



July 22, 2010

Dear HR 1881 Cosponsor:

Attached please find a draft letter that Congresswoman Nita Lowey and Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson intend to send to the new TSA Administrator, John Pistole early next week. As a cosponsor of HR 1881, introduced by Congresswoman Lowey and Chairman Thompson, you have demonstrated your support for providing basic civil service and collective bargaining rights to the employees of TSA. We ask you to continue to show your support for TSA employees by signing on to this letter.

NTEU represents TSA employees all over the country and they need and deserve the same rights as other federal employees, particularly the right to bargain collectively and the right to have fair and transparent pay and working conditions. Providing these rights will also make this important agency work better and ensure that its national security mission is carried out. Right now, TSA has the highest attrition rate and lowest morale in the federal government, leading to a lack of experience and the unnecessary expenses that come from constant hiring and training of new employees.

NTEU is committed to enacting HR 1881 and will continue to work for its approval, but the TSA Administrator has the authority to put these needed policies in place immediately. Please join Congresswoman Lowey and Chairman Thompson in urging Administrator Pistole to act swiftly to ensure that TSA has policies in place that enhance its mission as well as the rights of its workforce.

For more information contact Cathy Ball (Cathy.Ball@nteu.org) or Maureen Gilman (Maureen.Gilman@nteu.org) at 202-572-5500.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colleen M. Kelley".

Colleen M. Kelley
National President

July 22, 2010

The Honorable John S. Pistole
Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Administrator Pistole:

First, we congratulate you on your new position and look forward to working with you to protect the travelling public.

As you are aware, more than 42,000 Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) work in airports across the country on the frontline in detecting and preventing terrorism. However, due to poor management practices implemented at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) under the Bush Administration these workers suffer from high injury rates; high attrition; high rate of complaints filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; and low morale.

That is why we introduced H.R. 1881 to provide TSOs with standard government employment rights they deserve to ensure a professional, experienced screener workforce.

We agree with your statement that any change in policy cannot “adversely affect the safety and security of the traveling public.” However, we strongly dispute the notion that providing standard government employment rights, including veterans preference, uniform pay, and other basic workplace protections, including whistleblowing, and collective bargaining would hamper TSA’s ability to protect the public or respond to threats. In fact, providing these rights will enhance security by increasing employee retention. The alternative, continuing to treat TSOs like replaceable parts, will force TSA to perpetually replace experienced and inexperienced staff, thereby leading to a continuous investment in training resulting in a wasting of taxpayer funds.

Frontline DHS and other personnel across the country already have these basic government rights, including collective bargaining rights, and having these rights has not diminished their ability to protect the nation. To name some of these entities, they are: DHS components, the Pentagon Force Protection Agency, Capitol Police, and the New York City Police Department. Certainly your experiences at the FBI must indicate that collective bargaining rights are not a hindrance to Mayor Bloomberg or Commissioner Kelly successfully protecting the people of New York.

We urge you to conduct your review of current policies swiftly and to strongly consider providing comprehensive workplace and employment rights to ensure TSOs make a career of helping to protect the flying public and our skies.

Sincerely,

(Rep. Nita Lowey and Chairman Bennie Thompson)