



Voluntary Credentialing and Registered Traveler: Enhanced Aviation Security and Faster Security Lanes for All

“[P]rograms to speed known travelers should be a higher priority, permitting inspectors to focus on greater risks. The daily commuter should not be subject to the same measures as first-time travelers. An individual should be able to preenroll, with his or her identity verified in passage. Updates of database information and other checks can ensure ongoing reliability.”

(**The 9/11 Commission Report**, p. 388)

Registered Traveler (RT) is a voluntary credentialing program that allows passengers who pose a reduced security risk to access designated airport security fast lanes nationwide. Launched in 2005, RT has enabled TSA to focus its screening personnel resources on passengers who should be subject to more extensive screening, while allowing lower-risk passengers whose identities have been authenticated and biometrically verified to continue their air travels with less hassle and more predictability. To become a Registered Traveler, participants choose one of the competing TSA-approved service providers, voluntarily pay the fee set by that provider and submit to rigorous identity authentication procedures. Approved members receive a secure, biometric card to use in RT verification kiosks located at RT lines at TSA security checkpoints.

More than 225,000 frequent travelers have signed up for RT, and up to 1,000 more are doing so every day; they are the nation’s road warriors. These people are signing up for Registered Traveler to expedite air travel and to help the Department of Homeland Security do its job. Remarkably, approximately 90% of members renew. RT lanes have been used more than 1.8 million times to date. It is estimated that once RT is fully deployed during the next 18 to 24 months, 30% to 50% of travelers moving through any large airport on a weekday morning will be authenticated, biometrically-verified RT members. That takes a lot of hay out of TSA’s proverbial haystack – at zero cost to the taxpayer.

In short, RT is the first deployment of a voluntary credentialing industry that can: (1) enlist millions of Americans voluntarily to opt for biometric cards that authenticate their identity while providing contractually-guaranteed privacy protection and accountable customer service from the private sector; (2) add to resiliency by having an installed base of millions of biometric cards usable at other security bottlenecks, and (3) allow security officials to focus resources more efficiently and effectively – that is, truly practice risk management.



The RT program is now in 21 of the nation’s largest airports. Clear|Verified Identity Pass, Inc. operates RT at 18 of the current airports, while FLO Corporation and Vigilant Solutions operate RT at the remaining three airports; in addition, five other companies have received preliminary approval to operate RT programs, but do not yet have contracts to do so.

THE CLEAR NETWORK



Background

Congress authorized the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to create RT in the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, Pub. L. 107–71, (115 Stat. 597, 613, Nov. 19, 2001), sec. 109(a)(3), as a means to “establish requirements to implement trusted passenger programs and use available technologies to expedite security screening of passengers who participate in such programs.” The program has continued to receive support from Congress (see “What People Are Saying About Registered Traveler,” below, for a sample of Congressional opinion). A public/private partnership, RT is a voluntary program operated by the private sector whose costs are fully paid for by members who choose to participate at no cost to the taxpayers.



Benefits

Registered Traveler enhances aviation security.

No program can entirely eliminate risk, but RT allows TSA to manage risk better by identifying lower-risk ordinary fliers before they get to the security checkpoint through RT's identity authentication and verification procedures. TSA can then use its limited resources to evaluate and identify higher-risk passengers. For most of the RT program's history, RT members were vetted by TSA (using national security database checks including those used for terrorist, law enforcement, and immigration purposes). With TSA's recent announcement of expansion of RT beyond the pilot phase, the vetting process is now transitioning to the private sector which may (on a voluntary basis) conduct background checks that are even more comprehensive and security-enhancing than the original TSA vetting.

Registered Traveler offers speed and predictability to the frequent traveler whose livelihood depends on air travel.

On average, RT members are salespeople, contractors, and others who fly 3-6 round trips a month for business. Surveys in Orlando indicate that the average income of RT members is less than \$75,000. For these travelers, RT only costs \$1.00-\$2.00 per flight.

