opportunities at some locations where security directors come in, other locations it is staff and we give a pre-employment overview of what the job entails to ensure people understand it is a very difficult job.

As you stated, we interact with 1.8 million passengers a day and screen 1.2 million bags a day. Over the course of a year that is a long period of time. It is a very, very demanding job. As I have said in town halls when I travel the Nation, it is the most difficult job in the Federal Government because they have to be on their game for everything they have to do in the security effectiveness environment all the time while at the same time providing the customer service and interaction with the American traveling public and our foreign guests, as you said.

It is a difficult job. We do a lot of previews, we do some job fairs and we have information on USA Jobs and other means as well.

Mr. CONNOLLY. You do background checks?

Mr. HOGGAN. Absolutely.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Once you have made a job offer to someone, what kind of training do they go through for the job?

Mr. HOGGAN. You have initial OJT training, initial new hire training over 80 hours and then you have OJT or on the job training for an additional 40 hours. That is for a basic officer, entry level. There is additional training provided for unique types of equipment that you would use as well. That is incremental on top of that.

Mr. CONNOLLY. The basic orientation is a combination of 120 hours?

Mr. HOGGAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Is customer service part of that training?

Mr. HOGGAN. Yes, sir, it is. Customer service is an initial part of the training. It is also in recurrent training. I will commit to you that I will do a review and double the efforts for that interaction.

For the record, I also want to satisfy some of your questions. Recently, based on directions from our Deputy Administrator—I think it had to do with some questions Chairman Mica had and some others at the last hearing—we have instituted integrity training across the enterprise at TSA. There are situations and samples in there as relates to service training.

We have also instituted leadership training for anyone who manages any employees inside of TSA. They are required to have specific leadership training. That service training was in there as well.

I would also say for the record that currently today we are averaging about 35 percent of the traveling public on any given day, well over half a million individuals that come through our aviation system are going through TSA pre-check. As a matter of fact, the Administrator and the Secretary for Homeland Security are at Dulles right now talking about a TSA enrollment site.

That changes the perspective of our passengers as well, as well as the interaction of the officers when you have a passenger go through pre-check as opposed to standard screening. We believe that will also change and have a dramatic effect on interaction with the traveling public.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Every member of Congress is in the customer service business. I have been in public life and elective life 19 years. I always say all of my constituents are wonderful. Some are more wonderful than others. We experience what you experience. People are not all the same. Some people are very cooperative and some people can be less so.

While you are trying to do your job to make sure everyone is secure in that airplane when they get on it and nothing gets through, you also have to deal with the vagaries of different personalities in very large numbers of people. It is a huge challenge. I am sure if I had the responsibility there would be a sense of great stress.

I still think it is not an either/or proposition. I still think we can have high quality customer service and satisfaction with also top notch fulfillment of our mission. The two are not incompatible. In fact, they are compatible.

As I indicated, I happen to believe that the less pleasant the experience because we do not get customer service right in our interactions with the public we serve, I actually think it contributes to less cooperation, resentment and a desire frankly not to cooperate.

We do not want that. We want people understanding our mission. As I said, I have been amazed since 9/11 at the level of tolerance and acceptance by the public because they get the tradeoff, but I think we can improve on that tradeoff. I think we have to do that.

There is no excuse for someone barking orders continuously at the public at any airport in America who is an employee of the Federal Government or a contractor for the Federal Government.

Mr. HOGGAN. I would agree.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I would lose my job if I treated the public that way, and rightfully so. My staff would be fired if I found they treated my public that way. We need to hold ourselves to that standard. I fear it is beyond anecdotal.

The Chairman has referenced turnover in TSA. Could you comment a bit about that? What is it and do you think that it is too high and there are things we could do to try to ameliorate that?

Mr. HOGGAN. Too high is a unique definition. I know the attrition rate today as well as last year is lower than it was three, four, five or six years ago.

Mr. CONNOLLY. What is that attrition rate?

Mr. HOGGAN. I think a lot of it has to do with the professionalism we are building. There are full time positions in the TSA.

Mr. CONNOLLY. What is your annual attrition rate?

Mr. HOGGAN. It is through calculation right now. I do not want to say the exact number because it is being worked but somewhere between the 12 and 13 range is my understanding how we finished fiscal year 2013, part-time rates higher than full-time rates.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Are there things you have learned from that to try to get that down, to try to improve on retention and higher job satisfaction? It is not an easy job.

Mr. HOGGAN. No, it is not an easy job. As Chairman Mica said and talked about the average wage, whether in Orlando Airport or other locations, the transportation security officers are some of the lowest paid federal employees in the government. We need to work harder to see what we can do about salaries.

I think a lot of it has to do with flexibility and scheduling and opportunities for career advancement, future development and growth, not only inside the TSA but also inside the Federal Government.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to impose on my time.

Mr. MICA. Go right ahead. It is just the two of us right now.

Mr. CONNOLLY. If it is all right with you, I will finish.

Mr. MICA. Yes, go ahead.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you so, much.

Ms. Grover, this may be a logical thing, but I would like to look at the turnover/retention issue. In terms of best practices, what do we know that we could do or should do, including here in Congress, to try to help Mr. Hoggan and his mission of higher retention and higher job satisfaction for people in very stressful jobs? Did you look at that all?

I would like to see some comparison and I am sure the Chairman would also. How does it compare with other federal agencies? I would assume, given the nature of the stress of the job, you are actually going to have higher turnover in TSA than in some other parts of the federal enterprise. I think that is to be expected.

Are things we could do to make it more satisfying to improve job satisfaction and lower some of that turnover and help Mr. Hoggan in terms of retention? Has GAO looked at that, especially in comparison with either other federal entities or the private sector?

Ms. GROVER. In our work last year on SPP, we were interested in being able to compare workforce performance measures for the

SPP versus the non-SPP airports. That is things like attrition and injury rates and so on.

What we found is that TSA has data they collect for all of the airports that use federal screeners but at the time we did our work, TSA did not give the contractors specific instructions about how to define, measure and collect the same data.

The contractors were providing TSA with information about attrition but we found that TSA had no assurances that the data was comparable. We were not able to do a comparison of attrition at the SPP airports versus the non-SPP airports. One first step would be to make sure they had comparable attrition data across all of the airports.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Yes, fair enough. I am also interested in the broader subject, not just comparing the SPP with non-SPP, but generally this whole area of screening with say a large corporate entity. If you are a large corporation with 20,000 employees, what is the expected turnover that you would absolutely expect, just normal turnover every year?

Corporations do monitor that because that tells them something about what is going on in the work environment and what they need to do to retain. It cost a lot more money to recruit a new employee, train that employee—that is why I asked Mr. Hoggan about the process. To lose that employee costs you a lot of money. It is cheaper to retain that employee.

What do we need to do to do that? How does it compare in a stressful job, not easy, constantly dealing with the public versus other lines of work—Mr. Hoggan, an acceptable turnover given the nature of the work, maybe 13 percent a year.

If we find that it is 18 percent then we have a problem. We all would agree we have a problem because 13 is what we are expecting. If we are below 13, then we are doing something right. That tells us something too and we want to do more of that.

I think we will need you to help us look at other benchmarks as a management tool so that we can monitor what is happening in TSA and the SPPs and so can Mr. Hoggan, as a useful management tool. I commend that to you.

Mr. Bell, have you looked at that at all?

Mr. BELL. That is not something we have looked at.

Mr. CONNOLLY. One of the things the Chairman brought up and I brought up in my opening statement was there seems to be some difference in terms of cost estimate methodology. If I understand TSA correctly, their finding is that SPPs tend to cost about three to nine percent more than TSA itself.

There are others—I think the Chairman among them—who would argue that the SPPs actually save money and do not cost more.

Could you comment on methodology and the discrepancy in cost estimates, Ms. Grover? I think GAO did look at that?

Ms. GROVER. Yes, sir, we did. We looked at TSA's cost estimating methodology back in 2009 and 2011. When we did our last report on this, TSA did indeed show a discrepancy of three percent between the cost of running SPP and non-SPP airports.

However, at the time, we did not have confidence in the three percent figure because one of the issues that was still unresolved

at that time was the question of uncertainty in the underlying estimate and underlying assumptions going into the estimate.

Whenever you build an estimated cost, you have to make a series of assumptions that underlie it. Ideally what you want is a range around your point estimate so that policymakers have a good understanding of the level of confidence in the point estimate, so the actual difference in cost could have been three percent but it could have been eight percent or it could have been negative two percent—in other words that it was actually less expensive to run airports with private screeners.

Until TSA has a good understanding of the level of uncertainty feeding into their assumptions and how that plays out with the range around their point estimate, I think there is still some question about the relative cost.

Mr. CONNOLLY. This, to me, is a very critical question that has to be resolved because we cannot deal with different assumptions about how to get at a cost estimate. We have to have a methodology we all buy into so that we can then have one set of numbers, not a competing set of numbers.

