

Rep. Christopher P. Carney (D-PA), Chairman
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
MANAGEMENT, INVESTIGATIONS & OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

**Hearing on: “Protecting the Protectors: Examining the Personnel Challenges
Facing the Federal Air Marshal Service”**

10:00 A.M., Thursday, July 23, 2009

Opening Statement, as prepared

The purpose of this hearing is to examine personnel and workforce issues within the Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS). Before I go any further I want to point out that in 2008, 37 percent of all new hires at the Federal Air Marshal Service were veterans. I’d like to commend you for this accomplishment. As a veteran myself, I am glad to see you value the skills of our men and women in uniform. I would encourage you to continue seeking qualified Air Marshalls from these brave vets.

Federal Air Marshals are deployed on domestic and international flights to protect passengers and crew from harm. In the past, the FAMS organization has struggled with numerous personnel issues that have impacted morale and caused the agency public embarrassment.

Recently, it appears, improvements have been made. That said, I’m interested in learning about what has been done to overcome past challenges. Also, I’m particularly interested in hearing your thoughts as to whether or not there is room for further improvement.

I know that members have questions on a number of topics today, including policies aimed at improving Air Marshal anonymity, steps that have been put in place to foster better communication between line-level Air Marshals and management, and the need to implement consistent guidance on disciplinary actions that the entire FAMS, including field offices, are to follow.

Lastly, on July 9, 2009, the Full Committee marked up and approved *H.R. 1881, the Transportation Security Workforce Enhancement Act of 2009*.

This bill will bring all TSA employees, including Air Marshals, under Title 5 of the U.S. Code. What that means is that their pay structure will eventually be the same General Service (“GS”) structure that exists in other federal agencies. I will be interested in hearing how this legislation could bring more fairness and equity into the FAMS salary system.