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Statement by Secretary Jeh C. Johnson on the Transportation Security Administration

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TSA Administrator Admiral Neffenger and I are acutely aware of the significant increase in travelers and longer wait times at airports, and their projected growth over the summer. With this in mind, and given the current threat environment, last month I directed TSA to take a number of steps. In addition to the work they are already doing to address increased traveler volume, and provide more effective and efficient security operations at our airports, TSA is taking the following steps:

First, TSA is increasing the staffing of Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) to help expedite the checkpoint process without sacrificing security. This will allow TSOs to provide effective service at airports that are expected to have the highest passenger volume. TSA is also increasing the number of canine teams as an additional measure to help them expedite the screening process.

Second, TSA has expanded outreach and enrollment efforts for the TSA Pre✓®, which allows eligible travelers to go through security more quickly without removing their shoes, laptops, or travel-sized liquids. To that end, I encourage companies to follow Microsoft's example of reimbursing its employees who enroll in TSA Pre✓®. This incentive lends itself to both smart business and efficient security. I also encourage individual travelers to apply for and take advantage of the TSA Pre✓® themselves. This will help us enhance security while greatly reducing travel time for everyone.

Third, TSA is collaborating with airports and airlines to support non-security screening operations, such as returning bins to the front of waiting lines and other non-security related tasks. TSA has formed Optimization Teams and closely partnered with airlines, airport authorities and industry to deliver innovative screening procedures. Administrator Neffenger and I are working with the aviation industry to develop airport-specific actions plans for the nation's busiest airports.

In addition to these measures, I have called on Congress to approve a reprogramming, or reallocation, of Fiscal Year 2016 funds to pay for TSO overtime and fulfill critical short-term needs. These funds will allow TSA to expand the work hours of screening officers in peak periods at high volume airports.

As we look ahead to the surge in summer travel, we will continue to consider a number of other steps to ensure enhanced aviation security while also maximizing efficiency at check points.

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