



SA 5. Mr. BLUNT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 223, to modernize the air traffic control system, improve the safety, reliability, and availability of transportation by air in the United States, provide modernization of the air traffic control system, reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 311, between lines 11 and 12, insert the following:

SEC. 733. APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE SECURITY SCREENING OPT-OUT PROGRAM.

Section 44920(b) of title 49, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(b) Approval of Applications.--

*“(1) **IN GENERAL.**--Not later than 30 days after receiving an application submitted under subsection (a), the Under Secretary may approve the application.*

*“(2) **RECONSIDERATION OF REJECTED APPLICATIONS.**--Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of the FAA Air Transportation Modernization and Safety Improvement Act, the Under Secretary shall reconsider and approve any application to have the screening of passengers and property at an airport carried out by the screening personnel of a qualified private screening company that was submitted under subsection (a) and was pending on any day between January 1, 2011, and February 3, 2011, if Under Secretary determines that the application demonstrates that having the screening of passengers and property carried out by such screening personnel will provide security that is equal to or greater than the level that would be provided by Federal Government personnel.*

*“(3) **REPORT.**--If the Under Secretary denies an application submitted under subsection (a), the Under Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report that describes the reason for the denial of the application.”.*

The Business Coalition for Fair Competition (BCFC) is a national coalition of businesses, associations, taxpayer organizations and think tanks that are committed to reducing all forms of unfair government created, sponsored and provided competition with the private sector. BCFC believes the free enterprise system is the most productive and efficient provider of goods and services and strongly supports the Federal government utilizing the private sector for commercially available products and services to the maximum extent possible.

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<http://www.news-leader.com/article/20110217/NEWS01/102170346/1007/Blunt-amendment-challenges-TSA-private-screeners>

Blunt amendment challenges TSA on private screeners

Malia Rulon

Gannett Washington Bureau

Washington -- An amendment from Sen. Roy Blunt could clear the way for the Springfield-Branson National Airport to use private security screeners instead of federal agents from the Transportation Security Administration.

The Springfield airport sought permission from TSA in December for an exemption so it could use a private security company, but its application and those of several other airports were denied last month. A short letter explained that there was "no clear advantage to the federal government" for TSA to approve the request.

"That was not a reasonable decision. That was not one that the TSA was empowered to make," Blunt told reporters Wednesday.

Blunt's amendment to a Federal Aviation Administration bill was adopted by the Senate late Tuesday. It would require the TSA to reconsider and approve all requests for private security screeners that were pending between Jan. 1 and Feb. 3, as long as the agency determines that contractors can provide security equal to or greater than that of government personnel.

If applications are rejected, the TSA would have to give case-specific reasons.

The amendment still must be approved by the full Senate and the House.

The amendment is positive news, said airport spokesman Kent Boyd.

"We planned to reapply regardless of whether this legislation makes it through all of its hurdles, but the fact that this language was inserted into this bill certainly is good news and will help push things along," Boyd said.

Boyd said the airport sought the option to hire private screeners after several incidents with TSA agents, such as 40-minute lines, delaying a woman in a wheelchair so long that she missed her flight and once closing security checkpoints before all flights had departed, stranding several travelers.

"The issue is customer service," Boyd said.

"That's it, in two words."

Posted on Tuesday, Feb. 01, 2011 - <http://www.kansascity.com/2011/02/01/2626229/senator-blunt-to-back-private.html>

Sen. Roy Blunt sponsors bill on private airport screeners

By David A. Lieb

The Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY | Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri introduced a measure Tuesday that would require the federal Transportation Security Administration to use private security screeners if local airport officials don't want government employees staffing the metal detectors and patting down people.

His U.S. Senate proposal comes after the federal agency said recently it would not allow private screeners at any additional airports unless there was a clear advantage to doing so.

Since the TSA was created after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, federal law has allowed airports the option of using private screeners, who are hired and overseen by the TSA. Private contractors are used at just 16 of the nation's roughly 460 commercial airports, including in Kansas City, San Francisco and seven sites in Montana.

The Springfield-Branson National Airport in southwest Missouri sought in December to replace federal screeners with private contractors. But the airport's request was rejected last week. That decision drew the ire of Blunt, a Republican from Springfield.

"Congress clearly intended that this opt-out would be open to all airports," Blunt said in a statement to The Associated Press. "I have a great deal of respect and appreciation for the hardworking TSA screeners at the Springfield airport, but the law doesn't say that the TSA administrator gets to stop the program whenever he decides he wants to."

Blunt's proposal would require the federal government to approve the use of private security screeners within 30 days of a request. He plans to amend the measure to legislation reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration, said Blunt spokesman Amber Marchand.

Officials at the Springfield-Branson airport said they wanted to make the switch to private contractors to improve customer service.

A woman in a wheelchair recently was left at a security checkpoint for 15 to 20 minutes by TSA employees, causing her to miss her flight, said airport spokesman Kent Boyd. A few years ago, TSA screeners closed the checkpoint before all the flights had left in the evening, he said. And on occasion, there have been waits as long as 40 minutes without screeners opening up a second X-ray machine, Boyd said.

Airport officials had expected it would take 12 to 18 months for the TSA to decide on its request to use private screeners. Instead, the request got shot down in a matter of weeks. "We were stunned and disappointed and, frankly, more than a little bit disgusted," Boyd said.

The Transportation Security Administration declined an AP request for an interview about the denial of private contractors at the Springfield-Branson airport. Instead, it provided a written statement from TSA Administrator John Pistole explaining that he had reviewed the agency's policies in an effort to make it "a more agile, high-performing organization ... and decided not to expand the program beyond the current 16 airports."