



**U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE, SCIENCE & TRANSPORTATION**
Senator Maria Cantwell, Chair

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

**Senate Floor Speech on the Nomination of David Pekoske to be Administrator of
the Transportation Security Administration**

September 15, 2022

[VIDEO](#)

Senator Cantwell: Mr. President, today we are going to vote on the nomination of Admiral David Pekoske to serve as a second term as administrator to the Transportation Security Administration. We recently commemorated the anniversary of 9/11 and the attacks that lost 3,000 lives here in the United States when tragically, the Pentagon was struck, downtown Manhattan, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania. In response to that Congress created the TSA, Transportation Security Administration to strengthen the nation's security and our transportation system.

And every day that TSA works the frontlines to protect the traveling public, it is working to also prevent future attacks. It is safeguarding our nation's infrastructure, and certainly working every day to make sure that the flying public continues to move through a successful process. TSA's mission lies in the commitment of professionals and highly skilled individuals and Admiral Pekoske's confirmation and continued leadership of this team will enable the TSA to further its ongoing and important mission.

Over the past two decades, the TSA has had to deal with many challenges facing the continued threats of concealing weapons in shoes, and underwear, even in soft drinks. And in 2010, TSA began detecting explosives in electronics and countering attacks on the public side of airports.

Today, the landscape is even more sophisticated with state and non-state actors and cyber-attacks. Unique challenges obviously posed to us during the COVID pandemic have made these challenges to the aviation security landscape even greater. We know that we need to have continued experienced leadership and Admiral Pekoske is well qualified for this position. He will continue to make the Transportation Security and its modernization the nation's number one priority as it relates to the sector.

Each day and over 430 airports across the country TSA screens over 2 million passengers and 1.4 million checked bags for explosives and other dangerous items. This helps ensure that the security for over 24,000 domestic flights and nearly 3,300 outbound international flights per day. Security demands for the agency are returning and every day are continuing to grow. Over the Labor Day weekend, TSA screened nearly 11 million people or 3%, more over the

corresponding period in 2019. In fact, TSA screened more people on four of the five days from September 1st to 5th, making the first sustained period of checkpoint throughput during a holiday weekend above pre-pandemic levels.

So the traveling public is back and obviously we need dedicated TSA officers and individuals to continue to work. We're not saying that there aren't improvements to that process, there certainly are. But TSA has been charged with a critical responsibility to make sure that we continue to work to have the safety of our air transportation system.

Last year's ransomware attack on Colonial Pipeline threaten nearly 50% of the East Coast fuel supply. So we must harden all of our targets and make sure that TSA has leadership to make sure that they too are helping us address these emerging threats. Admiral Pekoske's experience in leading TSA and these critical missions deserves support for re-nomination to this position again. I thank the President and yield the floor.