



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on March 28, 2025

GOP Senators Looking to Abolish TSA, Privatize Airport Security

In a move to reshape air travel in the United States, Senators Mike Lee (R-Ut.) and Tommy Tuberville (R-Al.) have introduced the [Abolish the TSA Act of 2025](#). The bill seeks to eliminate the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and transfer airport screening to private companies. The plan would install a new federal oversight body within the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to regulate private security operations.



AP Images

Ending the TSA

The legislation charges TSA with being a “bloated” and “inefficient” bureaucracy.

Senator Tuberville calls it an “inefficient, bureaucratic mess that infringes on Americans’ freedoms and wastes taxpayer money.” He says the agency is “bloated,” delivers “minimal security benefits,” and creates “unnecessary delays and frustration for travelers.” His solution:

[F]ocus on smarter, more effective methods to protect our country without sacrificing the liberties that make America great. The TSA should be eliminated and replaced with more targeted, streamlined, and accountable solutions.

Senator Lee adds that the TSA has “intruded into the privacy and personal space of most Americans” and “repeatedly failed tests to find weapons and explosives.” He believes privatizing airport screening under an “Office of Aviation Security Oversight” will end the “bureaucratic behemoth” and let families travel “without feeling the hands of an army of federal employees.”

Provisions

The Abolish the TSA Act of 2025 lays out a roadmap to dismantle the agency over a three-year period.

Within 90 days of enactment, the secretary of homeland security — working with the secretary of transportation — must submit a full reorganization plan to Congress.

Key elements include:

Creation of the Office of Aviation Security Oversight within the FAA. This new body would be “responsible for the oversight and regulation of all aviation security activities,” but “no employee of the Office shall conduct airport screening services.”

Rapid transfer of all “aviation security activities and equipment to qualified private screening companies.”

Limits on power: The plan may not require private contractors “to conduct warrantless searches and seizures.”



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Proportional downsizing of TSA operations, with reductions in both personnel and scope “until the transfer is complete and no operations of personnel of the Administration remain.”

Transfer of surface transportation functions (e.g. freight rail, mass transit, pipelines) to the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Regular progress reports are also required. The bill mandates that the secretary submit updates every 30 days, while the Government Accountability Office (GAO) must review compliance every 180 days.

The bill states plainly:

On the date that is 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administration shall be abolished[.]

The TSA: Short History With Long Reach

The TSA was created in late 2001 after the 9/11 attacks. President George W. Bush signed it into law as part of a sweeping response to terrorism. Before that, private firms handled airport security [under FAA oversight](#).

What began as a rapid federal expansion has since entrenched itself as a permanent fixture. Critics argue the agency has grown beyond its purpose. Many point to [repeated failures](#) in undercover tests where weapons and mock explosives were smuggled through checkpoints.

More concerning to constitutional advocates is the issue of individual rights. The Fourth Amendment protects Americans against “unreasonable searches and seizures.” Yet the TSA’s authority to conduct pat downs, bag searches, and [full-body scans](#) — without warrants or probable cause — has drawn fire not only from civil-liberties groups, but from everyday Americans. Many felt their privacy violated in deeply personal and often degrading ways. For them, routine travel became a humiliating encounter with unchecked government power.

Yet over time, security screening methods evolved. What began as manual inspections shifted toward more digitized systems.

Biometric Screenings

Biometric screening is emerging as a central pillar of airport security. These technologies — facial recognition, fingerprinting, and iris scans — are quickly becoming standard at airports across the United States and around the world.

In the United States, the TSA is rolling out facial-recognition scanners (CAT-2) at a growing number of airports. [As of late 2024](#), the technology has been live at 84 airports, with plans to expand to more than 400 nationwide.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has [already implemented](#) Biometric Facial Comparison at 238 airports for entry, and 49 airports for international departures.

Biometric tools promise speed and less hassle — fewer bag checks, and no hands-on pat-downs.

At the same time, they raise new privacy concerns. These systems collect highly sensitive, unchangeable personal data. If hacked or mishandled, the consequences can be permanent.

Under the proposed Act, all biometric equipment would transfer to private contractors. That means private firms could take over facial and fingerprint scanning.



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Some already have. [CLEAR](#), a private biometric company, partners with TSA to offer identity verification services in major U.S. airports. As of this January, it operates in 74 airports across the country.

Enrollment in CLEAR is technically voluntary. Yet in practice, many travelers feel compelled to submit their biometrics — not out of trust, but to escape the frustrating, often humiliating experience of TSA lines, pat downs, and unpredictable delays. What the government has created is not just inefficiency, but a form of coercion: a process aggravating enough that people willingly trade privacy for convenience.

In this way, biometric screening isn't just replacing outdated procedures, it's profiting from their dysfunction.

Bottom Line

The Abolish the TSA Act may prove to be a bold strike against federal power in aviation security. Supporters see it as a long-overdue reset. Critics warn it could simply replace one form of government overreach with another.

Undoubtedly, technology will evolve. The hands that enforce security may change. But the core concern remains: Americans will likely still be searched, tracked, and have their private data stored in vast databases — public or private — all in the name of safety.

Whether the bill gains momentum in Congress remains to be seen. The 60-vote threshold in the Senate makes bipartisan support uncertain — but not improbable.

What is clear is this: The bill forces a deeper, unresolved question back into the spotlight — how much freedom and privacy are Americans willing to trade for the illusion of security?



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