April 16, 2013

Mr. John Pistole Administrator, U.S. Transportation Security Administration Washington, D.C.

Dear Administrator Pistole:

In the wake of yesterday's unsolved terror attacks in Boston, I am writing to beg you to maintain the current TSA prohibited-items list and not allow knives on U.S. airline flights. I am the widow of United Airlines Flight Attendant Alfred Marchand, who died on Flight 175 on 9/11. I'm also the mother of a current flight attendant. I know too well the violence that can be wrought with a knife.

The attacks in Boston prove once again that we can't be selective in our vigilance. We must guard against all threats, big and small. Dramatically changing the prohibited-items list now would be a huge mistake. We do not know what new threat we are facing. Allowing knives on planes nine days from today would send a message to the country that the TSA and this Administration are oblivious to the safety of the traveling public. *You must keep knives out of the aircraft cabin.* 

Do not demean the lessons of 9/11 by dismissing the outcry over knives as "emotional." TSA was created because knives were used against crew and passengers to bring down four flights that day. Flight Attendants and Air Marshals are the last line of defense in keeping attackers out of the cockpit. We know Flight Attendants and passengers were killed before the cockpit doors were breached.

Al's final hours on 9/11 provided us with a key lesson: Desperate and depraved people armed with sharp blades can wreak havoc inside an aircraft. Those lessons were not confined to the need to secure the cockpit. I worry daily for my son's safety while flying, but I dread the danger he will face if this change takes effect April 25.

How will you respond, Sir, the first time a knife is used as a weapon on an aircraft against a passenger or crewmember? As the wife of a Flight Attendant killed on 9/11, and the mother of a Flight Attendant who flies today, I have earned the right to say this: Knives have NO place on an airplane.

Please maintain the ban on knives permanently.

Sinderely,

Kelvic ca Marchand
Mrs. Rebecca Marchand

Phoenix, Arizona

Widow of Alfred Marchand

Flight Attendant on United Airlines Flight 175 on 9/11