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Statement for the Record

**Subcommittee on Transportation Security
Committee on Homeland Security
United States House of Representatives**

**Hearing - "Access Control Point Breaches at Our Nation's
Airports: Anomalies or Systemic Failures?"**

May 16, 2012

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee:

The United Steelworkers (USW) represents 850,000 workers across a variety of sectors in the United States and Canada, including flight attendants. The members in the USW airline division are critical safety and security workers of their respective employers. Our members in the airline sector undergo a rigorous background check and training in order to provide safe, secure flights to multiple locations in the continental United States.

Recognizing flight attendants as the security workers they are, the 9/11 Commission Act (P.L. 110-53) authorized the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to establish a sterile area access system or method that will enhance security by properly identifying authorized airline flight deck and cabin crew members at screening checkpoints. Expansion of these advanced screening programs to airline flight deck and cabin crew members would grant them expedited access through screening checkpoints.

The current limited versions of these risk-based surveillance screening systems, CrewPASS and Known Crew Member, are only available to pilots and are limited to a few locations. Excluding flight attendants from the risk-based surveillance program creates a system where TSA agents must spend valuable screening time inspecting workers who are trained to be the last line of defense in the aircraft cabin.

In a letter submitted to TSA Administrator John S. Pistole on April 25th 2012, USW President Leo Gerard requested that TSA expand expedited screening processes like CrewPASS and Known Crew Member to include flight attendants. The letter also provided a specific case where a USW member was required to go through multiple pat-downs due to the metals implanted during a knee replacement surgery. The invasive pat downs not only slowed security screening and caused the flight to be delayed by over an hour, but also created a scenario where TSA screening time was needlessly spent on a flight attendant with over twelve years of employment with the airline and thousands of hours of flight time.

United Steelworkers flight attendants believe TSA could provide quicker, more secure access to the flight deck by fully implementing a risk-based surveillance screening system for the entire flight crew. By employing a system that allows trusted and experienced crew members rapid access through TSA security check points, TSA will better accomplish the agencies mission to “protect the nation’s transportation systems to ensure freedom of movement for people and commerce”.

Again, the USW urges the House Homeland Security Committee to hold TSA accountable in providing a risk-based screening initiative for all flight crew members. Thank you for the opportunity to provide a statement for the record.