

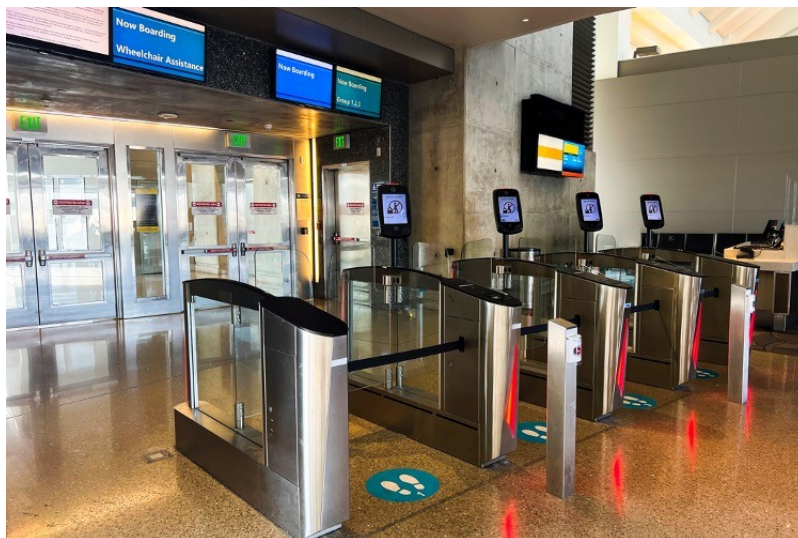


TSA Now Using Facial Recognition to Identify Travelers

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has quietly deployed facial-recognition scanners in at least 16 airports throughout the country.

Reason online reports:

Facial recognition technology has come a long way in recent years, spurred in equal parts by convenience and the priorities of government snoops. Now, if you plan to go a long way via air travel, you can expect to be required to stare into a camera as a computer algorithm scans your features to make sure you're no imposter. The TSA is trying out facial recognition technology at airports as a means of ensuring that travelers are who they claim to be and speeding security lines. It's, maybe, an improvement for impatient travelers, but even more so for the never-satisfied security state.



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The TSA itself published an unheralded announcement about the intended rollout late last year:

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at Denver International Airport (DEN) has deployed the next generation of Credential Authentication Technology (CAT) to verify the identity of travelers. First generation CAT units are designed to scan a traveler's photo identification, confirm the traveler's identity as well as their flight details. The new CAT units, referred to as CAT-2, have the same capabilities, but are also equipped with a camera that captures a real-time photo of the traveler.

Many Americans rightly see the attack on fundamental liberties that is being carried out by the very government that our ancestors created to protect those fundamental liberties!

Consider these words from the Declaration of Independence:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the



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People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Is it any exaggeration to say that the TSA's latest surreptitious surveillance and collection of biometric data and overall systemic denial of basic liberty is "destructive" of the purposes of the creation of the federal government by the states and the people?

And, even with that seemingly inarguable destruction of the rights it is supposed to protect, the TSA's latest scheme is in direct violation of the rights protected by the Fourth Amendment, as well!

The Fourth Amendment reads:

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

Exactly what is the probable cause for searching and seizing ANYTHING from Americans flying? Whence did the TSA — or any other agency of the federal government — derive the authority to search and seize anything at anytime in direct, open, hostile, and notorious violation of the Fourth Amendment?

One is reminded of the incredulous musings of James Madison, in *The Federalist*, No. 46, that he believed that the American people would never "silently and patiently behold the gathering storm, and continue to supply the materials, until it should be prepared to burst on their own heads."

That dystopian vision of Madison has unfortunately come to pass in its fullness from sea to shining sea, at the invitation of the so-called representatives of the people in the municipal, county, state, and federal spheres of government.

Those intent on boarding a plane should not be unreasonably and unconstitutionally subject to the prying eyes and roaming hands of the TSA.

Of course, the TSA insists that you can opt out of such surveillance. Here's the truth of that as reported by Reason:

Theoretically, travelers can opt out in favor of regular ID checks. But anybody who flies much knows how well things often go when you stand on your rights with the TSA — it's a great way to end up in a back room. Just weeks after writing up the rollout, [*The Washington Post's* Geoffrey] Fowler told PBS: "since my column came out, readers said they followed that, went up to the podium and got pushback" when they objected to the facial scan.

No screening, no riding. Consider what that means to real people: There are millions, literally millions of Americans who rely on air travel to get them to work and they depend on that work to afford food, housing, and other necessities of life. Now, thanks to the unholy alliance between the U.S. Congress (who created the TSA) and the TSA itself, if those people refuse to submit to having their entire body and possessions scanned by law enforcement, then those people will not make it to work.



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While many Americans would not lose their jobs for missing work one day or showing up late one day, there are so many of us, particularly those who depend on any form of public transportation, who would indeed find themselves unemployed in such a scenario.

Apparently, the TSA has no problem soaking the taxpayers, and sacrificing their employment on the altar of unwarranted searching, screening, scanning, and touching.

Anyone who has passed through TSA security checkpoints is an eyewitness to the excesses exercised by this agency. The threat of terrorism after September 11, 2001 was used as a pretext to give them an inch of intrusive authority, and the never-ending prosecution of the “War on Terror” has been used by them as an excuse to take a mile of liberty from the people of the United States.

Predictably, the TSA claims that the facial recognition is necessary so that they can screen large numbers of passengers with minimal inconvenience.

See? The denial of liberty is for your convenience, citizen.

Without the TSA, though, how do we keep the skies safe?

The only process that would be truly designed to be the least inconvenience to the traveler and the most likely to protect passengers would be to allow the market to secure the skies.

If transportation company A wants to give pat-downs to every traveler and transportation company B uses an expertly engineered process of patrolling who is allowed on their planes, a way that prevents most passengers from suffering the inhumanity of TSA-style searches and seizures, is there any question which airline will be more profitable?

Given the ever-accelerating expansion of the federal government’s shameless screening of everyone, including the elderly, children, and the disabled, it seems that perhaps our country is gripped by what Madison described as a “great madness” and we are all lost in the “incoherent dreams of a delirious jealousy, or the misjudged exaggerations of a counterfeit zeal, [rather than] the sober apprehensions of genuine patriotism.”

We must restore the protections provided by the Constitution, and we must insist that the government we created to protect our liberty no longer be allowed to destroy it.



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