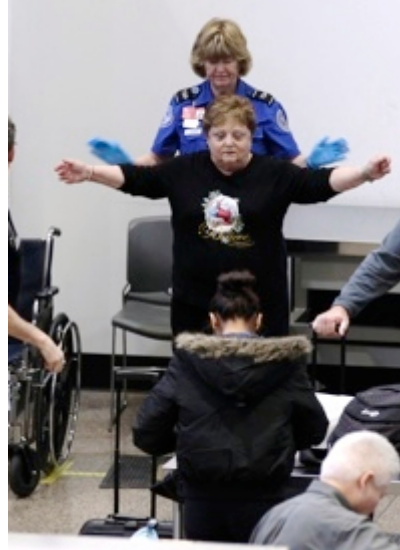




New FBI Rape Definition Could Aid in Fight Against TSA Groping

Opponents of the Transportation Security Administration's invasive pat-downs of airline passengers may be on the verge of obtaining a new weapon for their fight. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is considering changing its definition of rape in a way that could criminalize TSA agents' groping of passengers' private parts.

According to the *New York Daily News*, an FBI panel recommended that the agency change its current definition of rape — “carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will” — which was adopted in 1929, to a much broader definition: “penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.”



The proposed definition, which awaits approval by FBI Director Robert Mueller, was praised by both law-enforcement personnel and feminist activists. Police believe it will make it easier to report the number of rapes accurately because the FBI's criteria will now “more closely match the ones that police departments around the country already use,” reports the *Daily News*. Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority Foundation, which spearheaded the effort to have the definition changed, hailed the news as “a great victory.”

“This new definition will mean that, at long last, we will begin to see the full scope of this horrific violence,” Smeal added, “and that understanding will carry through to increased attention and resources for prevention and action.”

There is one place in America in which such “horrific violence” not only takes place regularly but is backed by the full might of the U.S. government: airports. Travelers who opt not to [take chances with their health in the government's X-ray scanners](#) are instead subjected to highly invasive pat-downs — that is, when they're not being blatantly [strip-searched](#) — that can involve groping of the genital area.

“There have been numerous documented cases wherein TSA agents have physically penetrated the vagina or anus of a traveler during the course of a pat down,” writes Paul Joseph Watson of Infowars.com. “As we [PrisonPlanet.com] reported last year, TSA screeners are now being trained to [physically put their hands down fliers' pants](#) as part of the pat down procedure.”

The most infamous case of such invasive groping occurred earlier this year, when journalist Amy Alkon [reported](#) that a TSA screener penetrated her genitals “four times” during a search. “It was government-sanctioned sexual assault,” Alkon wrote.

Eventually Alkon had enough and screamed, “You raped me!” at the TSA agent. Later, when the agent



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on December 9, 2011

in question found Alkon's blog post about the incident, she "hired a lawyer who contacted Alkon asking her to remove the post, threatening her with a defamation lawsuit, and asking for a settlement of \$500,000," according to [Forbes](#).

What happened to Alkon would almost certainly qualify as rape under the FBI's proposed definition — as would similar assaults visited upon [Ohio blogger Erin Chase](#) and [former Miss USA Susie Castillo](#), Watson reports. If Mueller approves the new definition, it will be instructive to watch how the courts deal with the lawsuits against the TSA that are sure to follow — and how the U.S. government, which claims to be a defender of women's rights in such far-flung locales as Iraq and Afghanistan, defends its functionaries when they are accused of actions that the government would consider rape under any other circumstances.

Photo: A traveler is patted down by a TSA agent as she goes through security at the Salt Lake City International Airport, June 1, 2011, in Salt Lake City.: AP Images



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