



An inconvenient truth: Don't point fingers at airport security

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Patriot-News Editorial Board



AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin

This week travelers shouldn't blame airport security for the scans and pat downs. We live in a dangerous world where terrorists want to use airplanes as weapons.

People are angry about airport security.

They are tired of the hassle of showing up hours before a flight takes off (even longer for international flights), frustrated at needing to empty their pockets and throw their belt and shoes in a plastic bin to be X-rayed and now incensed by the full-body screening and "enhanced pat downs" they must endure.

The air-traveling public has every right to be mad about all this. It's become a huge pain to fly and does seem invasive. But in recent days it's clear the blame for all of this is being completely misplaced.

It is not employees of the Transportation Security Administration, who do airport screening, that tried to blow up their shoes or underwear on a plane. They didn't try to smuggle liquid explosives into their carry-on luggage. None was a part of the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001.

Yet organizations and a growing online rallying call are telling passengers that on Wednesday — one of the busiest travel days of the year — they should boycott the full-body scanners to hold up lines and complain about the pat downs. This is all directed squarely at the TSA. Even Congress, always quick to jump on a bandwagon when it hears an angry electorate, wanted a full accounting of the pat downs from TSA director Joe Pistole recently.

It is the terrorists and would-be terrorists we need to blame for our inconvenience, and yes, uncomfortableness going through security — not airport workers. Unfortunately, the world we live in is dangerous and a place where we need to be ever-vigilant of those whose favorite choice of weapon against us is a pressurized aircraft filled with passengers flying at 30,000 feet above the Earth. Pistole is standing

firm on the new security measures and so he should.

If people had the choice of getting on a plane with passengers who went through the security we had more than a year ago or the new screening procedures, which do you think they would choose?

According to a recent CBS poll, people are clear on their preference.

The survey showed that most people believe it better to be safe — and screened or patted down — than sorry. They agree with the new procedures.

Carie LeMack, whose mother died on 9/11, said it best: "The biggest insult to those murdered on Sept. 11, 2001, is to ignore the lessons we have learned to prevent future attacks. Simply complaining about current aviation security tactics is not enough — to deny the evolving threat we face is foolish."

She is right.

TSA is in a difficult place. Last year, after the government failed to detect the Christmas Day bomber who had explosives in his underwear, the public outcry was unanimous: Security needs to be beefed up. Now that TSA has done so everybody from the ACLU, the Cato Institute and even hero pilot Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger are saying it's too much.

We need to always remember there are people out there who will do us harm if they get the chance.

It is worth the inconvenience and hassle of going through the full-body scans and if not that the pat downs to make sure our next flight is safe.

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