



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 18, 2012

U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers of Ala.: TSA Needs to Get “Tougher”

Despite the increasing examples of the Transportation Security Administration’s unconstitutional intrusion into the lives of American citizens, leading to a harsh public outcry for the elimination of the agency, U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Ala., left) [contends](#) that the TSA should get “smarter, leaner, and tougher” in order to avoid a repeat of the 9/11 attacks.



“TSA likes to talk about their successes and I’m proud of their successes — we haven’t had another successful attack in 10 years. The problem is, we only have to miss one and it’s a disaster,” Rogers commented on CNN’s *Starting Point*. “We want TSA to become smarter, leaner and tougher.”

Rogers, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Transportation Security, will host a hearing next Wednesday on security breaches and unauthorized access to tarmacs at U.S. airports. Subcommittee members will address a recent study by the Department of Homeland Security that found that the TSA was not reporting all its security failures — though the hearing had already been scheduled long before the report was released.

The congressmen said:

What we’re trying to find out is why these breaches were discovered by the local TSA but weren’t reported to big TSA. TSA cannot come up with mechanisms and processes to resolve these kind of breaches if they don’t know about them and only 42 percent were reported. That’s not acceptable.

For example, ABC News [reported](#) that a Massachusetts woman was stopped at Las Vegas-McCarran International Airport last Christmas Eve because she was in possession of a frosted cupcake in her luggage. One TSA agent was unsure of how to handle the item and so called in a supervisor, who determined that the vanilla icing could potentially be “a security risk” because it could be considered a “gel-like substance.”

Similarly, at Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Michigan, a TSA agent stopped a traveler who was standing on a security line because of an “oddly placed iPod and bag of candy.” That caused Lora Van Uffelen and seven other travelers to miss their flight to Chicago.

Some might argue that the TSA was simply being particularly cautious — that is, until they learn of what happened at a Corpus Christi, Texas, airport. A male traveler somehow made it past security with a 14-inch sword, disguised as a cane, hidden inside his carry-on luggage. The man was able to fly to DFW airport before the item was discovered. The sword was turned over to law officers at the DFW Airport, and there remains no word as to why the man was traveling with it.



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Once again the TSA was forced to issue a statement. Officials attempted to downplay the mistake by explaining, "The biggest threat to aviation today, explosives and explosive components. While edge weapons such as swords remain a prohibited item it will not cause catastrophic damage."

But apparently cupcakes and candy will.

In addition to these security breaches, engineer Jon Corbett — a blogger from the popular anti-TSA website [TSA Out of Our Pants!](#) — demonstrated through a video he [posted](#) on YouTube how the radiation-firing body scanners used by the TSA can easily be bypassed.

The video then shows Corbett carrying through the scanner a metal case that is away from his body in his side pocket. In the video, Corbett explains that the metallic objects appear as black on the image produced by the scanners, and therefore, the machines are unable to detect such objects if they are obscured by the background, which is black as well.

"Yes that's right," says Corbett. "If you have a metallic object on your side, it will be the same color as the background and therefore completely invisible to both visual and automated inspection."

"It can't possibly be that easy to beat the TSA's billion dollar fleet of nude body scanners, right? The TSA can't be that stupid, can they?" Corbett asks. "Unfortunately, they can, and they are."

Earlier this month, Colorado teen Savannah Barry [accused](#) TSA agents of breaking her \$10,000 insulin pump. Barry explained, "I went up to the lady and I said, 'I am a type one diabetic. I wear an insulin pump.' I showed her the pump. I said, 'What do you want me to do? I usually do a pat-down — what would you recommend?'"

She also showed screeners a doctor's note which indicated the pump was sensitive and should not go through the scanners. She says she was told to go through it anyway. "When someone in a position of authority tells you it is — you think that it's right. So, I said, 'Are you sure I can go through with the pump? It's not going to hurt the pump?' And she said, 'No, no, you're fine.'"

Barry says once through the scanner, the pump stopped working properly. She says the agents then exacerbated the problem because they did not know what to do about her insulin. "[The agent] said, 'Because we don't have the machines to scan the juice to make sure this is not an explosive we do have to do a full body pat-down and search through your bags.'"

The entire situation could have been avoided, however, if the agents had simply performed the pat-down in the first place which Barry had requested.

Still, when asked how the TSA was performing overall, Congressman Rogers replied that it was doing "an acceptable job." He added,

I base that solely on the fact we have not had another successful attack in ten years. That doesn't mean that we can't have one if we don't stay smarter and tougher. The bad guys, the terrorists, are way ahead of the curve in trying to find new and novel ways to get through.

In addition to the above examples of TSA ineptitude and overreach, however, there are a multitude of other stories from around the country: of both children and elderly travelers being harassed by TSA agents; of sexual harassment of young women by screeners; and of thievery from luggage and personal carry-on items by TSA agents.

And these enumerated incidents at the hands of the TSA speak nothing of the countless constitutional violations enacted on a daily basis by the Transportation Security Administration.



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