Otherwise, how can Congress or the Administration make informed decisions about which is better in a given circumstance—going the SPP route or going the TSA route—if we cannot even agree that it saves or costs money? How can we pass another bill mandating further privatization on the risk that we may get it wrong, that the assumption we are making, that privatization is always good and always saves money, is wrong?

I am a big believer that these decisions have to be made on a pragmatic basis, not a theological basis. Privatization is not intrinsically good or bad and neither is federal employment. It is a matter of what works. Part of what works is how much does it cost and what is the quality we are getting.

It seems to me this is a very critical question. Again, GAO can be very helpful in helping us get to the bottom of a methodology we all buy into.

Mr. Bell, did you want to comment on that?

Mr. BELL. I agree with your comments. We did not go into testing the cost methodology, similar concerns that GAO had that we did not have faith in the underlying methodology and did not have enough information to audit to make a good conclusion. I know that is something I know TSA is working on. Our second recommendation is coming up with solid cost estimates. We are still waiting for that documentation to take look and see if they have actually done that.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Hoggan, I assume you would agree with the principle that we need one methodology we all agree on so we can have one set of accurate cost estimates to make informed decisions?

Mr. HOGGAN. Absolutely, we do. It is my understanding with our federal cost estimates, we have taken all the recommendations from both GAO and the IG and put them inside to come up with that.

I know there is a large conversation or a difference of opinion as it relates to imputed cost as relates to additional employee benefits, whether life insurance or retirement, corporate tax credit or liabil-

ity insurance, but those are costs that TSA is not allocated for and are outside of our appropriations.

I know the Chairman has expressed concern with that fundamental difference and I am sure that will come up again. Not being a finance manager, and with the folks from the Appropriations staff here, I can only spend money that has been appropriated to me. That would be outside my appropriations.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I represent the third largest number of federal employees in the United States in my district and probably represent the largest number of federal contract employees in the United States. I deal with this issue all the time about in-sourcing or out-sourcing. I absolutely insist it not be done theologically. One is not better than the other. It is a matter of circumstance and what is the best outcome for the taxpayer.

Often the private sector will complain that the Federal Government often does not—you used the term “fully loaded costs,” but sometimes the private sector feels that when the Federal Government gets in the business of comparing the private sector to the public sector, it does not hold itself to the same standard to which it holds the private sector—fully loaded costs.

Trying to get our arms around this in an accurate way I think is essential if we are going to make informed decisions moving forward.

I thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Chairman. The Chairman talked about maybe what we need to do in contracting for SPP is get TSA out of the contracting business and give it to GSA. Do you have any opinion about that, Ms. Grover, from GAO’s point of view?

Ms. GROVER. GAO has not done any work specifically examining that issue, sir. We would be happy in the future to do a broad review of the current construct of the way that TSA operations are being run; examine the question of conflict of interest and whether it exists under the current arrangement; and what implications that might have for cost or efficiency.

Mr. CONNOLLY. You have looked at TSA’s performance as a contracting agency?

Ms. GROVER. Yes, sir.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And?

Ms. GROVER. They have a system set up where they meet monthly with each of their contractors and look at their performance based on a very broad series of measures. They have systems in place to follow up in any areas where they see concerns or discrepancies.

One of the things we pointed out in the past is that at the time of our review, they were maintaining all of those monthly records on paper. We encouraged them to consider putting them into electronic format to allow better contractor oversight over time.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Hoggan, my final question, to give you a chance to comment, is from your point of view, would TSA be alleviated of the burden if we were to transfer all contracting responsibility to GSA or would that just complicate your life?

Mr. HOGGAN. I believe it would complicate my life. The acquisitions process we have in TSA, I think we will see going forward, satisfies the requirements of the SPP office.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, again, thank you so much for your indulgence.

Mr. MICA. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member, too. We got these figures from TSA. They spent \$1.1 billion on administrative staff and \$1.9 billion on their screening staff. I do not know if that \$46,000 or \$51,000 is in their 66,000 total.

Mr. Hoggan, how many administrative personnel do you have in TSA in Washington, D.C.?

Mr. HOGGAN. My understanding is we have just under, headquarters staff and all, about 4,000; 2,500 in headquarters.

Mr. MICA. Just under 4,000—3,986, making \$103,000, nothing because I think people who live in the D.C. area need a good wage.

Mr. HOGGAN. There are 2,500 employees at headquarters roughly.

Mr. MICA. I helped envision TSA with other members of Congress. Not in our wildest imagination did we ever think you would get to 66,000. You are bigger than the United States Coast Guard and I think six departments of government. You are at \$103,000. If we divided this by half, we get \$51,000 to 8,000 screeners, you might get a bit better performance.

