



AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO

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July 15, 2026

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

On behalf of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO (AFGE), which represents more than 45,000 Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) at over 400 commercial airports, I write regarding the July 16 hearing on the nomination of David Cummins to be Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Before the Senate considers consenting to this nomination, AFGE urges the Committee to obtain clear, on-the-record answers from the nominee in three key areas.

First, Mr. Cummins must commit to upholding TSOs' collective bargaining rights and honoring the court-affirmed collective bargaining agreement with AFGE. A federal court has twice ruled against the Department of Homeland Security's attempts to terminate the 2024 collective bargaining agreement, most recently holding on January 15, 2026, that the Department's conduct violated a preliminary injunction "by its plain terms." That contract remains in force. Yet in written responses to the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Mr. Cummins asserted that collective bargaining agreements "interfere with critical national security functions." That same collective bargaining agreement, with the 2023 pay improvements, cut TSO attrition nearly in half. Then-Administrator David Pekoske said that without them "we probably wouldn't have a TSA in five or 10 years." The nominee must commit unequivocally to comply with all court orders, honor the CBA, and recognize the representative the workforce chose by secret ballot in 2011.

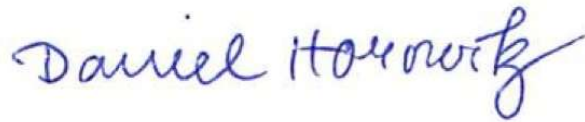
Second, Mr. Cummins must commit not to expand privatization of airport security screening. Congress federalized security screening in the after of the September 11 attack because the private screening contractor model failed. The Administration's FY 2027 budget nonetheless calls for eliminating 8,400 TSO positions and mandating private screening at over 200 Category III and Category IV commercial airports nationwide. Additionally, the agency is racing ahead with its opaque TSA Gold+ plan under which private vendors would control both the screening workforce and the screening technology itself. In his written answers to HSGAC, Mr. Cummins praised privatized airports' shutdown performance and pledged to expand public-private partnerships. However, even industry stakeholders testifying before the House Homeland Security Committee in May stated on the record that they were against mandatory privatization. The Senate Commerce Committee should insist that the nominee halt the current TSA Gold+ procurement pending full congressional review and oppose any mandatory expansion.

Third, Mr. Cummins must explain to the Committee his background and qualifications in transportation security. Nearly every previous Senate-confirmed TSA administrator brought significant transportation security experience. Administrator Pekoske served as Vice Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard. Administrator John Pistole served as Deputy Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Administrator James Loy served as Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard. Mr. Cummins' own questionnaire cites only private-sector contracting roles and the 2002 Winter Olympics. With the FIFA World Cup underway, the 2028 Summer Olympics approaching, and amid the current conflict with Iran, the next administrator must be prepared on day one to protect the traveling public.

TSOs have endured the two longest government shutdowns in American history, working 43 days without pay in late 2025 and another 75 days during the 2026 DHS funding lapse. Officers slept in their cars, sold their own plasma, and received eviction notices while screening nearly three million passengers a day. More than 2,100 trained officers left TSA in under seven months in response to the shutdowns. It is paramount that the next TSA administrator and the U.S. Congress work to rebuild the significant decline in morale among TSOs and build on the vast skill and experience the current TSO workforce provides.

TSOs have kept an unblemished security record through extraordinary adversity. They deserve a Senate-confirmed leader worthy of them. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel Horowitz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Daniel Horowitz
Legislative Director