

**TESTIMONY**

**Prepared Statement of  
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**Before the  
Committee on Governmental Affairs  
United States Senate**

**on “Weak Links: How Should the Federal Government  
Manage Airline Passenger and Baggage Screening?”**

**September 25, 2001**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee: I am Leonard L. Griggs, Jr.,<sup>[1]</sup> Director of Airports for the City of St. Louis.

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport served more than 31 million passengers last year. Lambert, historically TWA's hub, is becoming a major hub airport for American Airlines, as American takes over TWA's operations and personnel.

I appreciate being invited to share Lambert Airport's views on how the nation's aviation security system can be improved so that our citizens will have renewed confidence that our skies are safe and that the Federal Government is protecting airports and aircraft operations from the full spectrum of possible terrorist activities. I am pleased that the focus of this hearing is airport screeners since they are a key element in the defense against terrorists.

First, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Congress and President Bush for having developed and enacted S. 1450, the “Air Transportation Safety and System Stabilization Act,” within a single week's time. This legislation, which makes available \$5 billion in direct grants to the nation's scheduled airlines, will eliminate the likelihood of carrier bankruptcies due to business lost when the Federal Government closed all our airports two weeks ago. The bill's loan guarantee program could reverse the industry's loss of creditworthiness resulting from the terrorist acts of September 11. The bill also provides for faster payment of claims resulting from the New York City, Pentagon and Pennsylvania plane crashes that will benefit the families of those lost on those flights. Congress wisely added a provision authorizing \$120 million for continued air service to smaller communities. Finally, we understand that \$3 billion of the \$40 billion authorization enacted by Congress on September 14 will help airlines with the security upgrades that have since been put into the system.

There is one important item that won't require Congressional legislation – and that's the prompt reopening of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. I understand this issue will be resolved by the Federal security agencies. However, Reagan National Airport is an important symbol as well as a highly important destination airport serving the National Capital area. To paraphrase Washington Mayor Tony Williams, Reagan National Airport is the front door

of this city. Keeping it closed symbolically keeps Washington closed and tells the terrorists that they have won an important perceptual objective – not allowing our pre-September 11 civil aviation system to be fully restored. I am confident security measures can be agreed to that will make flying out of National safe.

Congressional leaders indicated last week when endorsing S. 1450 that other legislation will soon be developed to deal with other consequences of those terrorist activities to civil aviation. As you know, the scheduled airlines have announced more than 90,000 employee layoffs since September 11. Thousands of TWA/AA employees in the St. Louis region will be laid off. St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay supports Federal legislation to provide continuing health benefits and extended unemployment assistance to those laid-off airline employees.

On September 16, DOT Secretary Mineta appointed two “rapid response” task forces to make recommendations by October 1 as to needed changes to airport and aircraft security systems. Staff of the St. Louis Department of Airports will be participating in the work of those groups. We expect the Bush Administration to make legislative recommendations on how to organize Federal agencies, state and local governments, and private parties to improve aviation security during October as well.

-- Lambert-St. Louis International Airport's Response to FAA  
Increased Security Mandates

Security measures at Lambert have been noticeably increased in response to FAA's directives over the last two weeks. Law enforcement's presence has been expanded with Lambert police officers being stationed at all three of the passenger screening points within the terminal.

This suggestion came from Senator Durbin, and we have found that increased law enforcement presence reinforces the seriousness of passenger screening and communicates to screeners how important their functions are. Curbside baggage check-in has been eliminated and access to concourses has been limited to ticketed passengers and badged employees. I'm attaching a more complete listing of increased security measures that we have implemented at Lambert. Other security measures, not publicly discussed, have also been put into operation or are planned.

As a result, we believe that airport security at Lambert is very high. I was comfortable flying out of Lambert yesterday and believe that other travelers should feel safe resuming their flights through our airport.

-- City Of St. Louis Recommends Additional Actions To Further  
Improve Airport And Airline Security

As to aircraft security, St. Louis supports a substantial expansion of the Federal Air Marshal Program for on-board protection of passenger flights and improved protection of the cockpit in airline aircraft.

In addition, the following is a partial listing of additional security measures that St. Louis believes should be considered by DOT and the Congress to further improve the on-airport portion of airport security:

- ***Review of what items constitute a “weapon” for purposes of passenger screening and availability within airport concession areas.*** Setting aside questions regarding the quality of the passenger screening function

conducted under “low bid” airline contracts at our airports, it appears that the September 11 terrorists may not have violated FAA screening guidance. The short knives and box openers the terrorists may have carried through passenger screening were permitted by FAA regulations at that time. Wisely, these standards have since been tightened. Thus, it appears that these hijackings may have resulted from a failure in designing, rather than implementing, screening standards. Now that screening requirements have been tightened, airports need expanded guidance so that “weapon” materials aren’t available in airport concession areas beyond the passenger screening points.

- ***Better Federal intelligence sharing.*** We have all read in the press accounts of how information about some of the September 11 terrorists was never passed on to local law enforcement or airport police. Federal intelligence agencies don’t timely share their information with the FAA’s Civil Aviation Security Office and, in turn, with local airport law enforcement. Some have urged that expanded Federal intelligence efforts must be approved and funded by Congress and the Executive Branch. In our view, it is important that relevant, timely information must be shared with us. Airport security is the last ground defense to forestall terrorism against civil aviation, but that defense must be based on adequate, timely information.
- ***Federal enforcement agency support for airport proprietor actions.*** The current list of enumerated crimes, the conviction for which precludes an individual from having unescorted access to an aircraft or secure area of an airport, needs to be expanded. Additionally, the statute of limitation that precludes us from considering the relevancy of a hijacking conviction after 10 years needs to be lifted. Aggressive prosecution by United States attorneys would also be helpful. Presently, Federal prosecutors tend to rely on local prosecution. A change in the law that would allow criminal history checks of all personnel working at an airport would improve security. Currently, under Federal Aviation Regulation 107.31, only those individuals who are granted unescorted access to secure airport areas can be subject to the criminal history checks.
- ***Federalized passenger screening.*** I believe, and a majority of my colleagues believe, that the passenger screening function should be placed under control of a Federal agency, probably within the U.S. Department of Transportation, rather than being delegated, as now, to the private airlines. The federalized passenger screening program could be another branch of the Federal Air Marshal Program under the Secretary of Transportation. “Federalizing” the passenger screening function should make it easier to pass intelligence information concerning terrorist activities to locations at risk and to local law enforcement agencies that back up the passenger screening function at U.S. airports. In addition to providing for Federal agency supervision of passenger screening, individual screeners must be trained to perform at a professional level. Screener candidates should meet higher qualifications, should undergo thorough background checks, and should receive pay and benefits consistent with the critical importance of their jobs.
- ***Restriction on carry-on baggage.*** Until a Federal agency has taken over the passenger screening function, it might be advisable to limit carry-on bags to one per passenger, with some exceptions, to reduce the screener workload.
- ***Improved baggage, cargo and mail screening.*** Congress should assure that adequate numbers of Explosive Detection System (EDS) devices and

other current technology systems are available for the inspection of unaccompanied baggage, cargo, and mail packages. While these issues have not been much discussed recently, improved screening equipment as well as an expanded FAA and industry research and development program will be needed to minimize risk to aircraft from non-metallic weapons and explosive devices.

- ***Upgrade automated access control systems.*** Airports are already revalidating the badges of on-airport personnel who must have access to secure areas, badging other employees, and strenuously enforcing rules against “piggybacking” through secured doors. But in addition to using current systems to their fullest, airport proprietors should be given Federal funding to continually upgrade their access control systems for the air operations areas.

-- Congress Should Help Fund the New Security Mandates Imposed by FAA on Airport Sponsors

Lambert-St. Louis International Airport is spending millions of dollars of unbudgeted funds this year to implement the increased FAA security measures announced since September 12. Just the costs for an increased law enforcement presence at Lambert approximates an extra \$72,000 per week.

The City believes that “unfunded Federal mandates” should be covered by general Federal funds or through expanded authorizations from the Airport Improvement Program (AIP), a part of the Airport and Airway Trust Fund, or through Passenger Facility Charges (PFCs).

Another crisis we are facing is the cancellation and/or tripling of premiums by Lambert’s liability insurance underwriters. Airports will need help in addressing these never-before-seen spikes in liability premiums or outright cancellations.

In addition to unexpected expenditures, St. Louis and all other public airport proprietors have seen a dramatic loss of revenues. In the last two weeks, Lambert has lost some \$2 million in concession revenues. Parking revenues are being lost due to the Federal prohibitions on parking near terminals. Passenger flows are down; at Lambert, our passenger flows could be reduced 30-40% during the last quarter of the calendar year. Again, fewer passengers equals lower revenues from auto parking fees, from in-terminal concessions (news and gift, food and beverage, etc.) and from substantially reduced revenues from the Federally-authorized Passenger Facility Charge Program (PFC). Finally, because of these revenue reductions, \$45.5 million in current airport projects at Lambert have been deferred.

When Congress begins to process legislation to improve airport and airline security systems and to establish Federal operational control of the passenger screening function, the City of St. Louis will urge that airport financial losses due to terrorist activities be compensated. As an example, where an airport (such as Lambert) has issued bonds secured by Federal AIP grants according to a schedule of annual payments set out within an FAA Letter of Intent (LOI), these LOI payments should be funded as the highest priority from appropriated AIP funding levels. Further, there should be a statutory set-aside to cover these new security costs so that AIP funds for needed capacity increases won’t be diluted by the new security requirements.

Again, Mr. Chairman, St. Louis appreciates the opportunity to express its views and recommendations on this most important topic of aviation security. I would be pleased to answer the Committee’s questions or to respond for the

written record.

Thank you.

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[1] Member, National Civil Aviation Review Commission (1997)  
and FAA Assistant Administrator for Airports (1989-93).

Attachment

**PUBLICLY-ANNOUNCED SECURITY ACTIONS TAKEN  
BY LAMBERT-ST. LOUIS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

**SINCE SEPTEMBER 12, 2001**

1. Have established airport police officer checkpoints at security screening locations
2. Concourses are restricted to ticketed passengers and badged employees only
3. Curbside check-in of bags has been eliminated
4. Increased foot patrol perimeter checks
5. Explosive detection dogs visible to the public
6. Increased guards and police officers at both terminals on bag claim and ticketing drives
7. Placed distance-parking restrictions at both terminal buildings
8. Prohibited trucks, SUV's, vans etc., from using the terminal parking garages
9. Added vehicle checkpoints with guards to enforce the parking restrictions
10. Installed barricades and fencing as required for security and parking restrictions
11. Increased identification badge checks in the field
12. In the process of revalidating approximately 12,000 airport ID badges
13. Badged additional 1000 employees to access the concourses that previously were not required to have badges
14. Airport-issued photo ID badges will be required to access Lambert's employee parking area
15. Added signage and security type paging announcements

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