They have 9,656 administrators in the field. They are making \$80,000 on average. Again, I want people to have a living wage. This is not about wages. I think we should keep them high for retention purposes, whether they are private or federal.

This is not about union membership and I told you that. San Francisco had unions, private screening under federal supervision, long before the all federal. It is not about getting cheap labor. It is actually paying people. We spent over \$1 billion on training and more than half the people who were trained have left.

We compared Los Angeles with San Francisco on the training costs which we got access to and it was \$11,000 more per employee, that is what I was talking about, for federal screeners compared to the SPP screeners' training.

I am glad to hear you have the integrity training going on. That is only after meltdowns. I do not want to go through the sordid history of even my own airport, Orlando, where it was on national television, the folks ripping off passengers. I am glad to see you are taking steps on that.

When Mr. Pistole came in I sat with him and he promised me a risk-based system. How many Americans have had records of being airline passengers have ever been involved in a terrorist act?

Mr. HOGGAN. How many passengers?

Mr. MICA. How many Americans that have been passengers with a flying record have ever been involved in a terrorist act?

Mr. HOGGAN. I would have to pull the records.

Mr. MICA. There are none. I can give you the list.

Mr. HOGGAN. Are you asking U.S. or international?

Mr. MICA. I can give you the people who have been involved in terrorist acts. Richard Reid is one of the few Anglo names. He was Jamaican and English. You have had the shoe bomber. We had the Kenyan. Most of the events start in another country. At one time we had—it was a classified number—just a handful of people, looking at people coming into the United States. However, 99.9 percent of Americans have never caused a problem.

Now we are getting to where you are telling the committee that we have pre-check for what percentage?

Mr. HOGGAN. Approximately 35 percent.

Mr. MICA. It should be 95 or 99 percent. When Mr. Mineta was Secretary, we set this up. We set up a system where it was 15 minutes from curb to the plane. At the time, the Administrator was Michael Jackson. I am telling you that is the way this should operate.

If you come to Orlando or Sanford Airport, what is going on is almost criminal to American citizens with the way they are treated. You just heard from the Ranking Member. He does not fly as much. He just drives across the 14th Street Bridge, but I fly all the time. I see what we are doing to Americans who pose no risk.

Now I see finally the mess we have created, the lanes, you have a clear lane, you have a pre-check lane. It used to be you go through quickly and now pre-check is almost worse than the other lanes. They have known crew member lanes. The poor bastard public is there with their kids.

The other day I saw them patting down a gentleman and if he posed a risk, dear, God. This is the mess we have created along with the expensive uniforms, the badges and the intimidation. We tried to get this shifted to what we intended, private screening under federal supervision, with the Federal Government playing the appropriate role, conducting the intelligence, setting the security standards, changing things out.

You could go down to Orlando and probably let 90 percent of the people go through if you had a risk-based system with no hassle and screen them. Mr. Pistole has failed to put in place a risk-based system. Now you are telling me you are going to have 35 percent in pre-check. I can tell you that you are not ready for it out there.

The other thing I find out talking to the screening people is they have been the innovators. I know they are the innovators because I watched the transition. Probably some of the things I did to help TSA—almost all of the innovations I took from San Francisco and some of the other models from the private screeners—but they were allowed to innovate to actually process people efficiently and effectively. I saw the results. They performed statistically significantly better.

I know what happens now—this new evaluation, the tip offs and all of that stuff to tilt the scales. I followed this from the very beginning but I am telling you that in fact this needs to be converted out to a risk-based system.

The thing I passed three times in law and we put in the FAA bill, we tweaked it a little and now they are using it as an excuse to further delay, it is over ten years to have identification with a biometric measure, a hard copy and a pilot, for example.

The TWIC card, they wrote us and said they cannot get a reader, so we spent \$1 billion probably on TWIC cards that you have to use a driver's license. I do not know where we end this.

I will tell you what is coming. As you heard here today, the frustration is bipartisan. How many people do you have in your SPP office now?

Mr. HOGGAN. I have 10 people right now.

Mr. MICA. You may need a whole lot more because I think I will get the support. I may not get it done this year but I will get it done within the next year. Mark my words. It took me a while to get the change in the language which you are now slow rolling, but I will get the language that within a certain amount of time, you get out of the screening business, you set the rules, conduct the audits and so forth. I will get the support to do it one way or the other. If you cannot handle it, we will put it in GSA and they will handle it as a contracting thing.

We also need to get you out of the equipment business. You cannot maintain, you cannot acquire the acquisition when you buy the puffers and they have to be destroyed so spend a couple million dollars. The back scatter equipment staff, I want to do investigate where we are on that. We spent half a billion on that. They have been removed.

You deployed the RF Wave, millimeter wave screening which was never supposed to be used as primary screening, never, never. You have people up there, little old ladies and people who pose no risk and you are using that equipment on them and then patting them down. Come on, guys. It is just unbelievable. That was another half a billion dollar acquisition—a quarter of a billion split between a couple. It cost half a billion to install because they can do it the most expensive way.

I need to even get you out of that business, acquisition of equipment, acquisition of services because you cannot do it. It is nothing against you personally. You have been there eight months.

Mr. HOGGAN. I have been in this position as Assistant Administrator for Security Operations for eight months. I have been at TSA since November 2004.

Mr. MICA. I am told that the SPP Office is in disarray as far as its leadership.

Mr. HOGGAN. I disagree.

Mr. MICA. I am just told that people who deal with them cannot get an answer and also movement of personnel.

We have a host of questions, some of them technical in nature. I want to know what you have done with these applications, some of them approved back in January 2012 for your six airports, two approved in June 2012, two in August 2012, one in May 2013 and we still do not have these done after we passed the law.

The slow rolling is not going to work. I am probably going to let you stew in your juice a little bit longer but I can tell you that folks are getting fed up with the whole thing. There is support for a dramatic redo.

If we could move people after 9/11 through in 15 minutes, having had that risk at that point, here we are 10 or 12 years later, and I now aviation is still a target, but we are holding millions of Americans hostage and they are not getting proper screening at the most efficient and effective cost.

Take that message back to Mr. Pistole. I will give it to him personally. I do have more questions and we will submit them for the record.

Mr. Connolly, is there anything else?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Not at this time, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. Do you notice a little frustration? I get frustrated sometimes. I think together we can make it work better. I am embarrassed that I created the thing and now it has gone awry at great expense and inconvenience.

Security is incredibly important. We still are at risk and I believe they will use aviation again to come after us, but I do not think the current structure is geared to deal with that. Everything we have done is in reaction. Take off your shoes was the liquids. It is all reactive. Pretty soon we will be going through there naked and that has to be an ugly sight for some of us.

Mr. CONNOLLY. That is when I stop flying, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MICA. I thank Mr. Hoggan, Mr. Bell and Ms. Grover for your work and your cooperation.

There being no further business before the subcommittee, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:38 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

## **APPENDIX**

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MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD

**Opening Statement of Chairman John Mica  
Subcommittee on Government Operations**

“TSA Oversight: Examining the Screening Partnership Program.”

- Good morning and welcome to today’s hearing. I would like to welcome Ranking Member Connolly, Members of the Subcommittee, and members of the audience.
- The Transportation Security Agency, created in 2001 following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, was intended to be a lean security agency with the flexibility to quickly respond and adapt to potential threats of terrorism. Instead, TSA has mushroomed into a massive, inflexible, backward-looking bureaucracy of more than 65,000. Over its first ten years of existence, the agency and its numerous failures have cost taxpayers \$57 billion.
- TSA is a bloated, top-heavy agency in need of reform. Its ranks include approximately 3,986 headquarters staff in Washington, DC making \$103,852 per year on average, and 9,656 administrators in the field.
- The agency's primary objectives should be setting security standards, overseeing security performance, and analyzing intelligence, but it has become too focused on maintaining and growing its own bureaucracy. This is an agency that needs to get out of the personnel management business and into the security business.
- As Chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I conducted extensive oversight of TSA operations, including their SPP program. I’ve continued rigorous oversight, as the Chairman of this Subcommittee, with the hopes of increasing efficiency and returning TSA to their original mission.
- In 2011, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee issued a staff report, “TSA Ignores More Cost-Effective Screening Model.” We made a number of important findings such as: taxpayers would save \$1 billion over five years if the Nation’s top 35 airports operated as efficiently as San Francisco International under the SPP model, attrition rates were 5.1% higher at LAX than at SFO, initial hiring and training costs were more than \$11,000 per employee higher for federal screeners compared to SPP screeners and SPP screeners are 65 percent more efficient than federal counterparts.
- Today, the purpose of the hearing is to continue examining the Screening Partnership Program. Prior to the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2012, TSA was able to reject applications from airport operators for the SPP program without even providing

justification. The FAA Modernization Act, however, mandated that a private screening company must be considered if it can provide services that are "equal to or better than those provided by TSA." This is measured by costs and security.

