



Rep. Mica Urges Private Security for Airports

John Mica, a Republican congressman from Florida, has written a letter to 100 of the busiest airports in the country.

Congressman Mica has asked those airports to stop using the federal Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for airport security and to use, instead, private firms. Federal law allows airports to make their own arrangements for security, and one major airport, San Francisco International Airport, already does that.



Mica is not only interested in protecting the public from violation of the privacy interests, which has become an increasingly hot topic, but he also hopes that if airports provide their own security that the Transportation Security Administration bureaucracy can be significantly reduced. "I think we could use half the personnel and streamline the system," the Florida congressman said. As the ranking member (and soon to be chairman) of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which has jurisdiction over this area, Mica is expected to critique how this federal administration has handled the privacy concerns of citizens.

Private firms cannot dispense with those security procedures that are mandated by the Transportation Security Administration. But why not? Why not simply get the government out of the picture and allow private companies to decide how best to provide security?

But even burdened with onerous federal regulations, private firms have a big advantage over federal employees: private companies are naturally customer oriented. These workers in the private sector also would doubtless work faster, speeding up a process that is trying to everyone involved. People hired by those firms who abuse their authority could be quickly fired (as opposed to civil servants who are much harder to fire or demote.) Not only could companies that hired insensitive staff face the loss of their contract but, as private companies, these firms could also be sued by citizens for violations of their privacy more easily than a federal agency could be sued.

In addition, the more private firms who handle security for airports, the more competition there will be in this whole area. Competition leads to innovation, efficiency, and economy.

Several smaller private airports have expressed interest in this option. Erick Erickson, whose committee has jurisdiction over Macon City, Georgias small airport, wants private security companies to handle his towns airport. Erickson said that he personally has experienced TSA agents who have let the power of



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on November 20, 2010

their position go to their head. The experiences of Americans who fly regularly and who encounter federal agents engaging in offensive or demeaning behavior towards passengers will almost certainly give more support to clipping the wings of both the TSA and the regulations it imposes so that airports and airlines can decide the best ways to provide security. The more horror stories on the internet and on television, the sooner that day may come.

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