

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2309

April 22, 2012

John S. Pistole
Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
601 South Twelfth Street
Arlington, VA 20598-6001

Dear Administrator Pistole,

I am writing to urge you to reconsider the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) decision to allow some knives to be carried aboard commercial airplanes.

I have heard from many constituents who travel and work on airplanes that they are concerned about the risk they face if a knife is allowed on an airplane in the wrong hands. While I appreciate your stated desire to lessen the "hassle factor" that TSA has come to represent for travelers, I'm concerned that the risks outweigh the benefits in this particular decision.

In your testimony before the House Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Transportation Security, you stated that "a small pocket knife is simply not going to result in the catastrophic failure of an aircraft. An improvised explosive device will." While I agree that an explosive device clearly poses a much larger threat to an airplane than a knife, that doesn't mean a knife in the wrong hands couldn't end in a tragedy. TSA's mission is not just to prevent the catastrophic failure of an aircraft, and I'm concerned that this decision is turning a blind eye to very real security fears held by those who travel and work on airplanes. Lastly, I question your rationale that just because there weren't any security incidents with knives when they were allowed before the 9/11 attacks, those same attacks would be unlikely in the future.

For the reasons I've laid out above, I ask you to reconsider your decision to allow some knives to be carried aboard commercial airplanes. At the very least, you should delay the upcoming change to allow for more consideration of the risks and benefits. If you have any other questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Al Franken
United States Senator