



## An Update from Capitol Hill

### Honoring Our Fallen TSA Officers

The Honoring Our Fallen TSA Officers Act (H.R. 99) was reintroduced by Rep. Brownley (CA) to provide public safety officer benefits to TSOs who are killed in the line of duty. The bill currently has 16 cosponsors. Thankfully, Congress made an exception for the family of the late Gerardo Hernandez and granted them death benefits. Now, AFGE is working with Congress to ensure that any TSA Officer killed in the line of duty receives public safety officer benefits.

“TSA Officers risk their lives every day to protect the flying public,” said AFGE National President J. David Cox Sr. “Their families deserve the same death benefits that other federal officers receive when killed in the line of duty. It’s time we do right by those who protect us.”

### TSO Rights Making Progress on Capitol Hill

In May, Representatives Bennie Thompson (MS) and Nita Lowey (NY) introduced H.R. 2309, the Rights for TSA Officers Act. The bill, which currently has 29 cosponsors, is the House companion bill to the Strengthening American Transportation Security Act (SATSA) introduced by Senator Brian Schatz (HI) in February. SATSA is the first

Senate TSO rights bill introduced in over five years. Just like the Rights for Transportation Security Officers Act, SATSA eliminates the TSA Administrator’s authority to set the terms and conditions for the TSO workforce. It also aims to place all TSA Officers under Title 5, which includes the following rights and protections:

- TSO pay would be consistent under the GS system
- The same workplace rights and protections as other federal workers, including those at DHS.
- TSA would no longer be the “judge, jury, and executioner” of disciplinary actions against TSOs.
- TSOs would have protections against discrimination based on gender, religion, race, disability and age under the Civil Rights Act because they are federal workers, and not because TSA “allowed” protections in limited circumstances.
- TSA would be required by law to establish effective worker safety and health programs and to provide safety equipment and devices, including dosimeters to detect radiation exposure.
- AFGE would have full labor rights, including the right to bargain on all mandatory subjects.
- TSOs could appeal adverse personnel actions such



as removal, demotion and long-term suspensions to an outside, independent third party.

“Public safety is the top priority of TSA Officers,” said AFGE TSA Council 100 President Hydrick Thomas. “We work very hard under some of the most stressful and dangerous conditions, but aren’t valued at the workplace. Something needs to change.”

AFGE and the AFL-CIO Transportation Trade Department are negotiating with lawmakers to include provisions in the Department of Homeland Security authorization bill that could lead to workplace improvements for TSA Officers.



## The Push for Privatization

The South Jersey Transit Authority recently filed an application for private screeners at Atlantic City International Airport through TSA’s Screening Partnership Program (SPP). There are approximately 100 TSA Officers who work at the airport and are represented by AFGE Local 2222. According to New Jersey lawmakers, the airport filed for privatization after TSA management repeatedly refused to keep checkpoints open to screen passengers from international flights with connecting flights at the airport. Instead, TSA required that all overtime be devoted to continued staffing shortages. TSA has since removed information regarding pending SPP applications from the agency’s website, but AFGE continues to fight for our members’ jobs. Hiring private screeners is a waste of money and a safety risk. No one does it better than TSOs.

## One Fun Thing, One Serious Thing

You can add this 20-plus pound lobster to the list of unexpected items TSA Officers have found at checkpoints in 2017. Last week alone, TSA Officers discovered 78 firearms in carry-on bags across the nation— 62 were loaded.



## AFGE Wins Arbitrations and Appeals for Several TSA Officers

An arbitrator issued a decision to remove a Letter of Reprimand from an AFGE Local 1047 TSA Officer after finding that TSA didn’t provide evidence to prove that the officer violated operating procedures.

The 14-day suspension for an AFGE Local 1040 TSA Officer was reduced to a 7-day suspension after an arbitrator found that TSA imposed an unreasonable penalty. The arbitrator noted the officer’s long years of service, clean disciplinary record, and good intentions in keeping the public safe. TSA was also ordered to issue back pay.

Thanks to AFGE, a 21-day suspension of an AFGE Local 1044 officer was overturned after the Office of Professional Responsibility Appellate Board (OPRAB) ruled that TSA made a critical error in denying employee due process by failing to provide evidence to the officer before suspending them.

A senior reviewing official at Newark Airport found that TSA management violated Article 4, Section E(18)(d) by failing to show all available and unavailable dates; the number of available annual leave slots; and the names of TSA Officers using annual leave on each calendar day on the annual leave calendar.

A TSA Officer from Local 1260 had their job reinstated once the OPRAB found that TSA failed to prove that the officer didn’t follow standard operating procedures. Instead of being terminated completely, the employee will face a 14-day suspension.

AFGE negotiated settlement agreements for several other disciplinary cases including cases from AFGE Local 555, 556, 778 and 1040.