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HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE REVERSES TSA PLAN ALLOWING SCISSOR BLADES, SHARP TOOLS ON BOARD PASSENGER PLANES

Washington, DC (July 20, 2006) - Representative Ed Markey (D-MA), a senior member of the House Homeland Security Committee, succeeded in inserting in the Homeland Security authorization bill today a provision to restore the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) ban on razor-sharp scissors and other weapon-usable objects in the passenger cabins of commercial airliners. While the ban initially had been put in effect after the 9/11 hijackers used box cutters to launch their deadly attacks, the Bush Administration lifted the ban on these objects last year. Markey's measure has been endorsed by the major flight attendant unions who have joined him today in announcing this victory.

"We should be doing more to protect the traveling public, not less, as we near the fifth anniversary of 9/11," Rep. Markey said. "Everyone who flies, especially flight attendants and pilots, deserve the protection and peace of mind that comes from a ban on these sharp objects. I am pleased that today the Homeland Security Committee accepted my provision to reinstate the ban, and I hope that it represents the first step towards the full restoration of the prohibition on sharp scissor blades and tools that are deadly weapons in the hands of a suicidal terrorist or troubled passenger, Rep. Markey stated.

"Today, the House of Representatives took a much needed step forward in protecting the safety and security of our airline industry," said Patricia Friend, AFA-CWA International President. "Congressman Markey's tireless efforts to keep this issue at the forefront of importance will ensure that the loopholes in our current system are closed once and for all."

"Though almost five years have passed since 9/11, the threat of terrorist activity remains. On behalf of the American Airlines Flight Attendants, we applaud the actions of Rep. Markey and fellow lawmakers to ensure that our aircraft cabins remain as safe as possible for our crew members and passengers," said APFA President, Tommie L. Hutto-Blake.

"TSA should not choose between preventing potential weapons to be carried on a flight and carrying out the detection of explosive devices. The Bush Administration should be doing everything it can to ensure enough screeners are in place to do both things. We should be able to walk and chew gum at the same time when it comes to securing our airports and the flying public. The TSA has to be vigilant in making sure that passengers can't carry on weapons or sharp metal objects that can be deadly, and it also must make sure that cargo on those same planes is being scanned for bombs," Rep. Markey concluded.

Rep. Markey's work on homeland security can be found at www.house.gov/markey.