



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 by striking "The Under Secretary may approve any application submitted under subsection (a)." and inserting "Not later than 30 days after receiving an application submitted under subsection (a), the Under Secretary shall approve 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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Posted on Tue, 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."