



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

Eric Bunn Sr.
National Secretary-Treasurer

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Dear Senator:

On behalf of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE), which represents more than 800,000 federal and D.C. workers, I write to convey our outrage at today's announcement by Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem that DHS has unilaterally ended collective bargaining for Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) and nullified AFGE's collective bargaining agreement with the agency. This brazen action by Secretary Noem is not only a direct assault on workers' rights but will undermine the safety and security of our nation's airports and airlines.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is a creation of Congress. Over 47,000 TSOs work at more than 400 airports across the country every single day to make sure our skies are safe for air travel. It has been a tremendous success story: since 2001, there have been no successful terrorist attacks on U.S. transportation systems – and that is not for any want of trying by our terrorist adversaries. TSOs efficiently process more than 800 million travelers a year with courtesy and professionalism. They are patriots. Approximately 7,500 are veterans who wear a second uniform protecting the homeland and ensuring another terrorist attack like September 11 never happens again. They endure long hours, often long commutes, and difficult working conditions, and they do so for modest pay. They deserve better than this.

In 2011, TSO's achieved the right to collectively bargain and retained this right throughout the first Trump administration. Collective bargaining has strengthened TSA, not harmed it. Bills to enshrine full collective bargaining rights at TSA won bipartisan support but unfortunately were never enacted into law. We urge Congress to reassert oversight over TSA by requiring, through an appropriations amendment if necessary, that the Homeland Security Department immediately rescind the February 27, 2025, Determination that destroys collective bargaining, reinstates the prior Determination from December 30, 2022, and restores the status quo ante.

The justification given for the February 27 determination is a complete fabrication about union officials – making clear this action has nothing to do with efficiency, safety, or homeland security. This is merely a pretext for attacking the rights of hard-working Americans across the country because they happen to belong to a union. This action will leave tens of thousands of dedicated TSOs without vital protections and benefits. The claim that TSOs are “losing their hard-earned dollars” to unions is patently false, as union dues are entirely optional for federal workers.

Despite false claims to the contrary, TSOs who volunteer as union representatives account for less than half of one percent of all work hours performed at the Transportation Security Administration. We strongly urge every Member of Congress to take immediate action to oppose this decision by:




1. Issuing a public statement condemning DHS's action and supporting the rights of TSOs to collective bargaining;
2. Record videos at your local airports to highlight the importance of their work and the need for a highly trained transportation security workforce;
3. Cosponsor the Rights for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Workforce Act when it is reintroduced in the coming days by Rep. Bennie Thompson and Sen. Brian Schatz.
4. Support an appropriations provision to restore collective bargaining rights, as described above.

The safety of our skies depends on a motivated, well-trained, and respected TSO workforce. This decision by DHS will only serve to diminish working conditions and threaten the safety of airline passengers.

We implore you to stand with the hardworking men and women who keep our transportation systems secure. Your vocal opposition to this decision and your visible support for TSOs will send a powerful message that workers' rights cannot be summarily dismissed.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,


Everett B. Kelley
National President