

**EXAMINING THE FEDERAL AIR MARSHAL SERVICE
AND ITS READINESS TO MEET THE EVOLVING
THREAT**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY**
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

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EXAMINING THE FEDERAL AIR MARSHAL SERVICE AND ITS READINESS TO MEET THE EVOLVING THREAT

Thursday, July 16, 2015

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION SECURITY,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:05 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. John Katko [Chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Katko, Carter, Walker, Ratcliffe, Rice, and Payne.

Mr. KATKO. I would like to welcome everyone to today's hearing on TSA's Federal Air Marshal Service. The subcommittee is meeting today to examine the Federal Air Marshal Service and its readiness to meet the evolving threat. Before we begin, I would like to express my support for Administrator Neffenger, who assumed his new position at TSA's administration last week. I had the opportunity to sit down with Mr. Neffenger, and I am hopeful that he can provide steady leadership that is badly needed at TSA in order to bring TSA into a new and more effective chapter. While it is clear that he will have his work cut out for him, I believe that his experience in the United States Coast Guard would be a valuable asset to TSA, and I look forward to working with him and hearing his plans to fix the agency.

Since the beginning of the 114th Congress, this subcommittee has aggressively examined several issues related to TSA's operations, policies, and procedures in order to ensure that TSA is fulfilling its mission of keeping the traveling public safe. Today, we will examine what many have called the last line of defense against potential terror attacks in the sky; that is, the Federal Air Marshal Service. The Federal Air Marshal Service was significantly expanded in the wake of the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. The outcome of 9/11 could have been very different if we had Federal Air Marshals on those planes. However, we also have to keep in mind that the threat to aviation security has evolved dramatically over the last 14 years.

The terrorists who want to do us harm are constantly adapting their tactics, and we need to make sure we are not protecting ourselves against yesterday's threat and ignoring the threats of tomorrow. For example, the threat of an IED, or improvised explosive device, being detonated aboard an aircraft is very real. Is the Federal

Air Marshal capable of preventing an IED from being detonated, or should we reallocate some of the hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars that are appropriated every year for the Federal Air Marshal Service towards better intelligence efforts, or security measures for other soft targets, such as unsecured areas of airports? The purpose of today's hearing is to discuss if the Federal Air Marshal Service, in its current form, is demonstrating an appropriate risk-based approach to securing our Nation's aviation system from a terrorist attack. It is not clear to me whether the service and the strategy for resource allocation have kept pace with the new threats, and that is why I look forward to hearing from Mr. Allison today.

Additionally, I remain concerned that continued public allegations of employee misconduct and abuse within the Federal Air Marshal Service have served to hurt public perception and confidence in the Air Marshals and have the concomitant effect of decimating employee morale.

Today, we plan to examine several key areas of this program to determine its effectiveness and whether there is anything Congress can do to assist and assure the continued safety and security of the traveling public.

We all share the same goal, and as such, it is our duty to ensure that we constantly reexamine what we are doing and why we are doing it in order to yield better security enhancements and be more intelligence-driven.

At today's hearing, we are very fortunate to have the assistant administrator of TSA's Office of Law Enforcement, Mr. Rod Allison, to address these issues and to discuss what tools are necessary to improve efficiency and security. On our second panel, we will have Captain Tim Conoll from the Airline Pilots Association to discuss the Federal Flight Deck Officer Program and its coordination with the Federal Air Marshal Service.

I look forward to hearing the testimony from both of our witnesses, and having a meaningful dialogue on how to make improvements to the Federal Air Marshal Service as we work together to counter threats facing U.S. aviation sector.

[The statement of Chairman Katko follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JOHN KATKO

JULY 16, 2015

I would like to welcome everyone to today's hearing on TSA's Federal Air Marshal Service. The subcommittee is meeting today to examine the Federal Air Marshal Service and its readiness to meet the evolving threat.

Before we begin, I would like to express my support for Administrator Neffenger, who assumed his new position as TSA's administrator last week. I had the opportunity to sit down with Administrator Neffenger, and I am hopeful that he can provide steady leadership in order to bring TSA into a new and more effective chapter. While it is clear that he will have his work cut out for him, I believe that his experience in the United States Coast Guard will be a valuable asset to TSA and I look forward to working with him and hearing his views on how to fix this agency at our full committee hearing later this month.

Since the beginning of the 114th Congress this subcommittee has aggressively examined several issues related to TSA's operations, policies, and procedures in order to ensure that TSA is fulfilling its mission of keeping the traveling public safe. Today, we will examine what many have called "the last line of defense" against potential terror attacks in the sky: Federal Air Marshals.

The Federal Air Marshal Service was significantly expanded in the wake of the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. The outcome of 9/11 could have been very different if we had Federal Air Marshals on those planes. However, we also have to keep in mind that the threat to aviation security has evolved dramatically over the last 14 years. The terrorists are constantly adapting their tactics, and we need to make sure we are not protecting ourselves against yesterday's threat and ignoring the threats of tomorrow.

For example, the threat of an IED being detonated aboard an aircraft is very real. Is a Federal Air Marshal capable of preventing an IED from being detonated? Or should we reallocate some of the hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars that are appropriated every year for the Federal Air Marshal Service towards better intelligence efforts, or security measures for other soft targets such as the unsecure areas of the airport.

The purpose of today's hearing is to discuss if the Federal Air Marshal Service, in its current form, is demonstrating a risk-based approach to securing our Nation's aviation system from a terrorist attack.

It is not clear to me whether the Service and its strategy for resource allocation have kept pace with new threats. Additionally, I remain concerned that continued public allegations of employee misconduct and abuse within the Federal Air Marshal Service have served to hurt public perception of air marshals and decimate employee morale.

Today we plan to examine several key areas of this program to determine its effectiveness and whether there is anything Congress can do to assist and ensure the continued safety and security of the traveling public. We all share the same goal, and as such, it is our duty to ensure that we constantly reexamine what we are doing and why we are doing it in order to yield better security enhancements and be more intelligence-driven.

At today's hearing we have the assistant administrator for TSA's Office of Law Enforcement, Mr. Rod Alliston, to address these issues and discuss what tools are necessary to improve efficiency and security, and on our second panel we will have Captain Tim Canoll, from the Air Line Pilots Association to discuss the Federal Flight Deck Officer Program and its coordination with the Federal Air Marshal Service. I look forward to hearing the testimony from both of our witnesses and having a meaningful dialogue on how to make improvements to the Federal Air Marshal Service, as we work together to counter threats facing the U.S. aviation sector.

I now recognize the Ranking Member of the subcommittee, the gentlewoman from New York, Ms. Rice, for an opening statement.

Mr. KATKO. I now recognize the Ranking Member to the subcommittee, the esteemed gentlewoman from New York, Miss Rice, for an opening statement.

Miss RICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for convening this hearing. I understand this is actually the first time since 2012 that a panel in this committee has discussed the Federal Aviation Marshal Service. So it is clearly important that we do so, and I want to thank our witnesses for their participation today. Prior to September 11, the Federal Air Marshal Service consisted of only 33 full-time sky Marshals. The 9/11 attacks made it clear that we needed a much greater presence on commercial aircrafts to counter the threat of individuals attempting to gain access to a cockpit. In the wake of 9/11, the Federal Air Marshal Service was rapidly expanded through the Aviation Transportation Security Act of 2002.

Six hundred Marshals were hired, trained, and activated within a month, and thousands more were activated in the months that followed. The Federal Air Marshal Service, as well as Federal Flight Deck Officers, serves as one of the last lines of defense for both domestic and international flights. We know that the threats against our country, particularly against our aviation sector, are constantly evolving and have only increased in the years since 9/11. We must ensure that our Air Marshal Service is also evolving and maintaining the strength needed to counter these threats and keep passengers safe. That is why we are here today. There are a

number of issues of concern with the current state of the Federal Air Marshal Service. First and foremost, the dwindling ranks of the service. There has not been a new Federal Air Marshal Service class in 4 years. When you couple this with high attrition and poor retention rates, it is clear that the organization is shrinking dramatically, and it also raises serious questions about workforce morale. As the workforce is dwindling, so is the number of Federal Air Marshal field offices. Last year, there were 26 Nation-wide. Currently, there are 22, and there are two more scheduled to close in 2016, which will bring us down to 20 field offices within the next year.

Now, I understand that these closures are determined by complex risk analyses and by the fact that there tends to be fluctuation in which areas around the country are commercial aviation hubs. But we need to be certain that none of this compromises security on commercial flights, and we need to ensure that Marshals are transitioning to openings in other field offices as efficiently as possible.

I am very eager to hear from Assistant Administrator Allison about the details of these closures and what measures are in place to help with this transition, as well as details of what outreach efforts are being undertaken to improve workforce morale. I also look forward to hearing, in greater detail, from Captain Canoll about other layers of security aboard planes, such as the Federal Flight Deck Officers and enhanced barriers. The selfless pilots who volunteer for this program are subjected to intense training and prepare themselves for dangerous threats on commercial aircrafts. I am eager to learn more about the level of training they receive and how their regimen is evolving to counter current security threats.

Mr. Chairman, thank you, again, for your leadership and for convening this hearing. I look forward to a productive dialogue with our witnesses and colleagues, and I yield back the balance of my time.

[The statement of Ranking Member Rice follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER KATHLEEN RICE

JULY 16, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for convening this hearing.

I understand that this is the first time since 2012 that a panel in this committee has discussed the Federal Aviation Marshal Service—so it's clearly important that we do so, and I want to thank our witnesses for their participation today.

Prior to September 11, the Federal Air Marshal Service consisted of only 33 full-time sky Marshals.

The 9/11 attacks made it clear that we needed a much greater presence on commercial aircrafts to counter the threat of individuals attempting to gain access to a cockpit.

In the wake of 9/11, the Federal Air Marshal Service was rapidly expanded through the Aviation Transportation Security Act of 2002. Six hundred Marshals were hired, trained, and activated within a month, and thousands more were activated in the months that followed.

The Federal Air Marshal Service, as well as Federal Flight Deck Officers, serves as one of the last lines of defense for both domestic and international flights. We know that the threats against our country—particularly against our aviation sector—are constantly evolving, and have only increased in the years since 9/11. We must ensure that our Air Marshal Service is also evolving and maintaining the strength needed to counter these threats and keep passengers safe.

That's why we're here today.

There are a number of concerning issues with the current state of the Federal Air Marshal Service.

First and foremost, the dwindling ranks of the Service. There has not been a new Federal Air Marshal Service class in 4 years.

When you couple this with high attrition and poor retention rates, it's clear that the organization is shrinking dramatically—and it also raises serious questions about workforce morale.

And as the workforce is dwindling, so is the number of Federal Air Marshals field offices.

Last year, there were 26 Nation-wide. Currently, there are 22, with two more scheduled to close in 2016—which will bring us down to 20 field offices within the next year.

I understand that these closures are determined by complex risk analyses, and by the fact that there tends to be fluctuation in which areas around the country are commercial aviation hubs.

But we need to be certain that none of this compromises security on commercial flights, and we need to ensure that marshals are transitioning to openings in other field offices as efficiently as possible.

I'm eager to hear from Assistant Administrator Allison about the details of these closures and what measures are in place to help with this transition, as well as details of what outreach efforts are being undertaken to improve workforce morale.

I also look forward to hearing greater detail from Captain Cannoll about other layers of security aboard planes, such as Federal Flight Deck Officers and enhanced barriers.

The selfless pilots who volunteer for this program are subjected to intense training and prepare themselves to dangerous threats on commercial aircrafts. I am eager to learn more about the level of training they receive and how their regimen is evolving to counter current security threats.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for convening this hearing. I look forward to a productive dialogue with our witnesses and colleagues, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you, Miss Rice. Other Members of the committee are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

We are pleased to have a distinguished witness before us today on this important topic. Let me remind the witness that the entire written statements will appear in the record.

Our first witness is Mr. Roderick "Rod" Allison, who, in May 2014, began serving as the assistant administrator for the Office of Law Enforcement and director of the Federal Air Marshal Service.

Mr. Allison was the TSA assistant administrator for the Office of Inspection and supervisory Air Marshal in charge of the Washington field office prior to taking his current position. I would like to also note that I met with Mr. Allison yesterday in advance of his testimony here today, and if he displays the same candid demeanor that he did yesterday, I think we are going to have a very productive hearing. So I look forward to hearing from you, sir.

I now recognize you to testify for your 5 minutes, sir.

STATEMENT OF RODERICK "ROD" ALLISON, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, FEDERAL AIR MARSHAL SERVICE, TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. ALLISON. Good morning, Chairman Katko, Ranking Member Rice, and Members of the subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to testify about the Federal Air Marshal Service, or what is known as FAMS. Our mission in FAMS is to detect, deter, and defeat any criminal or terrorist activities against our transportation systems. We perform our core mission by deploying Federal Air Marshals on United States-

flagged aircraft throughout the world 365 days a year, utilizing a comprehensive concept of operations that aligns with TSA's risk-based security strategy. FAMS are law enforcement officers who receive specialized training to prepare them for the challenges associated with a very difficult working environment. FAMS operate at 30,000 feet in a restricted space and have no back-up to call upon.

The FAMS is unique in its ability to remain flexible and to rapidly deploy hundreds of law enforcement officers in response to specific evolving threats within the transportation domain around the world. In consultation with the Department of Homeland Security, FAMS recently completed an updated concept of operations for mission deployments addressing risk mitigation and incorporating randomness and unpredictability. While the focus remains on the highest-risk flights, the new CONOPS ensures adversary uncertainty and deterrence through potential deployment on any U.S. carrier flight.

A risk-by-flight methodology is under development, which will include FAM mission planning based upon passenger travel patterns, assessed passenger risk and consideration for airport locations with known vulnerabilities. In addition to deploying FAMS on-board aircraft, FAMS also assigns Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response, or our VIPR teams, at a variety of locations to augment the visible presence of law enforcement and security personnel in all modes of transportation.

VIPR teams can be made up of several different components of TSA, each working closely with Federal, State, and local law enforcement partners and transportation stakeholders to ensure the safety and security of our transportation systems.

The Federal Air Marshal Service is made up of dedicated professionals whose job demands that they demonstrate the highest level of preparedness and integrity. Since becoming FAMS director in June 2014, I have implemented several workforce engagement initiatives to enhance communication, and to promote the highest level of professionalism within the workforce. Over the past year, my deputy director and I have conducted nearly 50 office visits and town hall sessions across the country.

I have personally visited each headquarters site on multiple occasions, and 19 out of the 22 field offices to meet with personnel all over the organization to communicate expectations, address concerns, and answer questions. I recently launched a director's award which honors annually one non-supervisor employee at each office who demonstrates the highest level of integrity, and serves as a role model to their colleagues. I have also initiated a thank you campaign wherein hundreds of employees have received letters of commendation for noteworthy accomplishments. These initiatives provide me with a great opportunity to demonstrate my deep appreciation to the workforce and highlight the good work of our employees.

Additionally, FAMS continues to provide our workforce with the resources and support they need to carry out their mission. As part of this effort, FAMS maintains a robust system of both medical, including mandatory physicals and psychological assistance programs, which are readily available to the workforce and their families.

The FAMS medical program section is staffed with a physician and other full-time medical professionals who are available to FAMS personnel at any time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

FAMS recognizes the value of these programs for our workforce, and as our mission is demanding both physically and mentally, we will continue to make these and other employee assistance programs available to our personnel.

FAMS recently completed a staffing and field office assessment review in order to maximize organizational effectiveness and efficiency, and to ensure FAMS are located in offices that are positioned in a risk-based manner to cover the most critical flights. As a result of this assessment, 6 field offices have either closed or will be closing within the next year. Personnel from these affected offices were reassigned to our most critical offices, which service the highest-risk flights. The Federal Air Marshal Service is a strong counterterrorism element in the security TSA provides to the traveling public.

We take our mission seriously, and our workforce is dedicated to preventing and disrupting both criminal and terrorist acts on-board aircraft and within the transportation domain.

I appreciate this committee's partnership in our effort and your support for our critical mission. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Allison follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RODERICK "ROD" ALLISON

JULY 16, 2015

Good morning Chairman Katko, Ranking Member Rice, and Members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. The mission of the Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) is to detect, deter, and defeat criminal and terrorist activities that target our Nation's transportation systems. As director of the FAMS, I am responsible for leading the thousands of men and women who have taken an oath to prevent and disrupt acts of terrorism within the transportation domain. We perform our core mission by deploying Federal Air Marshals on United States-flagged aircraft throughout the world, 365 days a year, utilizing a comprehensive Concept of Operations that aligns with TSA's Risk-Based Security (RBS) strategy. In addition to deploying the Federal Air Marshals on-board aircraft, FAMS assigns Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) teams at a variety of locations to augment the visible presence of law enforcement and security personnel in all modes of transportation.

FAMS is comprised of law enforcement officers who receive specialized initial and recurrent training to prepare them for the challenges associated with a very unique operating environment. In addition to their initial training, all Federal Air Marshals receive 20 training days per year and are required to maintain a high firearms proficiency standard. As you know, Federal Air Marshals in the aviation sector operate at 30,000 feet, in tight quarters, remain vigilant, and are prepared to react to a wide spectrum of criminal and terrorist events and activities.

