

**Opening Statement of Chairwoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) as prepared
Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection
Committee on Homeland Security**

**“Lost in the Shuffle: Examining TSA’s Management of Surface
Transportation Security Inspectors”**

September 23, 2010, at 2 pm

We are here today to discuss critical programs and policies designed to protect our Nation’s transportation systems from terrorist attack, and to welcome to the Subcommittee the new TSA Administrator, John Pistole.

With responsibility for ensuring the security of the Nation’s airports, railways, roadways, transit systems and pipelines, TSA’s mission is critical and immense. Administrator Pistole comes to TSA in the wake of several events that have demonstrated to the American public and to Congress that the terrorist threat to transportation systems is persistent and evolving.

Marching through this decade since the 9/11 attacks in 2001, we have seen attacks on rail systems in Madrid, London, Mumbai and Moscow, the plot to destroy several commercial aircraft simultaneously over the Atlantic, the plot to attack the New York City subway system, and the attempted attack to destroy Northwest Airlines Flight 253 in the skies over Detroit on Christmas Day of last year.

You need not be a security expert to understand that our transportation systems are indeed the targets of attack. How do we remain vigilant? How do we continue to meet the very real and significant challenge of protecting our transportation systems which are critical to our economy and essential to our way of life?

Today, the Administrator will share with us his views and vision for accomplishing this mission. Let me start this discussion by laying this framework. We are a Nation of people who thrive on independence and deeply value personal liberty and personal privacy. We are also a Nation that has been attacked and plotted against by terrorists wishing to end the American way of life.

Mr. Pistole, while we were waiting for the confirmation of a TSA Administrator during most of this Congress, this Subcommittee has not been idle in its oversight of transportation security issues. This Subcommittee has conducted rigorous oversight hearings on security programs for air cargo, aviation repair stations, general aviation, passenger checkpoints, surface transportation inspectors and the Registered Traveler program. The Full Committee held an important hearing on the Flight 253 Christmas Day attempted bombing, and of course, the Committee reported and the House passed, H.R. 2200, the TSA Authorization Act.

In H.R. 2200, Congress gave direction to TSA on important security matters including general aviation security grants, codification of the Aviation Security Advisory Committee, improvements to the Federal Air Marshal Service and the Federal Flight Deck Officers Program, and a realignment of surface transportation programs which have been underfunded and have lacked priority positioning within TSA.

While the Senate did not act on this important legislation, we will certainly seek your input in crafting a new authorization bill in the next Congress.

Mr. Administrator, we thank you for your long career of Federal service. As a Judiciary Committee Member, I know you from your work at the FBI, and we have been reacquainted again in your new capacity. Your charge is significant, but this Subcommittee stands ready to work with you to improve security throughout every mode of transportation.