



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on January 11, 2011

Rep. Clyburn Miffed That TSA Treats Congressmen “Like Everybody Else”

“We’ve had some incidents where TSA authorities think that congresspeople should be treated like everybody else,” Rep. James Clyburn (left, D-S.C.) told Fox News Sunday.

What an outrage! How dare the Transportation Security Administration treat our exalted leaders the same way they treat the rest of us peons? Sure, “everybody else” should be subjected to virtual strip searches or invasive pat-downs of private parts, but not politicians who have managed to fool a plurality of those who bother to show up at the polls every two years.



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Clyburn uttered that elitist remark as part of a larger discussion about the [January 8 shootings](#) in Tucson that seriously wounded Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.) and killed a federal judge. Clyburn told *Fox News Sunday* that “the place where we [congressmen] feel the most ill at ease is going through airports.” It’s a good bet that most Americans would say the same thing; those TSA searches are hardly the thing to relax a person. Most Americans — thank goodness — are not congressmen, however, and thus they have little choice but to submit to the TSA’s intrusive, unconstitutional procedures if they want to fly.

Some high government officials, on the other hand, are already exempt from the TSA’s prying eyes and poking fingers. According to a November Associated Press report, among those who get to bypass the TSA’s harassment are cabinet members, the FBI director, the Speaker of the House, and the Senate majority leader. Clyburn, however, is merely the assistant minority leader in the House, and so (for now) he is forced to undergo the same humiliating procedures as “everybody else.”

Why does Clyburn believe that representatives should be exempted from the usual airport screening procedures? “Well,” he told *Fox News Sunday*, “the fact of the matter is, we are held to a higher standard in so many other areas, and I think we need to take a hard look at exactly how the TSA interact with members of Congress.”

That “higher standard” presumably includes allowing Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) to remain in Congress with little punishment other than a “shame on you” for being “found guilty of 11 charges of misconduct, which include solicitation of funds from companies engaged in business transaction with the House Ways and Means Committee while Rangel was its chairman, and failure to pay taxes on properties Rangel owned in Florida and in the Dominican Republic,” as [Raven Clabough described it in *The New American*](#). Rangel, unlike “everybody else” who gets caught evading taxes, was only forced to pay the taxes he owed, but no penalties or interest. With these high standards in Congress, the TSA ought to be scrutinizing members of that august body even *more* closely than the rest of us. (As a matter of fact, the late Sen. Edward Kennedy did find himself on the “no-fly” list at one point; but,



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again, unlike the rest of us, he was able to pick up the phone and call the Secretary of Homeland Security to get himself cleared for takeoff.)

If even more representatives and senators are, as Clyburn wishes, able to bypass the TSA's checkpoints, it is safe to assume that their sympathy for the delays and humiliations experienced by their constituents will diminish considerably, further reducing the chances that they will force the TSA to change — or, better still, abolish the whole agency.



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