The Federal Air Marshals are an integral part of RBS where they serve within a matrix of security layers, and often as a last line of defense. Federal Air Marshals serve as a deterrent to those with intent to do harm, and their presence helps to sustain the confidence of the traveling public. The FAMS is unique in its flexibility and ability to re-deploy thousands of law enforcement officers rapidly in response to specific threats or incidents in the transportation domain. For example, following the 2006 U.K. liquid explosives plot and the December 25, 2009, failed bombing of Northwest Flight 253 bound for Detroit by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, Federal Air Marshals were immediately deployed in response to the evolving threats. FAMS also assisted in security efforts during the evacuation of U.S. citizens from the island of Cyprus following the unrest in Lebanon in July 2006. As a risk-based orga-

nization, FAMS is responsive to current intelligence, threats, and vulnerabilities. Mission coverage goals are adjusted continually in response to emerging and evolving threats. Additionally, Federal Air Marshals have leveraged their basic emergency response training to intervene successfully in thousands of in-flight medical emergencies and non-terrorist incidents involving unruly passengers.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS (CONOPS)

In consultation with the Department of Homeland Security, FAMS recently completed an updated CONOPS for mission deployment addressing risk mitigation and incorporating randomness and unpredictability. While the focus remains on the highest-risk flights, the new CONOPS ensures adversary uncertainty and deterrence through potential deployment on any domestic flight. A “risk-by-flight” methodology is currently under development which incorporates mission planning based upon passenger travel patterns, assessed passenger risk, and consideration for locations with known vulnerabilities.

VISIBLE INTERMODAL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE (VIPR)

The FAMS manages the VIPR Program, which consists of teams of Federal Air Marshals, Behavioral Detection Officers, Transportation Security Specialists—Explosives, Transportation Security Inspectors and Canine teams who work closely with Federal, State, and local law enforcement partners and stakeholders in the aviation and surface transportation sectors.

Surface transportation offers an attractive target for our adversaries, as we learned from the subway bombings in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005. Through a joint planning process, TSA works with local law enforcement to plan operations that leverage existing resources to provide enhanced detection capabilities and a visible deterrent to terrorist activity. In 2014, VIPR teams conducted approximately 14,000 operations at transportation venues Nation-wide, to include National Security Special Events (NSSE) and Special Event Assessment Rating (SEAR) activities such as the Super Bowl, NCAA Final Four, and State of the Union. The 2014 NFL Super Bowl in the greater New York City area presented a unique set of challenges based upon the heavy reliance on mass transit to attend all the events surrounding the big game. Our VIPR teams successfully worked side by side with our local, State, and Federal law enforcement partners to ensure the safety and security of the traveling public attending that week’s festivities.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

TSA sets high standards for the code of conduct for all of our employees, especially law enforcement personnel. Professionalism and integrity on and off duty is expected of all Federal Air Marshals. Since becoming the FAMS director in June 2014, I have implemented several initiatives to promote the highest level of integrity, professionalism, and accountability. Over the past year, my deputy and I have embarked upon an aggressive workforce engagement campaign, convening nearly 50 office visits and “Town Hall” sessions across the country. I have personally visited the headquarters sites and most field offices. We meet with personnel at all levels of the organization to communicate expectations, gauge concerns, and answer questions. I have applied a multi-pronged approach to ensure robust communications and feedback through all levels of the organization.

During these site visits, I discuss my appreciation to the workforce and specifically address the on-going “Thank You Campaign”, wherein hundreds of employees have received letters of commendation for noteworthy accomplishments. I also recently implemented a “Director’s Award,” which honors one non-supervisory employee at each office location who demonstrates the highest level of integrity and serves as a role model to their colleagues. We have also launched a new product on the FAMS internal website home page entitled “In the Spotlight” where employees are recognized for civic related activities and accomplishments.

Additionally, FAMS has a number of programs to provide our work force with the resources and support they need to carry out their mission. As part of our efforts, FAMS maintains a robust system of both medical, including mandatory physicals, and psychological assistance programs which are available to the workforce and their families. The FAMS Medical Programs Section is staffed with a physician and other full-time medical professionals who are available to FAMS personnel 24/7 and upon request. FAMS also has a Critical Incident Response Unit that provides guidance and support to assist FAMS employees and their families in the event of a critical or traumatic incident. This unit provides guidance and support to assist FAMS, along with other offices within TSA, in the event of a critical or traumatic incident.

For example, shortly after the LAX shooting, members of the FAMS Los Angeles Field Office mobilized to offer assistance to all affected.

Further, FAMS contracts with a professional counseling team with licensed mental health professionals that provides services to employees that are free and confidential. Finally, FAMS employees can contact TSA's Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which provides short-term counseling and resources, and referral services at no cost to employees and family members.

WORKFORCE REALIGNMENT

In order to maximize organizational effectiveness and efficiency, FAMS completed a staffing and field office assessment to ensure that FAMS are located in offices that are positioned in a risk-based manner to cover the most critical flights. As a result, six offices will be closed: Cincinnati, Cleveland, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, San Diego, and Tampa. As of today, we have closed four of these offices, with the final two slated to close next summer. Personnel were reassigned to our most critical offices, namely those offices which serviced the highest-risk flights. Despite these closures, Office of Law Enforcement (OLE)/FAMS will continue to maintain a presence in these locations. OLE/FAMS will maintain an assistant Federal security director for law enforcement at each location and FAMS assigned to the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force will not be affected. While personnel will be reassigned to other offices, these closures will not adversely impact our ability to maintain coverage on-board flights at these airport locations. Additionally, though VIPR team personnel will be transferred to other offices, operations involving specific events and infrastructure will remain unaffected.

CONCLUSION

FAMS is a strong counterterrorism layer in the security TSA provides to the traveling public. We take our mission seriously and our workforce is dedicated to preventing and disrupting acts of terror on-board aircraft. I appreciate this committee's partnership in our efforts and support for this critical mission.

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

Mr. KATKO. That is pretty remarkable. I don't think anybody has ever spoken within 2 seconds of the 5-minute limit. That is pretty good. If that is part of your organizational skills, we are impressed, sir. I want to thank you for your testimony. We appreciate you being here, Mr. Allison, and we know your time is valuable. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes to ask questions.

You know, let's get right into it. With reinforced cockpit doors like we have now on airplanes, and we have more flight deck officers, which are officers—pilots that are armed, and passenger information collected via the secure flight, is the need for the Federal Air Marshal Service the same, or is it declining?

Mr. ALLISON. Well, Mr. Chairman, I will tell you, if I didn't believe in this mission, I wouldn't be in this job. All those things you cited are improvements that have happened within the aviation security business over the years. As we like to say, you know, no one layer stands on its own, right? So we do need to have Federal Marshals on these flights. We do need to have that partnership with the FFDO program. We need to continue to work on the improvements on the hardened cockpit doors, as you and I discussed yesterday, the secondary barriers. So those things will be on-going. As we get to a place where we are satisfied that those things are in place, that sufficiently mitigate the threats that we see, we will start looking elsewhere where we can be effective and where we can add value and make a difference.

Mr. KATKO. What additional changes do you feel the Air Marshal Service could implement to become more efficient and risk—and better risk-based?

Mr. ALLISON. I mentioned in my opening statement, Mr. Chairman, that we are looking at a model of a risk-by-flight. So with that, I like—maybe it sounds a little pretentious, but I like to think we are pretty good at being risk-based as we are today. But we are going to really examine critical infrastructure, our flights flying over critical infrastructure, in addition to the populous areas, in addition to using that passenger information from secure flight, known travel patterns, KSTs, known and suspected terrorists. So we are moving to a model where we can better utilize the information that is available to make better judgments about how we assign our personnel.

Mr. KATKO. Is there any new initiatives that you are planning for the current fiscal year? The upcoming fiscal year?

Mr. ALLISON. With respect to operations?

Mr. KATKO. Yes.

Mr. ALLISON. We recently amended our concept of operations, that was started by the former director. But I was able to get that over the goal line. But in that construct, what we did was we really took a look at how we were deploying our Federal Air Marshals. At the advent of 9/11, there were a number of things that we were required to do. For instance, mandatory flight coverage levels at DCA, looking at long-haul flights, looking at particular areas of the country and giving them certain priority levels. We have actually readjusted that, and I think it is going to make us more productive, more unpredictable, and we will be able to be seen and have Air Marshals on flights where we otherwise would not have coverage. I will be happy to share that concept of operation with you and the Ranking Member at your convenience.

Mr. KATKO. I appreciate that.

Now, you mentioned, I think you called it a secondary door they are talking about. That is, obviously, something that some groups have been interested in with respect to additional airline safety. So when a pilot is coming out of the cockpit for that temporary moment the door is opened, to have some sort of barrier there. I know now on flights they have a cart turned sideways, and the flight attendant is standing behind the cart so someone isn't able to get right up to the cockpit door right away. Is a secondary door, in your opinion, based on your expertise, something that should be considered, or is it necessary, based on your knowledge and experience?

Mr. ALLISON. I think it is absolutely necessary to take a look at it and see if it works, if it is effective, if it is something that is going to result in less resources and more protection and security for the flight crews. As you stated, the flight crew does bring out the cart and block the entrance for the pilot to use the facilities. So we are working, and have been for a number of years with Boeing, the FAA. I was just informed yesterday that there are some foreign partners that have an interest in looking at this as well, so that work will continue.

Mr. KATKO. One of the things we touched on yesterday, there has been a concern within the industry about the Federal Air Marshal Service booking flights close to the time that the plane is set to take off within a 24-hour period, for example. Oftentimes, if there is—first class is full, someone, if you are ever sitting in first class,

they get bumped out of first class; they can't even tell them why. That leads to some consternation and also leads to some difficulty explaining to try and attempt to deal with a passenger who paid for a first-class ticket, is no longer able to sit in first class. First of all, have you looked into this issue since we spoke?

Mr. ALLISON. I did look into the issue of deadheading, and I will get to that in a second. But specifically to your question, Mr. Chairman, these young men and women who fly these flights, they are having to submit their schedules and their availabilities 60 days in advance, so 2 months in advance is when we start the scheduling process. As I related to you yesterday, sir, I know more than anybody that what we do is necessary. It is important. But at the same time, it does impact the industry to some degree. Over the course, I think it was 2014, June 2014 to June 2015, the amount of economic impact of the Federal Marshals was .11 percent of the total revenue in the industry. Be that as it may, as you can sense, we are sensitive to that, and we make all attempts to minimize the disruption to their business.

Mr. KATKO. Okay. I guess going forward, I would ask, you know, perhaps it might be advisable to reach out to some of the airlines, and, at least, examine the issue and make sure you are both on the same page with that. Because we hear something a little different from them. But the bottom line is we want to make sure that the disruption to passenger traffic is as minimal as possible, but also allows you to fulfill your duties going forward. But I guess planning, planning, planning is the best we can do. So to the extent you can reach out to them, I think it would be advisable to do so.

Mr. ALLISON. Absolutely, I will make sure I do that.

Mr. KATKO. I appreciate that, sir.

The Chair now recognizes the Ranking Minority Member of the subcommittee, the gentlelady from New York, Miss Rice, for any questions she may have.

Miss RICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Allison, if you were given a wish list of improvements that you could make to your agency, what would they be?

Mr. ALLISON. The first thing I would put on that wish list in big, bold letters is the ability to hire. As I go across the country, and I talk to Federal Air Marshals, the No. 1 question I get is: What is the future of the organization? You know, not being able to hire has a detrimental effect on the workforce. There is a sort-of feeling of dying on the vine. You know, if I was able to hire, I would be able to open up and allow employees to move to places where they would want to go, conceivably. The workforce is getting older. All right? A lot of people that we hired in the beginning of 9/11, as I told the Chairman yesterday, they are going to be walking out the door 2020, 2021. So, you know, I asked the Chairman for his support in working through this problem to get to where do we want to be in 5 years? So that is the No. 1 issue that I would put on my wish list in big, bold letters.

I think the other thing that the men and women of the Federal Air Marshal Service would say is this is a tough, tough job. All of us have flown, and we have crossed time zones. We know how tough that is. These men and women do this job, and they are exceptional men and women. I just can't tell you how proud I am of

the work that they do. It is tough to recognize them for that. I think over the years, the constant reporting of the misconduct, which is a very small percentage of our workforce—and I would submit to you, Congresswoman, that every organization has misconduct. I am not condoning it, because I will tell you, I am zero tolerance when it comes to that. Everybody has an internal affairs division, and they are all busy. But the challenge of leadership is to make sure that our people know what the standards are, know what the expectations are, and know what they are going to be held to. That starts with me on down throughout the organization.

So to your point, the second, you know, highlighted bullet would be a little bit more support and recognition for the tough job that they do.

Miss RICE. So two other questions. You started a thank you campaign to help improve morale. Can you explain what that is?

Mr. ALLISON. Sure. When you think about the challenge of security work, any security profession, you do your job, nothing happens, and, you know, it is tough to recognize people for that sort of activity, right? So what we really did was take a hard look at what our people are doing. We get reports every day of Federal Air Marshals that are providing medical assistance to people on aircraft that are in distress, whether it is oxygen, IVs, putting on devices, stopping at roadside traffic accidents on their way to the airport or from the airport, assisting local police with arrests in the airports, train stations, bus stations, so there are a whole lot of activities that really, you know, have an indirect effect on the core mission, but are commendable activities nonetheless.

So what my staff does is, as these reports come in, they comb those reports and we—it is very simple. We write a thank you letter. I understand you were involved in this activity yesterday, thank you. I think so far, I have kind-of lost count, since—maybe 600 since I have been over the year; 200-something this year alone. So we think it is a low-cost way to show appreciation to our workforce or just a pat on the back.

Miss RICE. Yeah. I couldn't agree more.

How do you make the determination as to what offices are going to be closed? I know there are two upcoming. What analysis do you do to come to the conclusion that it is okay to close this office and redirect people to another one?

Mr. ALLISON. So, Congresswoman, I believe maybe 2 years ago, if not 3, the former director embarked upon a study where they looked at the flights that were in those offices that were identified for closure. I think it is important to note that the airline industry has undergone major consolidations over the years. In one particular area, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Cincinnati, several airlines pulled out of those airports. So that had a lot to do with identifying are these resources here, would they be better utilized putting them to some of the larger offices that we have? There were 10 offices that were identified where those people were allowed to go. That was the primary focus of—or the metric that was used to determine quality of flights, to be very candid. That is the reason.

Miss RICE. Well, thank you for your service and for the service of all of your employees. I yield back my back my time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you, Miss Rice. I want to echo Miss Rice's sentiments about thanking you and your employees for the great job you do. I was speaking with Miss Rice before the hearing began, and both of us are willing to come out to your offices to provide a little bit additional support and kind-of help boost morale a little bit. We will be doing that in the near future with you.

Mr. ALLISON. I appreciate that. I think that would be most appreciated. I think you would enjoy it.

Mr. KATKO. Well, good.

The Chair would recognize other Members of the committee for questions which they may ask the witness. In accordance with the committee's rules and practices, I plan to recognize Members who are present at the start of the hearing by seniority in the subcommittee. Those coming in later will be recognized in the order which I receive.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Carter.

Mr. CARTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Allison, thank you for being here.

I have got just a couple of questions. I am just inquiring. Okay? I am not going to be confrontational. I don't want you to be defensive, but I need to understand some things.

First of all, thank you for what you do. Thank all of your members and your staff for what they do. This is important. We understand that, and we appreciate that. But it is my understanding that many countries assess a fee or a tax, if you will, on airlines whenever we have a passenger from the United States landing in their country. Is that true?

You have to understand, I have not traveled much. In fact, I said before in this committee yesterday that I have only been to two countries in my life, and that is one more than I wanted to go to. So I am asking you, is that true?

Mr. ALLISON. Mr. Congressman, I am not aware of that.

Mr. CARTER. Well, that is the way I understand it. What I understand is that the airlines are having to absorb this fee because the Federal Air Marshals don't compensate for it. So whenever they are flying over there, it is my understanding that the airlines are having to absorb this fee, and that is just something I need to understand and need to inquire about.

Mr. ALLISON. I will provide you a follow-up on that point.

Mr. CARTER. Thank you. Thank you. I want to follow up on a line of questions that I believe the Chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. Katko, had addressed earlier, and that is about the Air Marshals flying first class. It is my understanding, and I have heard some horror stories, to be quite honest with you. In fact, I heard a story that has been communicated to us where there were like six Air Marshals flying first class, and there were another group on a competing airline, the flight got canceled, and they came over, and they wanted the first-class seats also, and all of a sudden the whole first-class cabin was taken up by Air Marshals. That just doesn't seem right.

Can you provide to us how often your employees are flying first class, and how often they are flying coach? I will be quite honest with you, I flew first class one time, and that was really not by

choice. That was the only seat they had available. I was with my family, and my three sons got to fighting about who was going to sit in first class, and finally I resolved it by sitting there myself. So that was the only reason I was really flying first class. I am just wondering why the Air Marshals got to fly first class.

Mr. ALLISON. Well, Mr. Congressman, I can't elaborate in an open hearing about our tactical seating. I will be happy to discuss with you in private and answer any question you may have. I would assure you that, as I stated before, our impact upon the aviation industry, we view it as a partnership. You know, as a matter of practice, those things are managed to a very high degree. I look forward to having a private conversation with you in a closed setting, and I will give you the full plethora of information with regard to where we sit and why we sit there.

Mr. CARTER. Okay. I certainly respect that. I understand there are probably situations where you would. But it just seems to me like you wouldn't need the whole first-class cabin.

Mr. ALLISON. I would agree with you.

Mr. CARTER. I suspect you would.

I can certainly understand if this is sensitive or not, but it would appear to me that it would be, especially in light of the fact that we have made so much progress on the doors, the cabin doors now, to where they are secure that the real target is going to be around the wings and the fuel tanks. That is where we really ought to have the agents, or the Marshals. Am I correct in that?

