



N.J. Lawmakers Stand Up to TSA

The U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has faced a copious amount of criticism in recent months after the introduction of naked body scanners and enhanced pat-downs to security screenings. The criticism has come from private citizens, airport workers, and lawmakers - on the local and federal levels. Critics have begun to take action against the intrusiveness of the TSA, such as by filing lawsuits or encouraging airlines to move from hiring TSA screeners to employing private screeners. The newest measure with which the TSA must contend is a bipartisan resolution proposed by New Jersey lawmakers.



[New Jersey legislators](#) teamed up with civil liberties advocates to ask Congress to review the screen processes utilized by the TSA. The legislators are calling upon the state Senate and Assembly to confront Congress and ask it to review both the constitutionality and effectiveness of the procedures taken by the TSA.

The lawmakers revealed their plans for the resolution during a [press conference](#) last week at the Statehouse. There, New Jersey State Senator Michael Doherty called on New Jersey Governor Chris Christie to ask Attorney General Paula Dow to decide whether the TSA's use of full-body scanners found at Newark Liberty Airport and JFK International Airports and enhanced pat-downs violate New Jersey's privacy laws.

At the press conference, Doherty indicated:

Were very concerned with what's going on in America and were very concerned with what's going on in New Jersey at our airports as far as the new TSA procedures used. We believe that there are constitutional violations taking place. We believe that there are violations of New Jersey law that are taking place when you buy an airline ticket, you do not give up your constitutional rights.

Doherty declared, American citizens should be able to travel freely without being harassed and intimidated by their government. There are other procedures that can be used, and there are other countries around the world serving as role models of how to do this.

In language similar to the [assertions of Texas Congressman Ron Paul](#), Doherty announced, Enough is enough. We believe there are constitutional violations taking place. We believe there are violations of New Jersey state law taking place.

In addition to the constitutional concerns raised during the press conference, legislators addressed the dangers of the radiation found in the body scanners.

Senator Diane Allen commented, I question whether this radiation of these scans is absolutely necessary.... We all know that radiation can cause, through free radicals, an interruption of our



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 21, 2010

chromosomes and genes. And scientists realize that even small amounts can be an issue, particularly the back-scanner X-ray technology.

The lawmakers found support in the American Civil Liberties Union. During the press conference, Deborah Jacobs, executive director of the New Jersey ACLU, compared the TSA procedures to virtual strip-searches. She added that the use of the body-scanners and enhanced pat-downs would simply encourage terrorists to use greater creativity in order to sneak objects past security. If they believe everybody's doing through a body-scanner they will start putting explosives in body cavities, Jacobs asserts.

During a period of American history in which the political climate is extremely hostile, one point on which all Americans seem to agree is that the U.S. government has entrusted far too many freedoms to the Transportation Security Administration. It seems that the American people are standing together against the TSA and through their elected representatives in Congress they have the power to bring about change.

Photo: N.J. State Senator Michael Doherty

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