

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 30, 2016

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

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Thune, Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member Nelson and Ranking Member DeFazio:

In the wake of the terrorist attack in Istanbul, it's critical to ensure that we make every possible effort to secure our airports, train stations, and bus depots. As you work to finalize legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), we urge you to include the provision, which passed the Senate in April with a 91 to 5 vote, to safeguard and strengthen U.S. Airports and mass transit security, especially in non-secure "soft" target areas at airports like check-in and baggage claim areas.

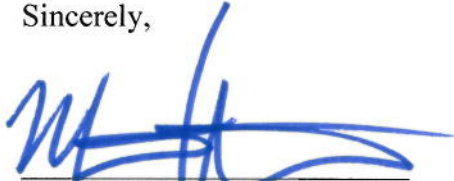
The provision would increase the number of Visible Intermodal Prevention and Response (VIPR) teams nationwide from the current 30 to as many as 60 and add their operations to non-sterile areas of an airport, such as outside of a checkpoint, to enhance "soft target" security. As you know, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) works with our intelligence and law enforcement agencies to deploy VIPR teams based on threat levels and other security priorities and consist of law enforcement officials, regulatory inspectors, explosives specialists, and in some cases, screening personnel.

The proposal also creates an eligible use under homeland security funding (SHSGP/UASI) programs for training exercises to enhance preparedness for and response to active shooter incidents at public locations, including airports, mass transit systems, and other "soft target" areas. Currently, there is no explicit authorization for homeland security funds to be used for training exercises for active shooter incidents or mass casualty events at public locations.

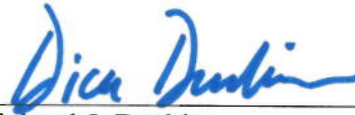
Further, this provision would authorize and make clear that SHSGP/UASI can be used for airport and surface transportation security in non-secure areas.

We look forward to working with you to ensure these additional safeguards will better equip us to respond to terror threats and preserve our freedom to go about our daily lives.

Sincerely,



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator