

Security Industry Association and International Biometrics + Identity Association Oppose Adding Extraneous Prohibitions on TSA Use of Facial Biometrics in Potential FAA Measure

SILVER SPRING, Md. – (April 26, 2024): The [Security Industry Association](#) (SIA) and the [International Biometrics + Identity Association](#) (IBIA) have urged Congress to oppose inclusion in the FAA Reauthorization measure of an extraneous provision seeking to prohibit the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) from using facial recognition technology.

In an [April 15, 2024, letter](#) to Sens. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and Ted Cruz (R-Texas) of the Senate Committee on Commerce Science and Transportation and Reps. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) and Rick Larsen (D-Wash.) of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, SIA and IBIA encouraged Congress to reject such a proposal, which would force the TSA to abandon its highly successful use of facial biometrics to verify required traveler documents at security checkpoints, which has improved safety, security and travel experiences for millions of U.S. air travelers, for the following reasons:

- **The FAA Reauthorization bill is not the appropriate vehicle to include such an extraneous provision** that: a) has not been considered in committee; and b) has significant potential to weaken aviation security in the United States and elsewhere.
- **The amendment is based on ill-informed and spurious claims** regarding TSA's current use of biometric technology and implies a potential for misuse — claims that are completely and demonstrably false. There is zero evidence for claims it is or could be used for mass surveillance.

Air travelers have long been required by law to present valid IDs at security checkpoints, subject to inspection for authenticity and checks against flight information. Before the technology, TSA personnel visually compared the photo on each ID with the person presenting it to verify that they match. On a completely voluntary basis for travelers, the technology now automates, speeds and more accurately performs this step, which verifies that the person at the kiosk matches the digital photo already stored on their ID or enrolled in a voluntary program.

Following this process on site, the information is then overwritten to take on verification of the next passenger in the security queue. No biometric information is retained or shared following this verification process.

- **The U.S. Department of Homeland Security and component agencies like TSA have [already adopted](#) an extensive facial recognition technology governance policy** that includes comprehensive oversight responsibilities, data privacy and civil liberties obligations, and testing and evaluation requirements.



“Facial biometrics are currently in use for traveler verification at TSA security screening checkpoints in more than 80 airports across the country,” said SIA CEO Don Erickson and IBIA Managing Director Robert Tappan in the letter. “The technology provides enhanced security, accuracy and convenience for travelers, without impacting existing privacy rights or changing privacy expectations. ... This 11th-hour measure will compromise programs that facilitate the safety and enhance the travel experience of travelers across the nation.”

As demonstrated throughout its 30+-year history of development, facial recognition technology offers tremendous benefits to society when used effectively and responsibly. SIA believes all technology products, including facial recognition, must only be used for purposes that are lawful, ethical and nondiscriminatory and has developed [principles](#) to guide the responsible and effective use of facial recognition technology, including recommendations for public- and private-sector applications; similarly, IBIA has published a [guide to ethical use of biometric technology](#).

About SIA

SIA is the leading trade association for global security solution providers, with over 1,400 innovative member companies representing thousands of security leaders and experts who shape the future of the security industry. SIA protects and advances its members' interests by advocating pro-industry policies and legislation at the federal and state levels, creating open industry standards that enable integration, advancing industry professionalism through education and training, opening global market opportunities and collaborating with other like-minded organizations. As the premier sponsor of ISC Events expos and conferences, SIA ensures its members have access to top-level buyers and influencers, as well as unparalleled learning and network opportunities. SIA also enhances the position of its members in the security marketplace through SIA GovSummit, which brings together private industry with government decision makers, and Securing New Ground, the security industry's top executive conference for peer-to-peer networking.

About IBIA

The International Biometrics + Identity Association advances the adoption and responsible use of technology-based identification solutions to enhance security and privacy and to facilitate convenience and productivity for government, businesses, and consumers. To effectively carry out its mission, IBIA focuses on three core activities: Advocacy, Connectivity, and Education.

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