

Alaska State Legislature

House of Representatives

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Sponsor Statement

HB 270- Passenger Disclosures

SCANNERS

The federal Transportation Security Administration has taken over areas of Alaska's hub airports in order to perform passenger screening.

- New screening procedures involve the use of both radiation emitting body scanners and non-medical physical examinations.
- Alaskans fly eight times more often than the national average. The result is many of the state's residents being exposed to scanner radiation more often than most Americans.
- There has not been reported neutral third-party oversight of installation, testing and recalibration by trained technicians for TSA body scanners.
- The cumulative effect of repeated exposure to scanner radiation on peoples' health is an unanswered question.

Unlike in the Lower 48, access to medical services requires frequent air travel by Alaska's rural residents, seniors, military personnel and veterans. Should a traveler have a prosthesis, a body irregularity or have undergone some types of surgery, the scanner will then signal for a thorough physical examination.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Physical examinations are performed by the hands of TSA personnel, who lack medical training. The resulting examination may include the removal of prostheses and surgical bandages. Also, the unsanitary nature of the exam may result in the transmission of pathogens to the traveler. These can create public health hazards.

- Beyond physical harm, new TSA procedures are traumatic and demeaning.
- Unwanted touching of an abuse victim by TSA personnel may trigger traumatic re-victimization reactions.
- Alaska leads the nation in domestic violence and abuse.

HB 270 will require the State Department of Transportation to place an informational sign in each Alaska airport where TSA screening takes place. The sign's wording will warn passengers of the potentially dangerous screening procedures before they enter the TSA controlled screening area.

The sign will let passengers know they are about be exposed to radiation from a device with possible unknown effects. Furthermore, the passenger may be subjected to a physical search that some find offensive. Knowledge is power. By informing passengers of what they will face by entering TSA controlled areas, Alaskans can decide for themselves if they are willing to be subjected to the dangers of screening. HB 270 will both empower and potentially protect the constitutional rights and health of the people of our state.