Mr. ALLISON. Sir, when you get to the notion of, as you are referring, the evolving threat, as the Chairman stated, IEDs, every day in TSA we start our day with intelligence briefings. I don't have to tell you gentlemen, the threat to this country has never been higher. Certainly, argument debatable, I would agree with you, has the threat evolved or have our adversaries chosen additional methods of which to cause us harm, which doesn't mean that the old ones went away and we can't ignore them. Now, we are not sitting around waiting for the last threat. We are watching for that, but we are also looking for the new threat. You know, we have got our eye on that, and we are looking at IEDs on aircrafts and the potential to do so.

I will tell you, Mr. Congressman, Christmas day 2009, I was at home preparing dinner with my mother. I got the call, this guy who tried to light his underwear on fire. Now, we weren't on that flight, but we were on the one just before that. So if there is an incident on an aircraft, I am very confident our folks are going to respond regardless of where they are on that aircraft. So I guess to your point is, wherever that incident is, we are going to respond to it.

Mr. CARTER. Okay. Well, you see where I am going with this. I mean, I give you the benefit of the doubt, but just, please, let's make sure we are taking care of this. Again, thank you for your work and for what you do.

Mr. ALLISON. You are welcome, Mr. Congressman.

Mr. CARTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you, Mr. Carter.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Walker from North Carolina for questioning for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Allison, thank you for being here with us today. It is a privilege to get to put a face with the title there.

My question is, as a matter of policy, the Federal Air Marshals fly out of an airport approximate to their home, and are there instances where a Federal Air Marshal needs to fly out for an off-duty commute before an assignment begins? Can you give me a little backdrop on how that lays out?

Mr. ALLISON. Sure. The Chairman mentioned that to me yesterday, and I had not heard that. We are actively looking to the industry engagement office to sort-of get some more information. So as a matter of policy, that is not something we do. That is not something that we have ever done. As long as I am director, that is not something we will do. I don't see a need to do that.

Mr. WALKER. But you are looking into that as far as the reports that we hear? You are taking a look at that?

Mr. ALLISON. Yes, sir.

Mr. WALKER. Thank you.

Mr. ALLISON. So I just want you to understand, I have been pretty busy the last year, but my strategy going forward is to really start looking out and having some more conversations with the airline industry, airline CEOs, you know, some of the Law Enforcement Association groups and things like that. So more discussion, but I am going to look into that and make sure that if that is happening, it needs to be reported. That is misuse of the position, and it shouldn't be happening.

Mr. WALKER. It does need to be reported. In your position, you know, a lot of us come from different backgrounds; ministry, law, business. A general manager doesn't necessarily know how to do every specific position underneath the scope of the country. But as an overseer, his job is to kind-of, sort-of pay attention to what the details are. Sometimes I wonder, are you so busy with the day-to-day? Are you able to get caught up as far as all the different things going on, or are you yourself overwhelmed with specific titles or things or specific tasks that you should be accomplishing?

Mr. ALLISON. I assure you, Mr. Congressman, I am not overwhelmed, because I have a great staff. If I need to be—immerse myself in the day-to-day business every day, I have the wrong staff. I have got the right staff.

Mr. WALKER. Okay.

Mr. ALLISON. I am not immersed in the day-to-day business to the degree that I am blinded; I don't see things that I need to be focused on. You know, as I stated in my opening statement, getting out in the field and talking to the employees and the managers about what is going on and using the employee advisory groups and listening to, you know, people outside of the organization, it gives you that perspective.

Mr. WALKER. I appreciate the confidence in which you answer that. I know we can't probably talk about this in an open setting, but to be curious as far as percentages and flights at some point, I would like to follow up with you.

I have got just a minute or 2 here. What sort of physical and psychological evaluations are conducted to maintain the Federal Air Marshal suitability? You feel good about that, the well-being for the mission? You talked a little bit about burnout, stress, stretch-

ing out budgets, and those kind of things. You feel good about that the guys are in a good condition to be doing the job?

Mr. ALLISON. That is a constant monitoring. That is one of those things where you shoot for perfection, you aim for perfection knowing you will never get there. So we do have a mandatory physical for every—myself included, for all the credentialed personnel. Once a year you get a physical. In that physical, there is psychological screening. You have to answer a series of questions about, you know, what you have experienced or maybe not experienced. Physical fitness, you know, we have a pretty good physical fitness program. You know, it is not mandatory. It is mandatory to participate, but, you know, we can't remove people from Federal service because they can't do 20 push-ups. That is what I am getting at. It is mandatory participation, and we provide a number of exercises and alternative exercises for people to participate. But to the root of your question, are we watching our personnel? Do we give them avenues for assistance? Absolutely. Absolutely.

Mr. WALKER. If we have the 20 push-up rule in Congress, we might be pretty thinned out pretty quick ourselves.

The last thing I want to touch on. I am married to a trauma nurse practitioner, flies out on helicopters some, works in the trauma 1. But if on the way home there was an accident or scene or situation, she would be the first one out of the car jumping in. My question is this: For guys who may be flying off-duty, is there a protocol to react if there was something? Can you tell me a little bit about that? Because I know once they fly to a certain place, like the other pilots or things, make their hours have expired. Could you talk about what the protocol is if they are off-duty, yet there is a situation arises?

Mr. ALLISON. Sure. Mr. Congressman, I will assure you that any of our personnel that sees something in their presence, they are going to react, and they do all the time.

Mr. WALKER. Okay.

Mr. ALLISON. That happens quite a bit. That is sort of the impetus behind the thank-you letters. Right?

Mr. WALKER. Great. Mr. Allison, thank you.

My time has expired. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you, Mr. Walker.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Payne, for 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. PAYNE. Oh, my goodness. Timing is everything. Good morning. So, Mr. Allison, could you detail for us your thoughts on the future of the Federal Air Marshal Service?

Mr. ALLISON. How do I see the future of the Federal Air Marshal Service?

Mr. PAYNE. Yes.

Mr. ALLISON. What I see, Mr. Congressman, is a viable counterterrorism force that supports the counterterrorism efforts of this Government. We may be smaller and leaner. You know what, budget dollars are tight, and we have got to do our part. But I will assure you that the threats that we face now, unfortunately, they may be with us for a little bit. You know, we are constantly looking for ways to make sure that we are adding that value that I was talking about, assessing the threats, watching the intelligence, you

know, making sure that we are operating in line with the U.S. Government counterterrorism efforts, you know, led by the FBI, looking at the secure flight data, as we had talked about earlier, and making sure that we are well-positioned within the aviation industry to thwart any threats along with the FFDO program.

It was mentioned about the office closures. Where we are now, we are situated with 80 percent of the traveling public is where we are aligned as we speak today. So that is a pretty powerful sort of statement.

Mr. PAYNE. Okay. You know, when the committee last held a hearing on FAMS and the 112th Congress examined allegations of discrimination, cronyism, you know, among other issues within the workforce, you know, detail for us the state of the workforce today, what the practices were—what practices were put in place to address these concerns, and also what is the attrition and retention rate of the Federal Air Marshals?

Mr. ALLISON. So as we sit here today, the attrition rate is 6 percent. It was a 5 in the beginning of the year, end of last year, so it is 6 percent at this point. To your point about the IG report, I testified at that hearing. I was deputy director back then. It is important to note that it was allegations of discrimination and retaliation, which they found none, but they did highlight that there was a rift between the workforce and the leadership. A lot of that came from how we were stood up. The workforce was hired, and then a leadership was brought in. I will tell you today, as we sit here, 92 percent of the leadership is from within the rank-and-file of the organization. The Congress, the Ranking Member, talked about pre-9/11. I was a FAM in 1998, went to the same training these young men and women went to. I left and came back, but that was, in large degree, part of the issue between the workforce and the leadership.

So what do we do about it? Clearly, there was a need to enhance the communication within the organization, provide more transparency, more opportunities with respect to ground-based assignments, more transparency and objectiveness to the promotion process.

So there were a number of workforce initiatives that were put in place right after that. Then since my return, you know, I have sort-of upped the ante, so to speak, on some of the communication efforts and making sure that I am more visible to the workforce. I was sharing with the Chairman that I am out once a month, and I will continue to do that.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you. So you are saying that these allegations of discrimination and what have you were unfounded?

Mr. ALLISON. Well, the IG said they had no evidence of widespread discrimination. But they did highlight, I believe, the perception of that was sort-of prevalent.

Mr. PAYNE. Okay. Let's see, well, I only have 25 seconds left, so in the interest of time, I will stay within the rules and yield back.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you, Mr. Payne. The Chairman now recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Ratcliffe.

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you convening this subcommittee hearing so we can continue to do the

work that we have been focused on here in terms of making our airports and airlines safer.

Director Allison, I thank you for being here today. One of the roles that we have here, obviously, is to make sure that our airlines and airports are as safe as possible. At a cost of nearly \$800 million a year to sustain the Federal Air Marshal Service, we obviously need to look closely at its viability, its efficiency, and its effectiveness. So I appreciate you being here to answer some questions.

