

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-1501

December 19, 2017

David Pecoske  
Administrator  
Transportation Security Administration  
East Tower, Floor 11, TSA-5  
601 South Twelfth Street  
Arlington, VA 20598-6001

Dear Administrator Pecoske:

I write regarding a chronic problem faced by air travelers from the District of Columbia—the inability of Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) to recognize D.C.-issued licenses and IDs as valid. My office has been working with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) ever since the D.C. license was changed from “Washington, D.C.” to “District of Columbia” in May 2014 as the license was updated to comply with REAL ID. I am grateful that your predecessors implemented additional training for TSOs so that they could more easily recognize District licenses, but perhaps due to turnover at TSA, the problem persists.

In the most recent incident, a D.C. resident was stopped at the Newark International Airport after the Thanksgiving holiday. The TSO refused to accept her District license as a valid form of ID. It is my understanding that other TSOs came over and discussed whether it was valid before letting her through, although the resident nearly missed her flight as a result.

As I am sure you can imagine, it can be humiliating for a U.S. citizen to be delayed because a federal government employee does not recognize the name of the District of Columbia. I understand that there is significant turnover of TSOs and that TSA is hiring more TSOs to alleviate overcrowding and long wait times at checkpoints at U.S. airports. I therefore ask that you, like your predecessors, take action to ensure that all D.C. licenses and IDs in circulation continue to be included in the daily TSO briefings and to take any additional steps that can help TSOs recognize District driver's licenses.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Holmes Norton

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