



Written by [Kelly Holt](#) on February 7, 2011

Austin, Texas, Forming Solid Resistance to TSA

Austin, Texas — known for Longhorns, live music, and legislative lollapaloozas — is poised to be the subject of a different kind of notoriety. The nationwide undertone of opposition to the TSA is surfacing in the state's capitol city. Austin is developing a downright defiance of the agency's shocking treatment of American air travelers into a cohesive defense of liberty.



Criticisms hurled at TSA from abused would-be air passengers and sympathetic media have taken the form of organized and well-thought-out resistance in Austin, and it could soon be the first American city to turn its dissent into airport relief for beleaguered flyers.

On Dec. 14, 2010, The Austin Airport Advisory Commission (AAAC), tasked with advising the Austin City Council regarding policy at Austin Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA), [voted unanimously to oppose the full-body scanners](#) being installed at the city's airport.

BE IT RESOVED THAT THE AUSTIN AIRPORT ADVISORY COMMISSION:? Recommends the City Council oppose the installation of AITs at ABIA and further oppose the practice of invasive body searching and encourages the City Council to inform the TSA, and State and Federal delegations of such opposition.

Each council member and a group of Austinites who showed up in opposition to the TSA expressed concern about privacy invasions, radiation delivery, and violations of the Fourth Amendment.

Robert Torn, Austin Airport and Advisory Commission board member, spearheaded the resolution, "For every scientist that says it's safe, I can find three or four who say it's not safe. I think it's an incomplete technology. I don't think it's ready for public use on legal grounds or on health grounds."

Then, on Dec. 22, Austinite [Claire Hirschkind](#) was arrested at ABIA, as reported in *The New American*.

When she showed up for a flight and simply asked a question about the presence of scanners, her inquiry prompted the TSA to require her submission to a pat down. Her objection caused the TSA to become hostile and resulted in a public treatment of Mrs. Hirschkind that horrified Austinites. The incident ended in her arrest and banishment from the airport for six months. She has retained counsel and is currently seeking legal redress. Her story gained national attention and rallied the support of others who had already had enough of TSA assaults.

And on Jan. 4, the Libertarian Party of Travis County (of which Austin is the county seat) passed a resolution to support the AAAC's Dec. 14 resolution.

They were joined by the [Travis County Republican Party](#), which chimed in with a national press release on Feb. 2 to oppose the scanners.



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The Party's firm stand on this issue has given considerably more weight to Austin's dissent.

Along the way, a couple of grass roots organizations in Austin are gaining traction about this and other infractions against liberty. *Texans for Accountable Government* (TAG) is opposing the scanners, as well as the newly formed [TSA Tyranny](#), founded by Wesley Strackbein.

The immediate goal is to persuade the City County to adopt the AAAC's recommendation, and the pressure is on. A point of extreme importance however, is one not seen in other opposition moves around the nation. The AAAC argues that the city should be held accountable, since the airport is city property. Where the city has jurisdiction, it has liability, and the move could ultimately end up in lawsuits against the city if the invasion of the body-snatchers is not stopped.

Strackbein noted that the local newspaper, the *Austin-American Statesman*, has been silent on the issue and Austinites read about the Party's opposition in their own county in a [Houston](#) paper.

The *Austin-American Statesman* has turned a deaf ear to the chorus of voices that have rung out on this issue. They've not printed a single word about the Austin Airport Advisory Commission's landmark resolution, nor have they bothered to tell their readers about the strong public statements that such groups as the Travis County GOP have made against the TSA's intrusive policies.

This is not a left vs. right, Republican vs. Democrat issue. It's a liberty issue, and we've heard from Austin-area citizens of all stripes who are outraged that a TSA agent would violate them or members of their family in the name of keeping America safe.

Strackbein and others expect additional area groups to form resolutions opposing the scanners, which will increase pressure on the City Council. And they think even ridding ABIA of scanners isn't enough. There's a strong belief that not only should the scanners be rejected, but also the invasive pat downs. He states that TSA Tyranny is also crafting a sound strategy geared toward developing an understanding of "[interposition](#)." James Madison asserted that state bodies are bound to interpose between federal government and individuals or states when the central government has overstepped its bounds. And that is exactly what's being encouraged in Austin.

Strackbein concluded:

What's happening in Austin is singular. While there has been isolated opposition to the groping pat-downs and naked body scanners in other parts of the country, I'm not aware of any other citywide effort to check the TSA that has such broad momentum as what we see here. It's a very exciting development.



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