- I have some concerns about TSA's cost-efficiency model and how the agency is measuring costs to define the threshold private screening companies must meet to become accepted into the SPP initiative.
- Based on the many questions surrounding the Screening Partnership Program, I requested documents numerous times in the past year to shed light on the number of TSA personnel needed at SPP operated airports and the Cost Efficiency Model used by TSA to approve or deny airports into the program.
- Information and costs regarding the SPP initiative is important to airport operators to understand so they can make an informed and effective decision about whether to privatize screening at commercial airports.
- I am troubled by the seemingly large number of TSA staff needed at SPP airports. Unlike the TSA, I received information from the Canadian Embassy regarding Canada's Airport Screening Privatizing and we found that Canada has generated a model of efficiency while maintaining a high level of security at airports in Canada.
- Specifically, Quebec City Jean Lesage International Airport handled approximately 1.2 million air travelers in 2010, while its ratio of private contract screeners to federal administrative personnel was approximately 150-to-1. By comparison, in the U.S. under the SPP, at Sioux Falls Regional Airport (FSD), which handled approximately 700,000 air travelers in 2010, the ratio of private contract screeners to federal administrative personnel was 3-to-1.
- Because the SPP is an important program to save tax-payer money, I want to ensure that the application and contracting process is as smooth as possible. While some airports recently had to wait, in some cases, years to go through the process, it appears TSA has recently developed a quicker time frame for approving and issuing RFPs to airports that have been approved for the SPP. We will continue to oversee the application process.

Questions for Mr. Bell  
Acting Assistant Inspector General for Audits  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Office of the Inspector General

Questions from Ranking Member Connolly  
Subcommittee on Government Operations  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform  
Hearing on:

“TSA Oversight: Examining the Screening Partnership Program”

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1. Last June, the Office of Inspector General investigated whether TSA puts undue pressure on airport officials to forgo participation in the SPP program. The audit found:

TSA has not pressured airport officials to not participate in the SPP. [DHS OIG] conducted telephone interviews with officials from 24 non-SPP airports, none of whom said they were pressured by TSA regarding the program.

Could you please elaborate on that finding?

Based on our audit work, we concluded that TSA met the requirements for SPP as intended under the *Aviation and Transportation Security Act*. The Component implemented SPP and made the program available to interested airports.

We randomly selected 24 non-SPP airports to contact, without TSA’s involvement, to ensure that the Component did not influence our discussions. Through interviews with airport officials, as well as review of SPP documentation, we did not identify anything that indicated TSA pressured airport officials about SPP participation. Specifically, we asked officials at the 24 non-SPP airports about their knowledge of the program and about their communication with TSA on SPP. Airport officials were aware of the program through the aviation industry, media, and TSA’s website. Five of the 24 airports had communicated directly with TSA about SPP. The communication focused on SPP as an option for their location and on the application process. We asked the airport officials whether they ever applied for inclusion in SPP and if they had, what prevented them from participating in the program. None of the airports had applied. Of the 24 airports we contacted, 20 reported they were satisfied with TSA screening at their airport, 2 had no comment or were undecided, 1 was not interested in SPP, and 1 planned to apply to the program. We also asked the officials if they had suggestions for TSA to promote SPP better. Some suggested that TSA should partner with the Airports Council International – North America and the American Association of Airport Executives to promote the program.

We also reviewed documentation from the six airports that applied to participate in SPP and were rejected. Four of the six rejected airports subsequently reapplied and were accepted. Officials from the two airports that did not reapply said that TSA had not placed undue pressure on them about their decision.

2. The report also recommended TSA develop quality assurance procedures to ensure the most relevant and accurate information is used when adjudicating SPP decisions. TSA concurred with the recommendation and planned a number of corrective actions. What plans has TSA made and what is their timeline for implementing those actions?

TSA's SPP application process is currently under review and will be updated to include quality assurance procedures. TSA expects to finalize the updated *Screening Partnership Program Application Process* by June 27, 2014. DHS OIG will review the entire process before closing our recommendation.

Although it is currently updating the process, TSA began working to improve quality assurance in application documents early in fiscal year 2013. In March 2013, TSA approved an addendum on quality assurance procedures to the *Screening Partnership Program Application Process*. In December 2013, TSA reported that changes in key SPP leadership positions had delayed and altered some planned actions. In reviewing the addendum, leadership determined that it was more beneficial to incorporate quality assurance procedures into the application process, rather than add them as a supplement.

