

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 24, 2013

**SCHUMER, MURKOWSKI CALL FOR
INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF TSA DECISION
TO ALLOW KNIVES ONBOARD AIRPLANES**

*New TSA Policy Will Allow Passengers to Carry Knives on
Planes for First Time Since September 11th Attacks – Ask
For DHS Inspector General To Examine Policy Potential
Downsides Before Agency Moves Forward With Change*

*TSA Officers Trained to Spot Dangerous Knives Using
Fifteen Minute Computer Program Instead of Measuring
Tools; Senators Say New Policy Could Create Lengthy
Delays at Checkpoint Screenings and Inconsistent
Application of Policy*

*TSA Delayed Implementation of Policy On Monday – It
Should Stay On Hold Until IG Report Is Completed*

WASHINGTON, D.C — Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) today called upon Acting Inspector General Charles Edwards of the Department of Homeland Security to closely examine the Transportation Safety Administration's (TSA) new policy to allow small knives through security and onto commercial airplanes across the country. Murkowski and Schumer today highlighted numerous concerns surrounding the new policy including safety issues, the lack of information and tools provided to officers and potentially, lengthy delays at checkpoints. Because implementation has recently been delayed, Murkowski and Schumer today called for an independent investigation and special review of the policy before it officially goes into effect.

The request for an independent and special review comes amid raised concerns surrounding the March 28th announcement the TSA would no longer be limiting knife blades of 2.36 inches (6 centimeters) or shorter – a restriction put in place following the

Exhibit

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September 11th attacks. Despite harsh criticism and opposition industry-wide – from major airlines to law enforcement – the TSA has continued to move forward in implementing their plan to remove small knives from their no fly list. On April 22nd, TSA Administrator Pistole announced that implementation of the policy would be delayed.

“Now that TSA has decided to delay implementation we write to request that your office closely scrutinize TSA’s process on this critical matter going forward and complete a special review before the change is implemented,” the letter states. “The TSA has argued that this new policy will speed up checkpoint screenings and enable TSOs to focus on greater security risks. We fear that the exact opposite will occur. We are quite concerned at the prospect that checkpoint screenings slow to a crawl as TSOs and passengers disagree over the length or width of knives or knives which do not meet policy. It is our understanding the TSOs would not be provided with measuring tools to quickly determine whether or not a knife is acceptable. Instead, they would simply rely on 15 minute of training during which they would view pictures of acceptable and unacceptable knives. Based upon those 15 minutes of training TSOs would be expected make a judgment on acceptability of knives at the checkpoint.”

The Senators also raised additional concerns about the implementation of the policy and potential for inconsistent applications of the 2.36 inch rule, writing:

“This plan gives rise to a number of concerns. Can we expect to see lengthy delays at checkpoints as TSOs consult with their colleagues and supervisors whether a particular knife is acceptable? Will we be subjecting the TSOs and other travelers to harm by requiring these knives to be opened for examination in the crowded checkpoint line? Are these dangers increased if arguments ensue in the checkpoint line? Will travelers experience an increase in secondary screening simply because the primary screener cannot tell whether a knife is in policy? Will TSOs simply give up and allow all knives of reasonable length through if they can’t figure out whether a particular knife meets policy? Can

we expect vast inconsistencies in how the policy is enforced between checkpoints in a single airport and among airports?”

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