

# AFL-CIO

## LEGISLATIVE ALERT

March 02, 2020

Dear Representative:

I am writing to urge you to support H.R. 1140, the “Rights for Transportation Security Officers Act of 2020,” and to oppose all weakening amendments when the bill comes to the House floor later this week. This important legislation provides Transportation Security Officers (“TSOs”) the same basic collective bargaining rights enjoyed by the majority of the federal workforce, including most other Department of Homeland Security employees.

When the Transportation Security Administration (“TSA”) was established, its Administrator was given uniquely broad authority to set workforce pay and working conditions. As a result, TSOs do not benefit from the Fair Labor Standards Act or the General Schedule pay scale, and they do not have the representational rights accorded by Congress to most of the federal workforce under the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978. Neither are they able to appeal adverse personnel decisions to a neutral party, a right provided to the majority of law enforcement officers who serve elsewhere within the Department of Homeland Security.

During the partial government shutdowns in 2018 and 2019, TSOs were required to work for more than five weeks without pay. Because of their low pay, many had to rely on food banks, loans and donations to make ends meet. They continued reporting for work even when they could not afford the cost of gas and parking. H.R. 1140 will address the many inequities TSOs face by:

- Repealing the TSA Administrator’s authority to maintain a separate and unequal personnel system that applies only to the TSO workforce;
- Ending the current TSA personnel directives that have allowed TSA to be the judge and jury, with no neutral third-party review, in workforce disciplinary matters;
- Requiring the TSA to follow the labor-management employee relations statutes that provide workplace rights and protections to most other federal government employees under Title 5 of the U.S. Code;

In sum, H.R. 1140 will provide basic collective bargaining rights to a vital workforce. I urge you to support it, and to oppose all weakening amendments.

Sincerely,



William Samuel  
Director, Government Affairs