According to TSA, to improve quality assurance, it has begun printing dates on Independent Government Cost Estimates (IGCE) to track changes and versions better over time and to ensure the quality of IGCEs. The SPP Program Management Office (PMO) has completed the final version of the Federal cost estimating methodology, which will detail how IGCEs are created and how they will be reviewed. The SPP PMO is also finalizing a review process for all application documents to ensure they are final and accurate before being used to reach a final determination. For all future procurements, 1 week before releasing a Request for Proposals, the SPP PMO will formally confirm or revise the TSA "cost efficiency" number.

On January 1, 2013, the TSA Office of Acquisition issued a policy letter on Source Selection Authority (SSA) appointment and business processes. The policy letter includes requirements for an independent SSA trade-off analysis decision, with a reference to the *U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Source Selection Guide*. In January 2013, the TSA Office of Acquisition also issued a policy reminder on source selection procedures. This policy reminder reiterates Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) requirements for the SSA to independently document its decision, as well as the need for Contracting Officers to review all source selection documents in detail. According to TSA, these implemented actions will ensure that SSA decisions comply with the FAR and supplemental guidance.

On March 4, 2013, TSA approved a revised process for documenting SSA decisions on SPP participation. The revised process complies with FAR Subpart 15.308 *Source selection decision*. The *U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Source Selection Guide* also provides guidance on specific information to be included in SSA decisions.

<b>Question#:</b>	1
<b>Topic:</b>	written testimony
<b>Hearing:</b>	TSA Oversight: Examining the Screening Partnership Program
<b>Primary:</b>	The Honorable Gerry Connolly
<b>Committee:</b>	OVERSIGHT & GOV RFORM (HOUSE)

**Question:** In your written testimony, stated, "Participation depends on interest from airport operators. To date, that interest has been limited." Only 30 airports have applied to the program, including the 5 airports originally involved in the pilot program. To what do you attribute the lack of interest in the program?

**Response:** Because participation in the Screening Partnership Program (SPP) is voluntary, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) remains neutral with respect to whether airport operators decide to submit an application. Program background details and airport application instructions are available on TSA's website; however, to retain a neutral posture, TSA has not solicited input from airport operators about why they may or may not have interest in the program. In 2007, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) explored factors that contribute to an airport operator's decision about whether to participate in the SPP. The GAO published these findings in *GAO-09-27R: Aviation Security: TSA's Cost and Performance Study of Private-Sector Airport Screening*.

<b>Question#:</b>	2
<b>Topic:</b>	SPP
<b>Hearing:</b>	TSA Oversight: Examining the Screening Partnership Program
<b>Primary:</b>	The Honorable Gerry Connolly
<b>Committee:</b>	OVERSIGHT & GOV RFORM (HOUSE)

**Question:** Almost half of the participating airports are small airports located in Montana. Why does it seem that Montana airport operators are more interested in SPP than airport operators in other states?

**Response:** Because participation in the Screening Partnership Program (SPP) is voluntary, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) remains neutral with respect to whether airport operators decide to submit an application. To retain this neutral posture, TSA has not solicited input from airport operators about why they may or may not have interest in the program. Therefore, TSA does not know if Montana airport operators are more interested in SPP than airport operators in other states.

<b>Question#:</b>	3
<b>Topic:</b>	GAO 1
<b>Hearing:</b>	TSA Oversight: Examining the Screening Partnership Program
<b>Primary:</b>	The Honorable Gerry Connolly
<b>Committee:</b>	OVERSIGHT & GOV RFORM (HOUSE)

**Question:** GAO recommended that TSA improve its application process to assist airport operators in understanding how their applications will be evaluated. TSA concurred with the recommendation and GAO reported that positive changes have been made. What has TSA done to make the SPP application process more accessible and transparent to airport operators?

**Response:** In 2013, in response to the GAO recommendations and the FAA Modernization and Reform Act provisions, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) revised the Screening Partnership Program (SPP) application and updated the guidance provided on its website for airport operators interested in participating in the program. Specifically, TSA posted an application overview that describes the process, provides as many details as possible concerning the data that is used to approve or deny an application, and discusses TSA's cost-estimating methodology and TSA's definition of cost efficiency.

<b>Question#:</b>	4
<b>Topic:</b>	GAO 2
<b>Hearing:</b>	TSA Oversight: Examining the Screening Partnership Program
<b>Primary:</b>	The Honorable Gerry Connolly
<b>Committee:</b>	OVERSIGHT & GOV RFORM (HOUSE)

**Question:** In its 2012 report, GAO stated it was not able to analyze the wait times and human capital measures (including attrition, absenteeism, and injury rates) of private and federal screener performance because TSA either had not collected data or had not collected it in a consistent manner across all airports. Do you agree with the conclusion that there is not sufficient data to allow a comparison between federal and private screening operations? Does TSA have any plans to collect this data in a consistent manner so that comparisons can be made between airports?

