



Mr. Jim Farley
Vice President, News and Programming
WTOP
3400 Idaho Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20016



May 9, 2012

Dear Mr. Farley:

We write to you today to express our disappointment and concern regarding a story by WTOP National Security Correspondent J.J. Green that aired and was posted on your website on Monday, May 7, 2012, regarding general aviation security. Together, our associations, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA), the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA), the Helicopter Association International (HAI), the National Air Transportation Association (NATA), and the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA), represent the bulk of those who make, fly, and operate general aviation aircraft.

We are disappointed that there does not appear to have been any attempt by Mr. Green to contact any member of the industry that his report accuses of being the “Achilles Heel” of aviation security. There is certainly no evidence in either the on-air or online reports that such an attempt was made. Nor did Mr. Green attempt to contact any of our associations, even though four of us are located within 10 miles of your studio, a fifth is located in Frederick, Md., and EAA, headquartered in Oshkosh, Wis., is easily accessible by telephone. Any or all of us would have welcomed the opportunity to discuss such an important issue with Mr. Green.


We are concerned because the report treats issues that were raised and addressed ten years ago as if they are new, and because it fails to make any mention of the myriad, multi-layered changes to general aviation security that have taken place since the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

One must recall that on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, there were no general aviation security requirements. Now, any person seeking primary or certain advanced flight training must prove his or her nationality, and if a foreign national, undergo additional background checks. The pilot registry is routinely checked against terrorist watch lists. Unlike airline pilots who fly hundreds of strangers every day, pilots operating flights under Part 91 of the federal aviation regulations – whether a light two-seat propeller airplane or a 19-passenger business jet – know their passengers. Part 135 air taxi/air charter pilots and operators have additional security requirements imposed by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Finally, contrary the implication in Mr. Green’s story, general aviation airplanes arriving in the United States are subject to exactly the same “no-fly” list requirements as the scheduled airlines.

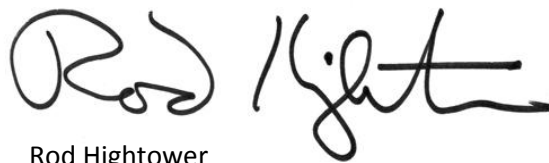
TSA itself recognizes that the many different missions and types of airports and landing facilities that general aviation operates from make a one-size-fits-all security solution impossible. Its *Security Guidelines for General Aviation Airports* allows the flexibility to enhance security in differing situations.

Our industry takes security very seriously. There is much more being done than was presented in Mr. Green’s report. Should WTOP have occasion to cover general aviation security in the future, we would welcome the opportunity to share our knowledge of the issue with your audience.

With regards,



Craig L. Fuller
President, CEO
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association



Rod Hightower
President, CEO
Experimental Aircraft Association



Pete Bunce
President, CEO
General Aviation Manufacturers Association



Matthew S. Zuccaro
President, COO
Helicopter Association International



James K. Coyne
President, CEO
National Air Transportation Association



Ed Bolen
President, CEO
National Business Aviation Association

cc: Mike Gartell, Managing Editor
J.J. Green, National Security Correspondent