

Personal Statement
David Pecoske
Confirmation Hearing to be TSA Administrator
July 21, 2022

Good morning Chairman Peters, Ranking Member Portman and distinguished members of the Committee.

I have had the honor of serving as the leader of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for nearly five years, and it is my great privilege to be before you today to be considered for a second five-year term as Administrator.

I would like to thank President Biden for re-nominating me for this important national security position and I would like to also thank Secretary Mayorkas and the entire DHS team for their support during this process. I'd also like to thank my family for their unending support in this position and throughout my career.

When President Biden announced my re-nomination, one acquaintance said to me, "that's a tough job; why would you want to do this for another 5 years?" The answer to this is simple – I want to continue to support the amazing TSA workforce.

The TSA workforce is exceptional and during my time at TSA, they have performed at a high-level amid challenging and historic circumstances.

Whether it is Transportation Security Officers, Federal Air Marshals, Inspectors or all of the TSA employees who support them behind the scenes, I am immensely proud to be a part of an organization laser-focused on protecting our Nation and its transportation system. They are a dedicated, committed workforce.

Of note though, I want to talk about our Transportation Security Officers (TSO). TSOs interact with millions of people every day and perform a critical national security function for our nation.

Their watch never stops. They came to work without pay during a 35-day partial government shut down in 2019. They staffed the checkpoints when the rest of the country remained home amid the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. And Transportation Security Officers have been an important part of the recovery of air travel from the pandemic.

Similarly, our Federal Air Marshals protect the Nation during shutdowns, pandemics, and other high level incidents. They do so with a level of professionalism and integrity that serves as a model for the entire TSA family.

Our workforce is an inspiration to me and totally deserving of our full support. That starts with funding the President's Fiscal Year 2023 budget request, which provides pay equity for TSA employees and finally puts them on equal footing with the rest of their counterparts in the federal government.

If confirmed, I will continue to do all that I can to advocate for and hopefully implement pay equity. I will continue to work hard to ensure the TSA workforce is well prepared to meet the challenges of the next five years and beyond.

TSA does not do its job alone. Our mission success is directly dependent on the cooperation between the Agency and its myriad of partners.

In aviation, we continue our strong partnerships with our critical stakeholders—the airlines, the airports, state and local governments, other federal agencies, foreign governments, and of course pilots and flight attendants.

Equally important are the growing partnerships we have with the surface transportation sector, where TSA works closely with the oil and natural gas pipeline, passenger and transit rail, freight rail, trucking and bus industries.

Amid the challenges of growing cyber threats, TSA also relies heavily on forging productive partnerships with owners and operators of our critical transportation infrastructure, for which TSA serves as the security regulator.

I value our strong partnership with organized labor, employee resource groups and advisory panels who provide advocacy for our workforce. They help us remain strong by promoting healthy and thriving work environments for our TSA family.

I want to take a second and recognize these partnerships and thank all of those entities for their contributions toward securing our nation's transportation systems.

If confirmed, I will do everything I can to make sure that TSA maintains and strengthens these important partnerships to ensure that our pursuit of the highest level of transportation security works in tandem with the facilitation of trade and commerce in the transportation system.

Finally, I want to thank this Committee for your critical work to provide the authority to the Department—and now explicitly to TSA—to counter unmanned aerial systems. I also appreciate the Committee's work on critical infrastructure security, to include efforts addressing the cybersecurity of the transportation sector. If reconfirmed, I hope to continue this important cooperation between HSGAC and TSA.

After 20 years, TSA has grown considerably and we have learned a great deal about how to best protect our nation's transportation system. We still have much more work to do, but I remain committed to TSA's future.

Chairman Peters, Ranking Member Portman and distinguished members of this committee, I look forward to answering your questions.