



Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

## **Transportation Labor Calls on Congress to Provide Federal Employee Rights to Transportation Security Officers**

The TTD Executive Committee has called upon Congress and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) numerous times to grant full federal employee rights to the nearly 45,000 Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) who keep our nation's airways, mass transit systems, and large public gatherings safe and secure. After years of continuous effort, TSA employees and their union have secured some improvements through administrative actions and congressional appropriations, but these changes do not go far enough. Now is the time to correct the injustice against the workers who keep our skies safe for travelers and transportation workers alike.

First and foremost, Congress must immediately pass, and the President must sign, the Rights for Transportation Security Officers Act (H.R. 8370/S. 4334), which has been introduced by House Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member Bennie Thompson and Senator Brian Schatz.

Under the Rights for Transportation Security Officers Act, authority granted to TSA to establish or modify a TSA personnel management system would be terminated, and the Secretary of Homeland Security would be directed, within 90 days of enactment, to suspend TSA personnel policies, directives, letters and guidelines and move toward conversion of the TSA workforce to the Title 5 personnel system in a manner that is mindful of tenure and status, particularly with respect to leave, pay, group life insurance, health insurance, and severance pay. Additionally, the bill includes protections to ensure that pay for employees is not reduced due to the transition to the Title 5 personnel system.

Historically, TSOs have been denied many fundamental rights and protections that are granted to nearly all other federal employees, including other TSA staff and those in intelligence agencies. As representatives of other essential federal safety workers like air traffic controllers, the TTD Executive Committee asserts that workers' rights and protections and a high level of safety and security are not mutually exclusive. In fact, withholding these rights has only led to operational challenges within TSA.

The TTD Executive Committee is once again calling upon Congress to pass and the President to sign the Rights for Transportation Security Officers Act to ensure essential workplace rights and protections are extended to all TSOs. Ensuring the passage of this legislation will not only address longstanding inequities but also enhance the TSA's ability to recruit and retain qualified personnel by creating a fairer and more supportive work environment. These changes are long overdue.

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