As you know, we have had some gaps and issues with respect to airport and airline security here at this subcommittee. We have convened hearings. We had former acting TSA administrator here, Melvin Carraway, back here in April talking about the improper screening of employees at airports. Back in June, we had the inspector general here talking about the fact that TSA failed to identify 73 airline employees that had links to terrorism. So we all know that we have had some issues with TSA security that we need to address, and so I want to focus on your agency efforts here or the Air Marshal Service issues. So one of the things that happened back in April was there were reports that an on-duty Air Marshal left a loaded pistol in a bathroom at the Newark Liberty International Airport. So I want to ask you about that incident in particular.

Can you give us some background about your investigation into that particular incident?

Mr. ALLISON. Sure. So whenever there is an allegation of misconduct, that allegation is referred to the Office of Inspection. They do the investigation. The former administrator had set up an Office of Professional Responsibility that administers discipline. So that incident, like any other incident, was investigated and referred to the Office of Professional Responsibility, and I think there is discipline pending.

Mr. RATCLIFFE. So it begs the question, though, that one became publicized because of how the pistol was recovered, but—and to the extent that you are able to answer this question, are there less public breaches of protocol like that that have occurred, and has it been a particular problem for you?

Mr. ALLISON. You have mistakes, and you have misconduct. You have, as you stated, you know, breaches of protocols. So the number of incidents that we have to deal with in that realm, it happens. As I told the Chairman yesterday, people who are engaged in this activity, they don't confess, they don't wear T-shirts. You have got to find them. And what we do is emphasize the rules, emphasize the standards, and we help people who make mistakes and deal with people who engage in egregious misconduct. So you don't get, you know, an infinite number of bites at the apple. Right? So I think this young man, unfortunately, made a mistake, and it is probably going to cost him.

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Well, Director, I am, by way of background, a former terrorism prosecutor myself, and so I certainly understand the threat that that issue poses to our country generally and specifically to air safety. Obviously, I believe in the core mission. But I would like to understand, if it is possible for you to talk about, when we look at the cost of maintaining this service, can you give

us any idea how many on-board threats have been minimized or ameliorated by the Federal Air Marshal Service?

Mr. ALLISON. Sure. So, Mr. Congressman, let me answer your question this way: In the aftermath of 9/11, when those buildings were smoldering in the District of Columbia, Pentagon, the World Trade Center, we were removing the wreckage from Pennsylvania, and we were burying 3,000 of our countrymen, we were asked to stand up the Air Marshal Service to make sure that that never happened again, and it hasn't.

Now, I would like to take credit for that, as I told the Chairman yesterday, but I really can't. It really goes to the effort of the counterterrorism apparatus that this country has put in place. Now, we are a part of that apparatus, and together as a country, we have thwarted a lot of terrorist attacks. Some we were involved in and many more we weren't. I can tell you, it is known all over the world that we have Federal Air Marshals on these aircrafts. I can't point to a fact, Mr. Congressman, but I can assure you that that is something everyone one knows about, and I believe in some small way, that probably is why we haven't had something in this country since then. I know that wasn't your direct question, but that is my thought.

Mr. RATCLIFFE. Again, thanks for being here and thanks for the work that you do.

My time has expired. I will yield back.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you, Mr. Ratcliffe. Just a quick follow-up question for the Chair, and we will take our brief recess and go to the second panel.

You mentioned something with Miss Rice I just wanted to follow up on briefly. There has been a hiring freeze, I take it, at the Federal Air Marshal Service?

Mr. ALLISON. Yes, sir. We haven't hired. Our last class was 2011, after the Abdulmutallab attack. We ramped up, I think, to the tune of 4- or 500 Federal Air Marshals, but that was the last class we have had.

Mr. KATKO. Okay. So there was an increase, at that time, a block increase, but overall, there hasn't been any hiring in the last few years?

Mr. ALLISON. No, sir.

Mr. KATKO. Now, you have approximately about an \$800 million budget?

Mr. ALLISON. Yes, sir.

Mr. KATKO. If you are not having any additional hires since then, and the budgets remain relatively static, are you doing anything—what are you doing with the extra money? Because I know there is attrition, you are losing Marshals, and everything else. So what is happening with the additional money?

Mr. ALLISON. Well, there are no additional funds, because the budget is planned in accordance with attrition.

Mr. KATKO. Okay. All right. So, now, do you have sufficient funding moving forward to have another class, or do you think another class is required and needs additional funding, or what?

Mr. ALLISON. For this year, obviously, the process is still going on. From what the initial reports that I have seen, probably not this year. We are going to make another run for next year. We will

submit here, through the Department, through OMB, to the Congress, a comprehensive report on what I believe, we believe, as a department what the size of the Federal Air Marshals should be. So that is coming up here very soon.

Mr. KATKO. Two quick questions, and I will be done. The first one is—actually, just one question moving forward. There has been some discussion by law enforcement circles that if other law enforcement personnel are on the flights, whether it is necessary to also have the Federal Air Marshal on those flights. Are you familiar with that suggestion, and how do you think it would work?

Mr. ALLISON. Yes, sir. So when we first stood up the organization, we took a hard look at that. It really relies on us getting that data and that travel data and being able to plan towards it. So we do our scheduling to minimize the disruption of the airlines, starts 60 days in advance. So there are a lot of times when our FAMS are on flights, we have other law enforcement officials who, they are traveling and they made their reservations maybe days before. So we don't have the ability to sort-of look and plan around that.

On a strategic level, we did look at that with respect to places where we see a large number of law enforcement officers and trusted travelers, and we reduced our coverage levels there. But individually by flight, it is sort-of challenging.

Mr. KATKO. Okay. The very last question, I promise. That is, what percentage of the overall population of employees of the Federal Air Marshal Service actually are Air Marshals in the air as opposed to administrative aspects that are on the ground?

Mr. ALLISON. So out of the number of Federal Air Marshals, the overwhelming majority, I don't have a percentage for you, and I will get you one, are flying Federal Air Marshals or direct support, meaning, they work in the office; they do the operations, they do the training. When you go back to the operation center, we have Federal Air Marshals there. We have Federal Air Marshals that work on the joint vulnerability assessments, and our mission support staff, we are very lean in that respect.

Mr. KATKO. If you can get us those percentages, that would be great.

I want to thank the witness for his testimony. It was very helpful. I want to thank the Members for their questions as well. We have a second panel coming up in a few moments, but the Members of the committee may have some additional questions for this witness. We will ask you to respond to these in writing, if you would, Mr. Allison. Pursuant to Committee Rule 7(e), the hearing record will be open for an additional 10 days.

Without objection, this subcommittee stands adjourned for a very brief recess.

[Recess.]

Mr. KATKO. We are back in session, and the Chair will now introduce our witness for the second panel.

Our second witness is Captain Tim Canoll, who began serving as the tenth president of the Air Line Pilots Association International in January 2015. As ALPA's chief executive administrative officer, Captain Canoll presides over the meetings of the association's governing bodies and oversees daily operations of the association.

The Chair now recognizes Captain Canoll to testify.

**STATEMENT OF TIM CANOLL, PRESIDENT, AIR LINE PILOTS
ASSOCIATION**

Mr. CANOLL. Good morning, Chairman Katko and Congressman Payne. I am Captain Tim Canoll, president of the Air Line Pilots Association International. ALPA represents more than 52,000 pilots who fly for 31 passenger and all cargo airlines in the United States and Canada. Thank you for inviting me here today.

For several decades, ALPA pilots have had a strong relationship with the Federal Air Marshal Service. ALPA leaders meet on a regular basis with the FAMS to ensure we have the most current and accurate understanding of their roles, responsibilities, training, and methods. We focus in particular on learning how FAMS interface with flight crew members like me when we fly the line. Throughout the FAMS' history, ALPA members have been deeply impressed by the professionalism of the individual Air Marshals and the dedication of the program's leaders, including Assistant Administrator Allison.

Every day FAMS put their lives at risk to safeguard the passengers and crew members on their flights. For that, ALPA and its members are and will always be extremely grateful. In ALPA's view, flying U.S. airliners with highly-trained anti-terrorism experts aboard is immensely valuable. These professionals are not only capable of defending the flight deck, they also serve as a powerful deterrent to anyone who might contemplate hijacking an airline flight.

The TSA has adopted a risk-based security philosophy for many of its programs. The Federal Air Marshal Service embodies a risk-based approach to aviation security.

On this same theme, the Federal Flight Deck Officer program also serves as another critical layer of protection and contributes to the risk-based approach to security.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, ALPA conceived of and advocated for the FFDO program which became a reality when Congress passed the Arming Pilots Against Terrorism Act in 2002. FFDOs are airline pilots who voluntarily undergo very thorough screening and training by the TSA. Once qualified, these individuals are then deputized before assuming responsibilities for protecting the cockpit. In the 12 years since the first FFDOs were deputized in 2003, thousands of pilots who fly passenger and all cargo airlines have volunteered to become FFDOs. They protect the cockpit on about 1 million flight segments each year.

