

**Statement of Senator Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), Ranking Member, at Senate  
Commerce Subcommittee on Security hearing “Promoting Safe Skies through Scanning  
and Screening: Oversight of Air Cargo Security”  
Monday, February 24, 2020**

Good morning. As the Ranking Member of the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Security, I call this important hearing to order. Thank you to everyone for being here.

Before I introduce our topic and witnesses, I'd like to express my gratitude to Commerce Committee Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Subcommittee Chairman Sullivan for supporting my request to hold this field hearing. I believe today's proceeding will be an excellent opportunity to both conduct oversight and learn from the Massachusetts model of aviation security.

I'd also like to offer special thanks to the Massachusetts Port Authority and its CEO, Lisa Wieland. Among many responsibilities, Massport owns and operates Logan International Airport, the site of today's field hearing.

Massport was generous enough to not only to host this proceeding, but to send Mr. Ed Freni, its Director of Aviation, to testify as an expert witness. I look forward to hearing your remarks.

Early in the morning on September 11th, 2001, 19 hijackers took control of four airplanes and changed our country forever. Two of these aircraft, American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines Flight 175, departed right here from Boston's Logan Airport.

2,997 people were killed in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, DC.

When remembering 9/11, many people only think about the victims at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, but we here in Boston will never forget the lives of those who flew on the two planes that left Logan Airport that day. We still remember the workers from Massachusetts companies like TJX and Akamai, and so many others who were tragically killed that September morning.

In total, 206 victims of the September 11th attacks had ties to Massachusetts. Nearly two decades later, these losses remain devastating for communities across the Commonwealth.

They have also motivated the great minds of this state to fight for security and vigilance in our aviation system. In the aftermath of tragedy, we came together – technology companies, airports, airlines, flight attendants, pilots, and many more – to enhance safety in the skies.

Here in Massachusetts, we continue to heed the call of the 9/11 Commission, which described “failures of imagination” as a primary reason why we did not thwart the attacks before they happened.

We know that the country must do more than simply prepare our defenses for the kinds of attacks we experienced 19 years ago; we must anticipate the loopholes that terrorists could exploit today and in the future.

That's why, when Congress passed a law in 2007 implementing the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, I secured a provision that required 100 percent screening of air cargo transported on passenger aircraft.

Prior to my law, almost all of the air cargo that we load onto passenger planes was NOT scanned for liquid, plastic, or conventional explosives.

Imagine that: before 2007, the flying public sat directly above cargo that did not belong to anyone onboard and that no one had physically checked for dangerous content or material.

It was a glaring loophole in our aviation security system just waiting to be exploited. That's why I am so proud to have closed it.

In order to meet my 100% screening mandate, the Transportation Security Administration established the Certified Cargo Screening Program. This program achieves security while maintaining a steady flow of commercial goods by allowing entities up and down the supply-chain to scan air cargo before it is loaded into the belly of passenger aircraft.

Cargo screening facilities must be certified and overseen by the TSA, as well as use only TSA-approved technologies and systems. There are currently 850 certified cargo screening facilities in the United States, including 41 in Massachusetts.

Through this system, we are keeping passenger airplanes secured from previously unknown threats. Making sure TSA's 100 percent screening program stays effective is one of my top priorities, and a primary focus of today's hearing will be determining what work remains.

I intend to ask questions that will assess the challenges we face in deploying the latest and greatest cargo screening technologies, as well as how TSA's strained budget may be impacting its ability to oversee air cargo security.

But air cargo is not the only arena where threats might lurk. That's why I also want to hear about our passenger and baggage screening systems, the danger that drones flying near airports pose to airplanes, and the cybersecurity of our increasingly computerized aviation system. I have invited today's panelists because they can speak to all of these issues and more. Our witnesses are experts who understand that "Never forget" is more than a slogan, it is a commitment to action.

The effort to keep our skies safe and secure is as important as it has ever been, and I look forward to hearing your testimony on how we fulfill this ongoing mission.

I thank you all for being here and am glad to now introduce you to the committee.

First is Mr. John Beckius, the Executive Director of TSA's Air Cargo Division. This Committee rightly established his office in the *TSA Modernization Act of 2018* to help improve our security programs – and I am proud of this accomplishment. I am grateful to hear his perspective on the current state of air cargo security.

Next is Mr. Ed Freni, the Director of Aviation for the Massachusetts Port Authority. Mr. Freni manages all airside and landside activities at Boston Logan International Airport, Hanscom Field in Bedford, and Worcester Regional Airport. He helped develop Logan's famous daily security briefing after the September 11th attacks and has an extensive history of fostering safety innovations at Massport.

Our third witness is Mr. Steve Urchuk, the Chief Technology Officer for Analogic. Analogic is a technology company based in Peabody, Massachusetts, that makes the kind of cutting-edge scanning equipment we need to secure air cargo, airports, and airplanes. Mr. Urchuk's company employs over 500 people in the Commonwealth and exemplifies why Massachusetts isn't just the Bay State, but the "Brain State" that is leading the charge for enhancing aviation security. We are so proud of what you do.

Next is Mr. Brandon Freid, the Executive Director of the Airforwaders Association, a national group representing the freight forwarding companies that serve as certified air cargo screeners. With more than 38 years in the air cargo industry, Mr. Fried has tremendous expertise to identify and discuss today's security challenges.

Finally, Ms. Jennifer Ritter is a flight attendant for United Airlines and a leader in the Association of Flight Attendants. Ms. Ritter represents an essential community that serves on the front-lines of aviation security – flight attendants are our truly first responders in the sky. Ms. Ritter will offer the Committee an invaluable perspective that we must hear.

Thank you again to all of our panelists for being here today.