



Written by [Becky Akers](#) on December 1, 2010

The Only Way: Abolish the TSA

"I was almost in tears," passenger Rhonda Gaynier told the Associated Press. "I've never been so humiliated in my life. It's one of the worst experiences I've ever had to endure."

She could have been speaking of the "enhanced pat-downs" — *sic* for "sexual assault" — the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) recently introduced at airports. But AP quoted her in 2004, when the TSA last tried mass molestation.

Two [Russian jetliners crashed that August](#) within minutes of one another. A Chechen woman had boarded each plane, and the wreckage contained traces of what may have been explosives. But the debris was scattered so widely investigators on the scene refused to guess the disaster's cause.

That didn't daunt the TSA. Its omniscient nitwits discerned what had happened from the other side of the planet — and worse, shared their vision with us: they declared that not only were the ladies rebels, they had secreted bombs in their bosoms.



That's bizarre enough on its face. But it becomes especially adolescent when we recall that no woman before or since has ever tried to sabotage a flight by blowing up her chest. And these salivating teens actually work for "national security" rather than *Hustler* magazine.

Nor were they finished with their hormonal fantasies: lest any exploding bustiers sneak past checkpoints in the Homeland, female passengers must run a gauntlet of official gropers before catching their flights.

Passengers then resented the pawing as much as they do now. They protested as loudly, too, until the TSA desisted — or at least, partially desisted: it decreed on December 23, 2004, that "[screeners will not be able](#) to pat-down a passenger's breast area *unless* the handheld metal detector goes off or if there is an irregularity in the passenger's clothing outline, said TSA spokesman Dave Steigman." [Emphasis added.] In other words, the agency claimed the right to continue sexually assaulting anyone and everyone: not only is "an irregularity in the passenger's clothing outline" a subjective judgment from a screener who may be angry at or lusting over a passenger, but these public servants long ago [learned to make their gadgets "go off"](#) when they want them to.

Obviously, then, the agency never repents nor reforms. And that's why we must continue clamoring for its abolition, loudly, tirelessly, insistently. We dare not settle for another temporary stay in its assaults



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on us.

The TSA has been a joke since its inception. It was a political rather than a practical response to 9/11 from Congressmen as ignorant about aviation's security as the TSA's bureaucrats are about Chechen terrorists.

It was also a shell game because the Federal government already controlled aviation's security.

Most passengers think the TSA was the Feds' response to 9/11. Since private screeners tragically failed to protect us, the government stepped in.

But the government had already stepped in, decades before. Federal control of aviation dates to 1926 and the Air Commerce Act — "the cornerstone of the Federal government's regulation of civil aviation," [as the FAA's website puts it](#), "...to improve and maintain safety standards."

During the skyjackings of the 1960s, [the FAA formed the "Task Force on the Deterrence of Air Piracy."](#) It recommended searching bags and passengers, among other measures. Its "suggestions" were voluntary at first, but the airlines were slow to appreciate the FAA's wisdom.

Then the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine obligingly hijacked four planes, two of them American. It blew them up once they landed overseas and all passengers had disembarked. Pres. Richard Nixon quickly exploited the destruction by forcing airlines to obey the FAA's whims. That demoted security from a valued necessity protecting billion-dollar inventory and highly trained personnel to a bureaucratic requirement airlines grudgingly funded.

The Feds have mandated aviation's security since. It's true that private companies staffed the FAA's checkpoints prior to 9/11, but regulations orchestrated every move those screeners made — just as a secretary types what the boss dictates rather than her own sentiments. In fact, one of the security-companies' managers wanted to release the surveillance tapes from that morning because they showed his employees at Dulles International following the FAA's instructions to the letter as they searched two of the hijackers. [See page 129 in [Unsafe at any Altitude](#) by Susan and Joseph Trento.]

So when Americans expect federal bureaucrats to protect aviation from terrorism, they're trusting the very incompetents who failed so catastrophically on 9/11.

No wonder we're still shedding our shoes nine years after Richard Reid: the TSA's buffoons mistook him for a trendsetter rather than a lone nut. Run by bureaucrats instead of professionals in aviation, the agency doesn't have a clue. It operates on the same untested, unstudied principle as the FAA: that passengers disarmed of everything but their fingernails, who cannot defend themselves should a terrorist climb aboard, are safe.

This makes no more sense than the absurd and often cruel policies that flow from it. Tormenting toddlers by stealing their teddy bears vanquishes al-Qaeda about as much as "touching" men's "junk" does.

How much better to evict inept bureaucrats and politicians from aviation's security! Abolishing the TSA means we could try something that, while entirely new to aviation, works magnificently in other industries: let experts who understand the field, who've spent their careers in it, design its protection. Let them tailor their security to the specific dangers they face — dangers that vary depending on route, usual customers, pricing, etc. — rather than hold safety hostage to the TSA's uniform straitjacket.

Imagine visiting an airport where the security is as effective but unobtrusive as that guarding your email account, the supermarket, your car. Imagine being a customer, not a criminal.



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Imagine travel without the TSA — and smile!

Becky Akers, an expert on the American Revolution, writes frequently about issues related to security and privacy. Her articles and columns have been published by *Lewrockwell.com*, *The Freeman*, *Military History Magazine*, *American History Magazine*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *New York Post*, and other publications.

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