

May 16, 2016

Vice Admiral Peter Neffenger, Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
Department of Homeland Security
601 S. 12th Street
Arlington, VA 20598

Administrator Neffenger,

I am greatly concerned with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screening wait times airline passengers are experiencing at Chicago O'Hare International Airport (O'Hare) and Chicago Midway International Airport (Midway). Reports over the last few days have shown wait times to be over two hours, and a recent viral video on the *Chicago Tribune* website shows an unimaginably long line winding throughout Midway Airport. Last year, over 90 million passengers traveled through both Chicago airports making air travel an economic priority for Illinois. To alleviate this issue, Congress has approved \$34 million in reprogrammed funds. I ask that you ensure that these funds are prioritized to efficiently and safely move passengers through screening in cities with the most air traffic, such as Chicago.

Congress has supported TSA's mission to protect air travelers by funding employee salaries, benefits, and training over the budget request in fiscal year 2016. However, TSA has failed to retain adequate levels of trained employees. On April 27, 2016, the House of Representatives Oversight Committee held a hearing highlighting security gaps and misconduct by TSA senior employees, leading to 103 TSA screeners leaving the job each week. On my recent trip from Chicago to Washington, I was dismayed to see the majority of screening lanes and equipment unused while hundreds of passengers waited for hours. This is unacceptable.

In response, Congress has approved the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) request to alleviate wait times by reprogramming \$34 million from other DHS activities to TSA screening operations. According to Secretary Johnson, the additional funds will be used for overtime and expedited hiring for screening personnel. **Please detail how these funds will be utilized in Chicago and the nation's other busiest travel hubs. I also ask that you include your plan to fully utilize the screening equipment and space already procured by DHS and TSA to protect investments already made by taxpayers.**

I would appreciate your response no later than May 23, 2016. Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Mark Kirk
United States Senator