

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2105

DISTRICT OFFICES:

5 HIGH STREET, SUITE 101
MEDFORD, MA 02155
(781) 396-2900

188 CONCORD STREET, SUITE 102
FRAMINGHAM, MA 01702
(508) 875-2900

<http://markey.house.gov>

March 9, 2013

The Honorable John S. Pistole
Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
601 South 12th St.
Arlington, VA 20598

Dear Administrator Pistole:

I am concerned about the Transportation Security Administration's recently announced changes to the prohibited items list. Under TSA's new rules, folding knives with blades shorter than 2.36 inches and narrower than 0.5 inches can be carried into aircraft cabins. I am concerned both about the safety and security implications of these changes as well as whether these modifications were made with sufficient consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

The attacks on September 11, 2001 demonstrated that in the confined environment of an airplane, even a small blade in the hands of a terrorist can lead to disaster. While reinforced cockpit doors make it harder for a terrorist to harm pilots or gain control of an airplane, they do nothing to protect the lives of the passengers and flight attendants in the main cabin.

The new, more permissive rules announced this week by TSA are opposed by the Flight Attendants Union Coalition and the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association as an unnecessary change that needlessly places the lives of airline passengers and flight attendants at risk. In addition, the additional responsibility of assessing which knives meet the new requirements could be a distraction for already overburdened screeners at TSA checkpoints, potentially leading to increased wait times and decreased security.

In light of these concerns, I urge TSA to reverse this change in policy.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey