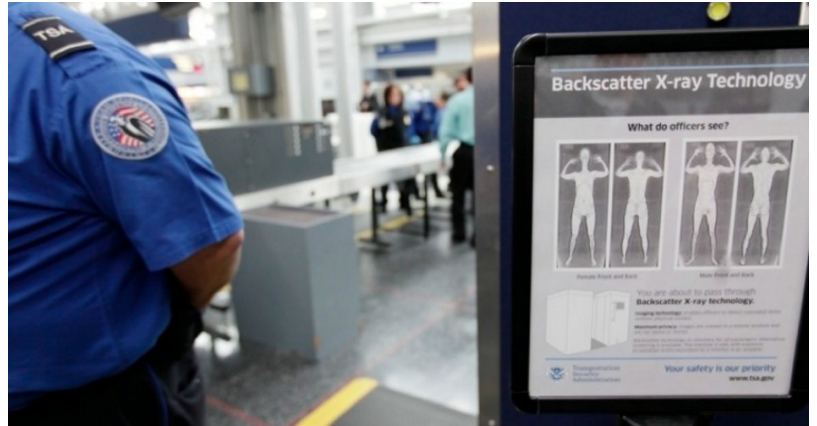




TSA Blasted for Exposing Breasts of Congressman's Teen Grandniece

The Transportation Security Administration is under heavy fire after publicly exposing the breasts of a teenage girl during its controversial "screening" procedures. Of course, passengers routinely complain of TSA abuse and molestation — some 17,000 formal complaints have been lodged against the widely ridiculed and despised unconstitutional Homeland Security agency just since 2009, documents show.



The latest scandal, however, has turned into an international firestorm for the embattled bureaucracy, largely because the then-17-year-old victim was the grandniece of Rep. Ralph Hall (R-Texas). More than a few analysts noted that countless regular Americans suffer similar abuse and humiliation every single day; virtually nothing is ever done.

Now, though, lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are crying foul while demanding investigations. Rights activists from across the political spectrum, meanwhile, have jumped on the opportunity to rein in the federal abuses once and for all.

According to official documents obtained by [reporter Scott MacFarlane](#) with an Atlanta TV news station, the girl was traveling to Australia on a trip with her classmates at Southwest Christian School in Texas. An [internal investigation by TSA](#) noted that after being selected for "secondary screening" and a so-called "pat-down," which critics regularly equate with sexual molestation and assault, the screener "removed minor passenger from the corral." Yes, the report uses the word corral, [defined as](#) an enclosure or pen for domesticated animals.

The girl was not offered a "private screening," the report noted, though passengers often prefer to be screened publicly anyway to ensure that there are witnesses to the controversial procedure in case of extraordinarily inappropriate fondling or other incidents. As the teen was enduring a "pat-down of the stomach area," the top of her dress came loose and slipped down to her stomach, according to the internal investigation at least, revealing her breasts to everyone in the vicinity. Analysts [suggested](#) the dress had actually been pulled down, a far more plausible scenario.

Surveillance cameras caught the humiliating event on film, but TSA claimed the footage was not good enough to determine whether its screener had "properly conducted" what commentators [said](#) sounded a lot like "sexual assault." The girl's chaperones, according to the report, became "visibly upset" about the event and notified her parents. On the following day, her father filed a formal complaint.

The incident happened at the international airport in Los Angeles (LAX) some two years ago. However, it came to light only in recent days after journalist MacFarlane obtained the internal TSA report about the investigation using the Freedom of Information Act. When the findings were publicized, outrage quickly ensued.

News of the scandal has since gone viral, attracting headlines across America and beyond. Major press outlets from the [United Kingdom](#) to [Iran](#) have also covered the resulting uproar. Meanwhile, countless



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victims of TSA abuses took the opportunity to vent their fury in online comment sections over the lawless but routine violations of the rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution's Fourth Amendment.

Rep. Hall, describing the incident as "brutal" and saying his grandniece had been "badly mistreated," called on the TSA to fire the screener responsible for exposing his relative's body at the airport. The 17-term congressman from Texas is also seeking a proper federal investigation of the incident, according to news reports.

"We have no desire to revive a painful event of the past, one that we abandoned any effort for litigation for privacy reasons," Hall said in a statement quoted in the press. "We did not want to hurt our niece any more than she had already been hurt."

Other lawmakers have also entered the fray. Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.), for example, contacted the massive screening bureaucracy to ask for a review and to express concerns about "potentially invasive screenings." Democrat Rep. Maxine Waters of California, whose district includes LAX, also complained to TSA about the suffering and humiliation endured by her colleague's young relative.

It is also not the first time lawmakers have had unpleasant experiences with the TSA. Earlier this year, Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) missed a flight to Washington, D.C., after [being detained by screeners for refusing a full-body pat-down](#). The incident happened at the Nashville, Tennessee, airport when a so-called "naked-body scanner" found some sort of alleged "anomaly" around the conservative senator's knee.

Sen. Paul's father Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas), a hero to millions of Americans for his devotion to liberty and the Constitution, has been a foe of the TSA and its lawless abuses from the start. "Why is the TSA permitted to abuse the rights of any American traveling by air?" the congressman [wondered](#) in his farewell address this month. "Victims of TSA excesses never consented to this abuse."

Last year, meanwhile, a [congressional report determined](#) that despite squandering close to \$60 billion in taxpayer funds on the TSA, screening is based on "theatrics" and has failed to catch a single terrorist. Passengers and crew, the investigation found, are actually the most effective line of defense. Ironically, perhaps, the explosive report said air travel is no safer now than it was before September 11, 2001.

The out-of-control agency has become "an enormous, inflexible and distracted bureaucracy, more concerned with human resource management and consolidating power," according to the report, released in November of 2011. "Today, TSA's screening policies are based in theatrics. They are typical, bureaucratic responses to failed security policies meant to assuage the concerns of the traveling public."

This week, a stinging investigation by Charles Kenny, a fellow at the Center for Global Development and the New America Foundation, [found that the TSA actually makes air travel less safe](#). Still, despite the facts and the growing surge of public revulsion, the Department of Homeland Security continues purporting to usurp new powers for itself, with the TSA still [seeking to expand its "mission"](#) far beyond the confines of "corrals" at airport terminals.

In typical fashion, the widely loathed screening agency attempted to blame the teenage victim after the latest scandal exploded into the global press, claiming the girl's dress being too loose was the problem — not the molestation. "We regret that the incident of more than two years ago was one that caused embarrassment to the young lady; however, an investigation concluded that the event was accidental," TSA [claimed](#) in a statement cited in media reports.



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According to the official report about the internal investigation, the bureaucrat responsible for disrobing the girl was “counseled on the expectation of our agency for professionalism and customer service.” By “customers,” TSA was presumably referring to its hapless victims who are lawlessly forced to submit to the violation of their rights in order to board an airplane, and more recently, sometimes even a bus or train.

Aside from the wanton violations of Americans’ constitutionally guaranteed, unalienable rights, the TSA has also refused to respect federal court decisions. In August, for instance, a U.S. appeals court [demanded that the agency promptly explain its brazen failure to obey the law and a judicial order](#) issued a year earlier.

With Americans across the political spectrum becoming increasingly outraged by TSA abuses, some state lawmakers are taking action. In Texas, for example, a bill to [criminalize the “screening” procedures as sexual assault](#) was passed overwhelmingly as Democrats and Republicans united to protect the rights of Texans.

Now, the celebrated Texas Travel Freedom Act, HB 80, recently pre-filed by state Rep. David Simpson, [aims to put an end to TSA lawlessness](#) in the Lone Star State once and for all. Activists, however, are hoping to end the abuses nationwide, and with a congressman’s grandniece becoming the latest high-profile victim, analysts say achieving that goal just got a big boost. Indeed, the entire unconstitutional Department of Homeland Security is [increasingly in the crosshairs](#), too.

Photo: AP Images

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