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One Hundred Eighth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Select Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

October 30, 2003

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DEPUTY STAFF DIRECTOR

The Honorable Tom Ridge
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Ridge:

We recognize that the Department has moved rapidly to address deficiencies in testing and training procedures for Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screeners since Nathaniel Heatwole smuggled box cutters, bleach, matches and a simulated bomb through security at Baltimore-Washington and Raleigh-Durham airports on repeated occasions. Particularly because the Heatwole case is part of a broader pattern -- for example, DHS-IG investigators were recently able to bring knives, bombs and handguns through Logan International Airport without detection -- the Committee will remain keenly focused on the Department's remedial actions in this area.

We are more deeply concerned, however, that TSA was unable to competently handle the detailed information provided by Heatwole concerning the contraband smuggled onto the Southwest aircraft. Despite the fact that TSA was provided with the exact dates that the contraband was hidden, the flight numbers, and even Heatwole's name and telephone number, it appears that TSA did not provide this information to the FBI or to Southwest Airlines for over one month, and then only after the airline accidentally discovered some of the items.

October 30, 2003

Please provide the Committee with the following:

1. Complete unredacted copies of each email sent by Heatwole and received by TSA or any other component of the Department of Homeland Security.
2. The name and office location of the first DHS employee who read each Heatwole email, and the date(s) on which such employee(s) received and read such email.
3. The name and office location of each person within the Department to whom any Heatwole email was forwarded by a person named in response to question 2 prior to October 10, 2003, and the date of such forwarding.
4. A complete, unredacted copy of any response to Heatwole from TSA or any other component of DHS prior to October 10, 2003.
5. A description of the action, if any, taken by TSA or by any other component of DHS prior to October 10, 2003, to follow up on the Heatwole email.
6. Complete, unredacted copies of any other written communication sent by Heatwole to TSA or any other component of DHS.
7. A written summary of any telephonic or oral communication between Heatwole and any person employed by DHS prior to October 10, 2003.

Please provide the above information no later than November 21, 2003. We sincerely appreciate your cooperation.



Christopher Cox
Chairman

Sincerely,



Jim Turner
Ranking Member