**Why Airport Security Should be Reformed**

1. **General Purpose:** To persuade
2. **Specific Purpose:** To persuade my audience that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) should be reformed or replaced.
3. **Central Idea:** Airport security is a critical element of national security and the lack of effectiveness of the TSA justifies a need to reform its security structure or to replace it entirely.
4. **Introduction:** In 2015 undercover federal agents were employed by the Department of Homeland Security and were tasked with testing the airport security and screening abilities of the Transportation Security Administration, the TSA. These agents attempted to sneak fake weapons and explosives through TSA checkpoints at airports. Author **Brian Bennett wrote in 2015** that the results of these tests, being that 67 out of 70 fake weapons or explosives managed to get through the checkpoints unnoticed, shocked the TSA. The TSA was established by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), following the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001, to oversee airport security and stop threats. For such an agency to encounter such a drastic failure rate caused concerns to arise among the public, such as myself whose future career will revolve around this, and government officials about the effectiveness of the TSA and whether it should continue being funded. The TSA also happens to have a rather notorious negative reputation among the public. Faulty equipment, unnecessary searches, incompetent personnel, and the highly controversial accusations of using profiling have driven the reputation and credibility of the TSA into the ground over recent years. For purposes of national security and the well-being of the public, the TSA should be abolished or done away with and replaced by private security.
5. **Body:** Security has been an issue in commercial aviation ever since 1933 when **according to an opposing viewpoints article titled “Airport Security” written in 2019**, the first official act of air terrorism occurred on a United Airlines flight. Most likely everybody will travel by air at some point in their lives and with the constant expansion of air travel, the importance of ensuring safety is at its peak, yet numerous problems can still be seen regarding the TSA.
6. The TSA is not as effective as needed at detecting security threats.
7. The Red Team Auditing Tests
8. An article titled “**Why Privatizing Airport Security is Good for the American Taxpayers and Their Security**” published by **David Inserra and Danielle Ford** stated that 67 out of 70 fake weapons were not discovered by the TSA through these tests.
9. The 95% screening failure rate by an agency devoted to airport screening found as a result of the auditing test is a prime example of the TSA’s ineffectiveness.
10. The DHS and TSA then ran more tests and found that most airports would have a 70% overall failure rate.
11. Equipment and Protocol Failures
12. **Anthony Gregory stated in 2013 in his article, “The TSA is Incompetent and Should be Disbanded”** that in March 2011 it was reported that the TSA had discovered some of its full-body X-ray scanners had demonstrated radiation levels of over ten times higher than they are supposed to.
13. **An article titled “Airport Security” written in 2019 highlights that** there have been no attacks since 9/11 on commercial US flights.It could be viewed that this decline has caused the TSA to relax as time has passed, but the TSA was making crucial errors right when they started. In the same article, **Gregory states that** in September of 2003, only two years after the attacks, Nathaniel Heatwole, a college student, managed to get weapons past security and on to a plane at Baltimore-Washington International. Following this, he sent his story to the TSA highlighting his success at getting past their security.
14. The negative image of the TSA also calls for reform.
15. Profiling accusations and the TSA’s tactics have made many people question their procedures and have caused people to view the TSA in a negative light.
16. **Gregory states** “Consumers have also criticized airport and airline staff for using security concerns as excuses for providing poor customer service and infringing upon people's rights.”
17. The TSA’s criticism received from certain pat-downs and searches have painted them in a bad light and have been deemed “…invasions of bodily integrity.”
18. Funding the TSA is not worth it.
19. The TSA’s annual budget has exceeded $8 billion.
20. An absence rate of over 6.8 percent, numerous failures including the 70% and 95% failure rates, and highly controversial and scrutinized protocols simply do not justify the $8 billion budget.
21. The solution is moving airport security to the private sector.
22. A private security model offers strengthened accountability, superior management, lower costs, and a more specific focus on security.
23. When examining the Red Team audit tests, **Inserra and Ford discuss in their article** that if the same tests were performed and similar results displayed but on a private contractor, then they probably would be fired and promptly replaced by their competitors.
24. Having aviation security directed to the private sector creates competition and a competitiveness between agencies to perform their tasks better than competitors. Meanwhile the TSA has no competitors so a lack of motivation is easier to encounter with a federal government supplied agency.
25. As well as having a competitive drive to enhance security, a private security model would be better for the economy. An article written by **David Gillen and William Morrison titled “Aviation Security: Costing, Pricing, Finance and Performance,”** examined the differences between US airport security and Canada’s airport security. It states that unlike the US, Canada’s security personnel are provided by private firms. It can be seen that through use of the TSA, the US loses money but via the use of private contractors, Canada earns money.
26. **Conclusion:** The numerous flaws seen in the TSA and the lack of effectiveness exhibited can’t justify the massive budget allotted to it. Privatizing airport security offers an incentive for security contractors to compete against other firms in an attempt to enhance job performance and security effectiveness. For an issue of such magnitude, it may be difficult for the average citizen to truly make a difference or impact regarding this action but there are numerous petitions online to abolish the TSA and replace it with a more effective security supplier such as the one found on the visual aid. National security as well as the economy will benefit from the replacement of the TSA.

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