In addition, FFDOs volunteer their personal time to receive the training required to join the program, and many pay of their own expense. FFDOs are the last line of defense in protecting the cockpit. Like FAMS, FFDOs provide passengers, cargo shippers, and flight crew with a critical additional layer of security. ALPA applauds the many supporters of the FFDO program in the Congress, and particularly those in this committee. We believe that the funding level agreed on by Congress is adequate now for the TSA to continue to train new FFDOs while providing the management and oversight required. The FFDO program is a successful, efficient, and effective program, and should be expanded to meet our risk-based security objectives.

ALPA also commends the FFDO program's current oversight authority, the Office of Training and Workforce Engagement, for setting the stage for the program's continued success. OTWE has given ALPA members the opportunity to observe the most current training methods and procedures, and to provide airline pilots' perspectives. OTWE has been very responsive to ALPA's feedback. We look forward to continue to work closely with them.

Finally, since we are focused on the overall security of airline operations, I would be remiss if I did not underscore ALPA's strong support for installing secondary cockpit barriers on passenger airliners as another essential layer of security. I would be pleased to discuss the details of how they work for your interested subcommittee Members.

Simply put, secondary cockpit barriers create a common-sense additional layer of security by protecting the cockpit when the hardened door must be opened. Installing secondary cockpit barriers on passenger airlines would be an important security enhancement for many reasons, not the least of which is that FAMS and FFDOs would benefit from this additional layer of security as part of the multi-layer proactive strategy.

At ALPA, we are committed to advancing aviation security to protect our passengers, our cargo, and our flight crews. We appreciate this subcommittee's shared interest in exploring new ways to make a secure air transportation system even more secure.

Thank you for this opportunity to be here today.
[The prepared statement of Mr. Canoll follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TIM CANOLL

JULY 16, 2015

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the subcommittee. I am Captain Tim Canoll, president of the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA). ALPA represents over 52,000 pilots who fly for 31 passenger and all-cargo airlines in the United States and Canada. On behalf of our members, I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspectives on the Federal Air Marshal Service, which provides an important layer of aviation security.

ALPA has a decades-old relationship with the Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) which dates back long before it was part of the TSA and even before it was overseen by the Federal Aviation Administration. Historically, ALPA and FAMS leadership have met multiple times over the years, we have observed their training methods at their facilities and engaged with them on a regular basis to better understand their roles, responsibilities, methods, and other aspects of their work and how their role interfaces with our flight crew members. We are impressed by the professionalism of the individuals whom we have known through the years, which certainly includes Rod Allison, who currently heads the FAMS organization. As just one indicator of their professionalism, FAMS' demonstrated marksmanship skills are among the very best of any law enforcement agency in this country, which is certainly a needed skill in the very tightly-confined space of a crowded aircraft cabin.

The work of a FAM within the aviation domain is a difficult, thankless job. It mostly consists of long hours traveling on airliners, endeavoring to maintain a low profile while still keeping high situational awareness and being prepared to react on a moment's notice to any disturbance which could threaten the flight. FAMS put their lives at risk on behalf of the passengers and crewmembers on-board their flights on a daily basis, and for that, ALPA and its members are most grateful.

Although the FAMS cadre had numbered into the thousands prior to the 9/11 attacks, there were only 33 of them in September 2001, according to the *911 Commission Report*. FAMS were being used to protect international flights exclusively, except when they were required to travel on a domestic leg to get to an international flight. The Government's rationale behind this arrangement at the time was that

domestic travel was quite safe from hijackings, as there had been none of a U.S. airliner since 1986.

After 9/11, the program grew very quickly to several thousand FAMS and they were assigned to international and domestic flights, as they still are today. In our view, there continues to be great value in having highly trained anti-terrorism experts on-board U.S. commercial aircraft. They are not only capable of defending the flight deck, they serve as a strong deterrent to anyone who might consider hijacking a commercial flight. TSA has adopted a risk-based security (RBS) philosophy for many of its programs—the FAM program may also benefit from adopting a greater RBS focus than it currently has, which could result in greater efficiencies and effectiveness.

A complement to the FAM program is the Federal Flight Deck Officer (FFDO) program. FFDOs are airline pilots who voluntarily undergo a very thorough screening and qualification process and then submit to being trained by the TSA and assume responsibility for protecting the flight deck with lethal force. ALPA conceived of and successfully advocated for the creation of the program, which became a reality when the Arming Pilots Against Terrorism Act (APATA) was enacted as part of the Homeland Security Act of 2002. In response to that Congressional mandate, ALPA assisted the TSA in designing and implementing the FFDO program.

In April 2003, the first 44 airline pilots graduated from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Glynco, GA and were deputized as the Nation's first FFDOs. Since then, thousands more pilots who fly for passenger and all-cargo airlines have volunteered to become FFDOs. They protect the flight decks of our Nation's airliners on about 1 million flight segments per year, all within a budget of roughly \$25 million dollars per year, or about \$25 per protected flight.

FFDOs volunteer their personal time in order to receive the training required to become part of the program, and pay some of the related expenses as well. Because of its volunteer "work force," the FFDO program may well be the most cost-effective, Federally-funded program in the country. FFDOs are the last line of defense in protecting the flight decks of our Nation's airliners. A fully trained and armed pilot in the cockpit provides a strong deterrent against the potential for terrorist acts and helps ensure that our airplanes will never again be used as guided weapons. The thousands of FFDOs have protected millions of airline flights since the inception of the program and, like FAMS, FFDOs provide an additional layer of security to our Nation's aviation system.

We applaud the supporters of the FFDO program in Congress and particularly those from this subcommittee. There are some within Government who have endeavored to reduce its relatively small funding level or zero it out completely, but we have been very gratified to work with numerous representatives who are steadfast in their support for the program. The funding level that Congress has agreed upon, \$22.3 million, is enough for the TSA to continue to train new FFDOs and provide management and oversight the program needs. ALPA would like to encourage this subcommittee to continue its support of appropriate levels of funding for this highly efficient program.

Last year, TSA placed the FFDO program under the oversight of its Office of Training and Workforce Engagement (OTWE) and, to date, that branch of the agency has exhibited a strong desire to ensure that the program grows and thrives. We have worked closely with the program's leadership since that change—in fact, several ALPA representatives are attending a quarterly FFDO working group meeting that OTWE convened this week in Artesia, New Mexico. That meeting will give our representatives and other Government and industry attendees an opportunity to observe the most current FFDO training methods and procedures and provide input on any areas of concern. OTWE has been very responsive to issues that we and other industry organizations have raised regarding management, resources, communications, and other areas.

Although not specifically part of this hearing, I would be remiss if I did not reiterate ALPA's strong support for installing secondary barriers on passenger aircraft. FAMS and FFDOs would benefit from having this additional layer of security on-board to help them protect the flight deck whenever the hardened cockpit door must be opened. The key to any multi-faceted, multi-layered safety plan is to be proactive and not reactive. We need to be mindful of the ever-emerging threats that face our Nation and not get complacent in our defense against terrorism. More can always be done and frequent changes, adjustments, and improvements will help protect our Nation's flight decks from future attacks.

Thank you for your interest. I would be pleased to take any questions that you may have.

Mr. KATKO. Well, thank you, Captain.

The Chair now recognizes himself for 5 minutes of questions. Let's start out with the secondary barrier issue. There have been some people advocating for a secondary barrier for cockpit doors. I know when I am on the airplane now I always notice the flight attendant turning the cart sideways and standing behind that cart when someone comes out of the cockpit door, even for a moment.

There has been some question whether a secondary barrier is necessary given all that and given how quickly you come in and out of the cockpit. I just wanted you to comment on that and tell me, by way of background, whether there has been any attempts to rush the door that you are aware of since 9/11.

Mr. CANOLL. So I am not prepared to speak to exactly how many rush-the-door issues or incidents that there have been, but they have occurred. The door is an excellent door. It is very well-fortified, and it is completely deployed. It is everywhere. But the one vulnerability is this period of time when you have to leave for essential purposes, either passing meals or to access the bathroom on the aircraft, even if it is for a very short period of time, and we take steps to make sure that it is for the shortest period possible. That period is when we are most vulnerable.

The installing of a very cost-effective secondary barrier, and we are talking \$5,000 to \$12,000 per aircraft, once installed, installed forever, and there is no operating cost of it, you can almost completely if not completely eliminate that risky period of time.

Mr. KATKO. Do you have any idea what they look like? I mean, I have seen some renderings, but is it a full door? Is it just a screen or what is it?

Mr. CANOLL. Yes, sir. It is a wire mesh, retractable, light-weight, and it is inexpensive, as I mentioned. It goes from the floor to the ceiling of the cabin, and it is installed after the cockpit door but before the passenger cabin. So as you enter an aircraft, normally you will see the cockpit door to your left as you enter and then you turn right to go down the aisle or two aisles of the cabin. It is in that period where you would make your right turn near the galley normally installed in the front area. It is unobtrusive. Often you wouldn't see it unless it is deployed.

