

# NEWS RELEASE



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## ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING 400,000 ON THE FRONT LINES OF U.S. AVIATION SUBMIT LEGAL PETITION TO TSA AND HOMELAND SECURITY TO KEEP ALL KNIVES OFF PLANES

**WASHINGTON, D.C. – May 6, 2013** - Lawyers for nine organizations representing 400,000 aviation professionals, passengers and law enforcement officers today filed a legal petition with Transportation Security Administrator John Pistole and copied to Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano seeking to rescind plans to allow knives in the aircraft cabins for the first time since 9/11.

"The Transportation Security Administration and the Homeland Security Department cannot dismiss the grave security concerns of 400,000 people on the front lines of U.S. aviation, including TSA's own Transportation Security Officers and Air Marshals," the coalition asserted. The coalition also includes flight attendants, gate agents, pilots, law enforcement and passengers.

The petition makes five critical points:

- **Permitting knives in the cabin is an unnecessary risk to the traveling public and violates the Administrator's duty—as set out by Congress.** A TSA-approved knife could be used to stab or kill a passenger, crew member, federal air marshal, gate agent or TSA Security Officer by a terrorist, mentally ill person or drug or alcohol-impaired passenger. A TSA-approved a knife could be used to hijack a plane.
- It would be irresponsible to relax the TSA's existing policy on knives when virtually every organization representing those directly affected by the change adamantly opposes it on safety and security grounds.
- Federal regulations currently ban all weapons on airplanes and in airport secure areas, and a knife is a weapon.
- TSA's argument for the change is false. TSA says the change would bring the US in line with the international standard for knives. **There is no international standard for knives:** Canada, Israel and Taiwan – to name a few – ban knives on planes.
- One of the nation's foremost experts on knives provides testimony stating that with many folding knives the only way to be certain whether its blade locks is to open the knife. However, TSA has instructed its Officers to screen knives in only a closed position. Consequently, knives that lock will inevitably wind up on airport concourses and aircraft cabins. Should TSA change its directive and allow TSA's officer to directly examine knives at security checkpoints, the Officers would have to devote substantially more time to screening knives and security lines would slow.

The planned rule change is arbitrary and capricious and to implement it without using the federal rulemaking procedure would be unlawful. If TSA moves forward with this dangerous change, the petitioners reserve the right to challenge TSA in federal court.

Without warning, TSA announced in March it would allow certain knives (with blades up to 2.36 inches long) through security and into the passenger cabin starting April 25.

Following massive opposition from those on the frontlines of aviation and national security concerns highlighted by the April 15 Boston terrorist bombings, TSA announced April 22 it would temporarily postpone the new knife policy. It has not said it would reconsider the policy shift.

The Coalition's legal filing is adamant: **No Knives on Planes Ever Again.**

The organizations signing the petition are:

- **The Association of Professional Flight Attendants** (American Airlines flight attendants)
- **The Association of Flight Attendants-CWA** (flight attendants at 20 airlines, including United and US Airways)
- **The American Federation of Government Employees** (TSA Security Officers)
- **The Allied Pilots Association** (American Airlines pilots)
- **The Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association** (including the Federal Air Marshals) - FlyersRights.org (largest airline passenger organization)
- **The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers** (largest aviation union, including flight attendants and gate agents)
- **The Teamsters** - (thousands of aviation workers including pilots at Frontier, Horizon, Allegiant along with pilots and flight attendants at Republic, Net Jets, Sun Country, Trans States and World Airways)
- **The Transport Workers Union** (thousands of aviation workers including Southwest flight attendants)

View the [full text of the petition](#), which is also posted on [www.NoKnivesOnPlanes.com](http://www.NoKnivesOnPlanes.com).

The legal petition is supported by expert testimony from:

**John Bonner** – *Assistant professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Served with the FBI including providing counterterrorism training to the Iraqi police and military in Baghdad and Fallujah, Iraq. His long list of security credentials includes Instructor at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Va., certified as a Law Enforcement Officer by the State of Florida, and participation in FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force.*

**Bernard Levine** – *Recognized as one of the world's leading knife experts with more than four decades of experience. His books include four editions of the standard reference work in the field of knives and knife identification, as well as Pocketknives, a Collector's Guide and Identifying Pocketknives. His business website is [www.knife-expert.com](http://www.knife-expert.com).*

**Jon Adler** - *Federal Law Enforcement Officer Association National President, decorated officer, certified tactical instructor, an Executive board member of the DHS Federal Law Enforcement Advisory Board, and a First Responder at Ground Zero on 9/11.*

**Paul Hudson** – *President of FlyersRights.org, aviation attorney, Member of FAA Aviation Rulemaking Advisory Committee. Formerly Executive Director of Aviation Consumer Action Project, FAA/TSA Aviation Security Advisory Committees, and president of Families of Pan Am 103/Lockerbie among several other public policy committees and published author on passenger aviation security.*