**Response:** Cost and screening performance are the two areas where the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) compares the Screening Partnership Program (SPP) airports and non-SPP airports. Metrics such as attrition, absenteeism, or injury rates are not included as germane to the definitions of either cost or screening performance and, thus, are not monitored on a consistent basis. Because SPP contracts are not considered personal services contracts, SPP contractors have flexibility about how they manage their workforce as long as they meet the Acceptable Quality Level (AQL) for screening performance outlined in their contract. Airports, including those in the SPP, are required to report wait time data that exceeds 10 minutes. However, TSA is still working to ensure consistency in the collection of that data. Wait time reporting is required in the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plans (QASP) for each SPP contract along with other measures of performance such as Threat Image Projection (TIP) detection rate, first time certification pass rate, and missed selectee rate. TSA does not collect data that measures any element for which the contractors are not legally or contractually liable. TSA believes the data that is collected provides a sufficient basis for comparison and does not agree with the conclusion drawn in the GAO report that there is insufficient data for meaningful comparison.

<b>Question#:</b>	5
<b>Topic:</b>	contracts
<b>Hearing:</b>	TSA Oversight: Examining the Screening Partnership Program
<b>Primary:</b>	The Honorable Gerry Connolly
<b>Committee:</b>	OVERSIGHT & GOV RFORM (HOUSE)

**Question:** Once a contract has been awarded, what measures does TSA utilize to ensure contractors meet federal standards, including those relating to hiring, training, and screening procedures?

**Response:** The Screening Partnership Program (SPP) contractors must meet contract requirements regarding hiring (as related to security vetting), training, and screening procedures. Hiring requirements include full security vetting of all contract personnel by the Personnel Security Division of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). The same training materials and screening procedures that are provided to federal employees are also provided to the SPP contractor for implementation at the local level. The SPP also executes a Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) for every contract that outlines the Acceptable Quality Level (AQL) for each metric related to legal or contractual compliance. These metrics include training completion and SOP compliance and are monitored by TSA monthly to ensure contractors continually meet federal standards.

<b>Question#:</b>	6
<b>Topic:</b>	TWIC
<b>Hearing:</b>	TSA Oversight: Examining the Screening Partnership Program
<b>Primary:</b>	The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
<b>Committee:</b>	OVERSIGHT & GOV RFORM (HOUSE)

**Question:** The Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2012 required the TSA to implement a program within 270 days of enactment to enable individuals to obtain a TWIC card with only one visit to a TWIC enrollment center.

I understand TSA has implemented a pilot OneVisit program in two states. How is the pilot progressing and what lessons have been learned from it?

**Response:** In June 2013, TSA launched Phase I of the OneVisit pilot in all nine enrollment sites in Alaska. In December 2013, Phase II of OneVisit was initiated in five enrollment sites in Michigan. As of mid-February 2014, there were a total of 2,279 Transportation Worker Identification Credentialing (TWIC) program enrollments at those enrollment sites. Of that number, 1,517 workers requested that their credential be sent to a mailing address, resulting in approximately 66 percent of the total enrollments requesting the OneVisit option. The primary lessons learned are that verifying the address provided by the applicant as a valid postal address before mailing has resulted in very few cards or personal identification number (PIN) mailers being returned. The pilot also confirmed as a lesson learned that a manual solution was highly labor intensive and as currently planned, an automated solution must be used for the nationwide rollout.

**Question:** What is the average length of time it takes an individual to receive a TWIC card after the person completes the enrollment process at an enrollment center?

**Response:** The average wait time for a TWIC is 5 to 7 days if there is no potentially disqualifying information associated with the applicant. For OneVisit enrollment, cards are received at the requested mailing address within 5-10 days which includes a typical 2-day mailing period.

**Question:** How will the OneVisit program be expanded - will it be introduced slowly in additional states or simply rolled-out nationwide?

**Response:** The nation-wide OneVisit rollout will begin in mid-May 2014 and will be implemented on an incremental basis over a three month period.

**Question:** When will expansions occur and by what date will the program be implemented in all states?

<b>Question#:</b>	6
<b>Topic:</b>	TWIC
<b>Hearing:</b>	TSA Oversight: Examining the Screening Partnership Program
<b>Primary:</b>	The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
<b>Committee:</b>	OVERSIGHT & GOV RFORM (HOUSE)

**Response:** The nation-wide rollout will begin in Mid-May 2014. It is anticipated that the national rollout for OneVisit will be fully implemented in July 2014.