Mr. KATKO. Now, I want to switch gears a bit and talk about the Federal Air Marshal Service and the relationship with the airline pilots that you are aware of. Now, it seems like you enjoy a pretty good relationship, but is there any concerns about the conduct of the Federal Air Marshal Service or ways we can improve it going forward?

Mr. CANOLL. So we have no concerns over the conduct in the Air Marshal Service whatsoever. I think a part of aviation safety and security is always seeking better ways to do business. So while we are satisfied we have good communications procedures through OTWE and out there on the line flying the aircraft, we know we can do better, and we are constantly looking for those better ways to do it.

Mr. KATKO. Okay. What better ways would you say? How can we improve the Air Marshal Service? Is it more bodies in the seats or is it better training for them or what?

Mr. CANOLL. Well, I think one way would be actually to expand the FFDO program. The FFDO program is an amplifier for the

Federal Air Marshal Service in that the coordination of coverage on flights is executed at the TSA. So if you are covering more flights with FFDOs, then you have the capability of covering more critical flights with the current cadre of FAMS.

Mr. KATKO. Now, when you say expand the FFDO, what is preventing you from doing that?

Mr. CANOLL. Well, currently our budget is around \$25 million, and that is adequate, as I mentioned in my testimony. We would like to see the opportunity to expand to entice every pilot who wished to become an FFDO to become an FFDO.

Mr. KATKO. Are there pilots who want to become FFDOs who are not able to because of budgetary constraints?

Mr. CANOLL. It is my understanding there are FFDOs on the waiting list. Yes, sir.

Mr. KATKO. Do you know how long the waiting list is?

Mr. CANOLL. I do not, but I will get that to your office.

Mr. KATKO. Yeah. I would appreciate that. I think that would be very instructive for me.

Because if there is something—if there are pilots that are desiring to do this and it is a question of funding, then that should not be a question moving forward. We should do what we have to do to make that happen because, to me, that is important going forward.

Now, can you tell me approximately what percentage of airline pilots have the FFDO certification?

Mr. CANOLL. So I have always wanted to say this in front of Congress. I can't confirm or deny how many there are, sir.

Mr. KATKO. Aren't you cool?

Mr. CANOLL. It is confidential. So, unfortunately, I can't tell you that. I don't even know, sir.

Mr. KATKO. Okay. Well, at some point perhaps in a more secure setting you could advise us.

Mr. CANOLL. Yes, sir.

Mr. KATKO. I do think it is another layer of security that is an important deterrent. So if there is something we can do to help you enhance that, we would certainly be interested in trying to do that.

The last thing is somewhat far afield of the subject of today, but since I have a few seconds I will ask it. What happened with the German airlines with the pilot going bad, and is there ways that we can examine to try and help you prevent that from happening in this country with our airlines?

Mr. CANOLL. So as you know, airline pilots are subject to physical examination in that there is an element of mental evaluation. The FAA has stood up an aviation rulemaking committee to examine the current processes we use for this element. At the Air Line Pilot Association, we really have had programs in place for many, many years. We have not only substance abuse programs, but we have professional standards committees that monitor peer-to-peer within the program. We have pilot assistance programs where pilots can access hotlines 24/7 to express their angst, whether it be a family matter or personal matter or financial matter.

We feel these programs have been very effective, as evidenced by this exceptionally rare incident. But we are part of the solution going forward in trying to examine what else we can do.

Mr. KATKO. Well, I look forward to hearing the results of that because, to me, if there is something we can do to help you with that, we certainly would be interested in doing so.

I am out of time, sir. I appreciate your questions, and now I will refer to my Ranking Minority Member, Mr. Payne from New Jersey.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, as usual, we are on the same page and the same thought. I was going to ask that same question in reference to the German incident. So it has kind of stole my thunder.

But, Captain Canoll, we are really delighted to have you here this morning to testify before us. Your credentials are second-to-none as we look at them, and just definitely consider you an expert in this area.

I want to ask you about the screening process for applicants into the Federal Flight Deck Officers program. Are there any prerequisites for applying, such as tenure or flight hours?

Mr. CANOLL. Thank you, Congressman. So the prerequisites that I am about to describe are over and above the prerequisites that you would have to maintain to be an active air transport category pilot, and that would be the physical and testing requirements to be in the cockpit.

The volunteers, through an on-line process, submit a voluntary questionnaire which is extensive. Then there is an in-person interview conducted with those who get through that first level, and then there is a background check of those who are conditionally accepted.

The program training is essentially 1 week in length. They arrive on Sunday, they depart on Saturday, and in any given 5-year point, they need to be able to look back and find that they have either completed initial training or recurrent training, and twice a year they complete firearms training to maintain their qualification at all times.

Mr. PAYNE. Okay. How has the training undergone by FFDOs been tailored to address the evolving threats with aviation security?

Mr. CANOLL. So as I mentioned before, all of aviation, both in the cockpit and in design and in the FFDO program, is an evolving training process. It changes in each cycle. I am not familiar with the actual recent changes they have made. They are, of course, not for public consumption, but they do evolve each training cycle so that the FFDOs are receiving the most current thoughts from the FAMS, and also all of TSA, on tactics that they use.

Mr. PAYNE. Are there any incentives that could be created to encourage enrolling into the FFDO program?

Mr. CANOLL. Yes, sir. Currently, the FFDO program—there are a few elements here. First off, we do not have widespread or it actually is extremely limited international carriage capability for our FFDOs. So they don't deploy on international flights. In our larger airlines, pilots transfer in and out of international categories, even sometimes within a daily basis international. So if we could work with the Department of State to expand our ability to travel internationally, as a FAM does, with our weapon, that would be helpful.

We also believe that the requirement for the employer to provide leaves of absence for the FFDO to attend training would be helpful as well. Currently now you just have to coordinate it through your off schedule.

Finally, any assistance we could get for FFDOs to offset the expenses they incur in travel and in practice ammunition would be helpful as well. As you know, FFDOs receive no remuneration for service.

Mr. PAYNE. Okay. Just for us, please detail the way the FFDOs communicate with FAMS to address vulnerabilities within commercial flights.

Mr. CANOLL. So from a broad perspective, the FFDO program coordinates with the TSA, and so does the FAM program. I am not familiar exactly within the bureaucracy of the cross-communication between OTWE and Assistant Administrator Allison's department, but we are satisfied that it does take place, evidenced by the very quick reaction we get from OTWE on all our concerns.

Mr. PAYNE. Okay. Well, I appreciate your testimony and you being available to answer the questions. With that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

Mr. KATKO. Thank you, Mr. Payne.

I have one quick follow-up question I neglected to ask, and that was comparing the current safety strategy that is in place absent the secondary barrier, and that is turning the cart sideways and having a person behind it versus the secondary barrier, could you tell me the degree of difference you think there is in the security when a pilot is coming out of the cockpit?

Mr. CANOLL. I never really contemplated putting a mathematical measurement on it.

Mr. KATKO. I don't need a mathematical measurement. What are your concerns with the current way they are doing it?

Mr. CANOLL. Well, I mean, without getting into our common strategy elements, I think even the most uneducated passenger can see that a simple drink cart isn't nearly as obstructive as a floor-to-ceiling wire mesh. The drink cart is guarded by a flight attendant which also isn't nearly as strong as a wire mesh.

So I think it is intuitive that if you have a wire mesh, you are going to have zero capability to get through that in the time the door is open. The drink cart has wheels. It is meant to move. It is meant to move. It only comes up about waist level. So there are some serious considerations there. I don't think you could find anyone who would argue that the wire mesh—a physical barrier is far more secure.

Mr. KATKO. Now, I have done a lot of hearings this year, and I have never asked this question, but since we have a few moments, is there anything that we haven't touched on that you wish we did or anything else you would like to raise before you conclude your testimony?

Mr. CANOLL. I think we have been very efficient in our time.

Mr. KATKO. I think so too.

Mr. CANOLL. You know, I think the program is running very, very well, in summary. I think I would like to see an expansion of the program, as you mentioned, Mr. Chairman. I think it would work well, and it has been since 2001—we had secondary barriers

in our agenda as something we wanted to see in our aircraft as a real enhancement to our security.

We had some voluntary compliance, but in the last 7 to 8 years, it has waned to zero. No one is installing them because there is no requirement. So if we could find a way to work a requirement in, and it doesn't have to be a requirement to have them installed by the end of the year on every aircraft. We can phase this in over a longer period of time. That is the single best enhancement we could do.

Mr. KATKO. Okay. I appreciate your time. As far as Federal Flight Deck Officers program, if there is any information you want to submit to the committee, we would be happy to take a look at it and see what we can do.

Mr. CANOLL. Thank you, sir.

Mr. KATKO. All right. I want to thank you for your testimony, and I want to thank Mr. Payne for his questions. The Members of the committee may have some additional questions for you, and we will ask you to respond to these in writing.

Pursuant to committee rule 7(e) of the hearing, the hearing record will be open for 10 days. Without objection, the subcommittee stands adjourned. Thank you for your time, sir.

Mr. CANOLL. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:25 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

