

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 6, 2019

Mr. David P. Pekoske
Administrator
Transportation Security Administration
601 12th Street S
Arlington, VA 20598

Dear Mr. Pekoske:

On August 9, 2019, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit unsealed the private flight logs of Jeffrey Epstein.¹ These documents indicated that Mr. Epstein used Teterboro Airport in Teterboro, New Jersey, as the primary hub of his human trafficking operation. According to reports, Mr. Epstein used Teterboro Airport to transport dozens of girls over multiple decades via private planes between his homes in Manhattan, New York and Palm Beach, Florida.²

Unlike at commercial airports, we understand the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) relies on general aviation pilots and staff at the 14,500 general aviation airports in the United States to screen luggage and passengers and assess potential security threats based on TSA guidelines.³ While the GAO has recognized these TSA measures have been generally successful at preventing terrorist or criminal activity at general aviation airports⁴, the TSA guidelines on assessing security threats and in training protocols for the general aviation community make no mention of human trafficking. Mr. Epstein's ability to take advantage of less stringent security regulations and staff training at Teterboro to facilitate a multidecade human trafficking ring demonstrates gaps in the current monitoring of general aviation airports and training of general aviation staff.

According to the International Civil Aviation Organization, aviation is one of the "primary modes of transportation utilized by traffickers."⁵ With an estimated 24.9 million victims of human trafficking worldwide, it is vitally important that the TSA act decisively to ensure the general aviation community is fully prepared to identify and stop human trafficking.

To that end, we request that the TSA, in collaboration with the general aviation community, update its Security Guidelines for General Aviation Airport Operators and Users to include:

1. Policies and procedures to prevent human trafficking.
2. Reporting protocols to inform law enforcement, Congress, and the general public on human trafficking efforts.
3. Annual training on identifying and preventing human trafficking.

¹ <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1507315-epstein-flight-manifests.html>

² <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/watchdog/2019/08/16/jeffrey-epstein-sex-traffic-ring-teterboro-airport-nj/2011917001/>

³ https://www.tsa.gov/sites/default/files/2017_ga_security_guidelines.pdf

⁴ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/320/318542.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.wats-event.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Maurino-Trafficking.pdf>

Further we ask you to work with us to determine if additional statutory authority is needed to address human trafficking at our general aviation airports. Please provide us with a response to the following:

1. Please detail TSA's current statutory authority to ensure general aviation airports are secure and free of criminal activity, especially for identifying and guarding against human trafficking. Please identify if limitations exist in TSA's current statutory authority.
2. Please explain how TSA ensures general aviation pilots comply with the applicable statute and TSA guidance.

We appreciate your prompt attention to this matter and look forward to your response to our requests and questions.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress