
TESTIMONY OF TIM EDWARDS

SENATE COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH
HARRISBURG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Dear Chairman Aument, Chairman Haywood, and Members of the Committee; my name is Tim Edwards, Executive Director of the Harrisburg International Airport. On behalf of the Susquehanna Area Regional Airport Authority, its staff, and its board of directors, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the issues surrounding Act 38 and its implications on aviation in Pennsylvania.

Harrisburg International Airport (HIA) is third-largest commercial airport in Pennsylvania in terms of departing passengers, and has served the South Central region of Pennsylvania since 1967. HIA currently is served by six (6) airlines, providing nonstop services to 14 destinations with connections to hundreds of destinations worldwide. In 2016, HIA handled 50,000 aircraft operations while the airlines served nearly 1.2 million travelers, and transported more than 105 million pounds of air cargo.

The REAL ID Act, passed by Congress in 2005, enacted the 9/11 Commission's recommendation that the Federal Government "set standards for the issuance of sources of identification, such as driver's licenses." The Act established minimum security standards for license issuance and production and prohibits Federal agencies from accepting for certain purposes driver's licenses and identification cards from states not meeting the Act's minimum standards. The purposes covered by the Act are: accessing Federal facilities, entering nuclear power plants, and, most importantly for us, boarding federally regulated commercial aircraft.

In response, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed Act 38, the Real ID Non-Participation Act of 2011, which prevents full compliance with the Real ID Act by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. As a result, starting January 22, 2018, PA travelers who do not have a REAL ID license or an alternate form of acceptable ID (like a U.S. passport, DHS Trusted traveler card, military ID) will not be permitted through the security checkpoint.

To put this perspective, every day approximately 1,600 passengers depart HIA. About 60 percent of them are PA residents. As it stands today, about 1,000 PA residents departing HIA won't be able to fly. As a result, when they approach the TSA security checkpoint, the TSA officer will ask them to complete a form. Then a phone call will be made to the national Identify Verification Call Center (IVCC) where a series of questions will be asked to try and confirm the traveler's identity. If successful, the traveler will be allowed to proceed, however, they still may be subject to additional screening. If the call is not successful, the traveler won't fly. This ID verification process creates unnecessary hassle and takes time...anywhere between

10 and 15 minutes per call. And, for all travelers over age 18 without REAL ID, a call must be made to the IVCC.

For example, should this process average about 10 minutes per passenger, on a flight to Orlando with 166 people on board, more than 100 people likely will face additional screening hassle. At 10 minutes per passenger, an additional 16 hours of security checkpoint screening time becomes necessary just to enter the security for this one flight alone. The reality is, most passengers will miss the flight.

Apart from the obvious operational drawbacks, the Commonwealth's current non-compliance position with the Real ID act places greater financial burden on all PA residents who travel by air. The recommended form of alternate ID is a U.S. Passport. New passports cost \$135 each. For a couple who wants to take their family to Disney, or to visit a family member in Texas or California, there is now additional \$270 cost to the trip. That money goes directly to the Federal Government with no financial benefit to the state of PA.

Thank you for holding today's hearing. As I'm sure you can see, at HIA—and at airports all throughout the state of PA—we are all extremely concerned about the significant consequences of Act 38.

Today, I'm here to ask for your support of Senate Bill 133—the repeal of Act 38. Also, I'm here to offer my support—and the support of my colleagues statewide—to work together on a REAL ID solution for air travelers and residents living in the state of Pennsylvania.

Thank you for your time. I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.