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COMMITTEE ON
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Support Commonsense TSA Changes on Small Knives

Dear Colleague,

The TSA recently announced commonsense changes to their prohibited items list for passenger aircraft that will allow small, keychain-style pocket knives onboard airliners effective April 25. These changes are being made to allow TSA agents to concentrate on significant security threats such as bombs, guns and other weapons that can do significant harm.

It is important to put the new policy in perspective. The new policy brings the US in line with international standards and is consistent with prior changes to the prohibited items list starting in 2005 that allow scissors with pointed blades under 4-inches long (in essence, under 4-inch knives held together with a pivot screw), knitting needles of unrestricted length or material (e.g., metal, wood or plastic), and screwdrivers and other tools under 7-inches in length. These are all potentially more threatening than the 2.36-inch (60mm) long non-locking blade folding knives allowed under the new rules.

H.R. 1093, the "No Knives Act," is an ill-conceived attempt to thwart the new TSA rules, effectively freezing the permitted items list as it exists today, micro-managing TSA and shackling its hands. In 2005, there was an unsuccessful attempt to stop the rule allowing scissors, knitting needles, and certain screwdrivers from being allowed on planes. The many years of safe travel since 2005, despite the revised rules, show that the concerns over these items was misplaced and they pose little to no hazard. Similarly, the tiny knives allowed by the new TSA rule also present no hazard, as years of international experience have shown. These items do not imperil crew, passengers, or aircraft.

The TSA has a responsibility to safeguard air travelers and crew. In doing so, they must balance passenger convenience with necessary security and do it in the most expeditious manner possible. Perfect security is impossible. However, the limited resources of the TSA must be focused on the greatest threats and on the highest probability of preventing an attack. That is not achieved by continuing the ban of these miniscule knives which are tools carried by millions of Americans.

H.R. 1093 is an overreaction to this commonsense change by the TSA. It micro-manages the TSA instead of leaving them to do its job. I urge you to join me in opposing this bill. If you would like additional information, please contact Lliam Morrison (6-9741) in my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Salmon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matt Salmon
Member of Congress