The average time it takes a member to pass through an RT security lane is less than five minutes. Studies have compared security lanes that feature RT with security lanes that do not. These studies demonstrate that the dedicated, additional resources contributed by the RT program (which also aids travelers with divesting and re-vesting – or, the process of moving personal items and carry-on luggage through security) increase throughput by as much as 30%.

Registered Traveler makes airport security lines more efficient for ALL travelers.

RT helps non-Registered Travelers. After all, airports with RT are more efficient for *all* travelers. In Orlando, RT lanes regularly process up to 15% of the passengers moving through the airport, using just 10% of the TSA checkpoint lanes. RT not only gives its members a fast, predictable experience when they arrive at airport security, but makes the lines for everyone else shorter too.

The analogy here is electronic tolling (like E-Z Pass) on highways. As long as the electronic lanes and non-electronic lanes are apportioned correctly, everyone now goes through highway tolls faster than before electronic tolling was invented.

Registered Traveler offers economic and other benefits to airports and the air travel industry.

RT helps airports manage overall traffic flow and increase revenue. And, RT helps the aviation industry generally, as travelers are more likely to fly on short haul flights if they



don't have to contemplate getting to the airport an hour and a half or two hours earlier. Since 9/11, the air industry has seen the slowest growth in short haul flights, because the possibility of a long security line means that travelers have to build in more time at the airport *in advance* of the flight than the flight itself takes. It's little surprise that, in June 2008, Delta entered into a partnership with an RT service provider, agreeing to sponsor RT programs at many of its most significant terminals, as well as to promote RT to millions of Delta's frequent fliers.

Registered Traveler provides a quick, practical solution to Secure Flight's imminent hurdles

Secure Flight is the program scheduled to be implemented in 2009 that will transfer responsibility for terrorist watch list reviews for passengers from airlines to TSA. However, a registered traveler need not be subject to a Secure Flight search, because TSA has the capability of clearing registered travelers in advance (and on an ongoing basis) through a TSA security threat assessment. Indeed, assuming TSA conducts the ongoing TSA security threat assessment on registered travelers, the RT background check is substantially superior to the Secure Flight background check, because registered travelers must authenticate their identity at enrollment with a biometric and with scannable forms of identification, and then verify their identity with a biometric whenever they fly. By having RT members tell the air carrier when making a reservation that they are RT members, their boarding passes could require that they pass through an RT lane at the airport – where their identities would be verified biometrically.

As a result, if “false positive” travelers (like Senator Ted Kennedy, who have the bad luck to have a name that is similar to that of a terrorist) simply enroll in RT, they will be able to avoid the perpetual and terribly time-consuming process of establishing their innocence every time they fly, which is a key purpose of Secure Flight. And, unlike with Secure Flight as currently designed, their “innocent” identities will actually be confirmed, closing a large security loophole. In sum, TSA's daily Secure Flight searching burden could be reduced by as many as 1.25 million of the Secure Flight's total projected 2.5 million name-matching searches per day. RT's relief of Secure Flight can begin immediately (and grow) with each expansion of RT. And, again, those 1.25 million travelers would be going through a more secure process than Secure Flight will offer.

Registered Traveler increases our Nation's resilience.

Ensuring that our Nation's critical infrastructure systems (including – but not limited to – aviation) can resume their normal functions — or “bounce back” — in the face of a disruption, or an attack, is vital. RT is a powerful platform for such increased resilience. In the case of a future disruption or attack, for example, RT could rapidly be deployed for use in other venues where increased security became essential. As soon as RT verification kiosks were in place, the large universe of existing RT members could use those kiosks, and security agencies would immediately be able to confirm the identity of those members and their vetted status.



Policy Considerations

Notwithstanding RT's successes to date, RT faces several challenges that will determine the program's future. Among the important policy issues that remain unresolved are the following:

(1) To maximize the security potential of RT, TSA needs to be encouraged to work in a robust partnership with approved service providers on their proposals to conduct enhanced background checks and to introduce state-of-the-art technology at the RT lane, for example – all at no cost to the government.

(2) To drive membership in all DHS trusted traveler programs (including RT and Global Entry), those programs need to be fully harmonized, and RT service providers need to be able to do what they do best – enroll members through a unified application process, provide customer service, as well as install and maintain enrollment equipment to DHS standards.

So, Here's How Airport Security Should (and Easily Could) Work

Key: Everything in regular type is already happening; everything in *italics* is waiting in the wings.

Picture this: Jane Traveler is a typical business person and frequent flyer, who happens to share a name with a terrorist. Jane is also a Registered Traveler who carries a biometric RT card. To qualify, she voluntarily provided a TSA-approved service provider with (i) her biographic information, (ii) two forms of identification to be electronically authenticated, and (iii) a scan of her biometrics. *Then, TSA checked her against the No-Fly and Selectee lists of the Terrorist Screening Database (a check which is constantly updated as long as Jane remains a Registered Traveler). And, Jane's RT Service Provider separately conducted a private sector background check, accepted by TSA, that is the equivalent to those used by numerous government agencies when screening personnel needing various levels of security clearance.*

As part of the same Registered Traveler enrollment process, Jane also elected to become a member of Customs and Border Protection's international registered traveler program (called Global Entry, which provides for automated border control when flying back into the US). So, CBP received all the biographic and biometric information it needed from the RT service provider, and completed Jane's enrollment in that program, too. The only extra step necessary was for Jane to set up an interview with a CBP agent, which the RT service provider scheduled for her. She uses the same customer service system, and the same technology infrastructure, already in place at dozens of airports, to benefit from both programs.

Jane learns that she has a meeting the next day in London. She goes on line to book herself a flight. *In addition to payment information, she enters her name and checks a box marked "Registered Traveler." She immediately prints out her boarding pass which*



features a prominent “Registered Traveler Line Only” designation. That night upon arrival at the airport, she proceeds directly to the Registered Traveler line at the security checkpoint. An RT attendant checks her RT card against her RT boarding pass to confirm that she’s flying that day and that she’s at the right checkpoint. Then, Jane proceeds to the RT verification kiosk which scans her fingerprint (or iris) and compares it with the fingerprint (or iris) encrypted on Jane’s RT card to confirm that she is, in fact, Jane and to confirm Jane’s up-to-date status as someone who (i) continues to appear on neither the No-Fly list nor the Selectee list maintained by the TSA and (ii) is cleared under an ongoing private sector background check. At the same time, Jane’s shoes are scanned for both metal weapons and explosives using quadropole resonance technology, and her finger is tested for explosive trace. Jane then passes through the metal detector and puts her carry-on through the X-ray machine, but keeps her shoes and jacket on.

When Jane arrives back in the US from London, she goes through the Global Entry automated border control.

What does this improved process accomplish?

1. We really know Jane is not the terrorist with the same name, a vital enhancement to the current Secure Flight which relies on the unlikely scenario that a terrorist will provide a real birthdate when making a reservation in order to be caught. (Jane is thrilled because she does not have to go through the painful process of establishing her identity every time she wants to get a boarding pass.)
2. Indeed, we know that Jane is a much *lower* security risk than any regular traveler going through security, because Jane has been through an enhanced background check that no regular traveler has.
3. And, we know that Jane has no metal weapons *or* explosives in her shoes, which we can’t say about any regular traveler going through primary security because the X-ray machine through which shoes typically pass does not test for explosives.
4. And, we know that Jane has not handled any explosives, which we can’t say about any regular traveler going through primary security, because neither the traveler nor her bags is tested for explosives when passing through primary security.
5. And, TSA can allocate its limited resources (and manage risk) more effectively, because fewer officers will be needed to process Registered Travelers whose shoes and jackets won’t need to be reviewed by the X-ray machine and whose shoes won’t alarm when going through the metal detectors because they’ve already been scanned. These officers can now be redeployed to processing non-RT members.
6. And, Jane was able to buy a ticket and print a boarding pass at home *within 72* hours of her flight without a problem, which otherwise could well be a problem under the current Secure Flight.
7. And, membership in Global Entry will dramatically increase, because RT’s private sector service providers will have a very strong incentive (and the



marketing expertise) to facilitate Global Entry membership as an optional bundled component of RT enrollment.

8. And, CBP can allocate its limited resources (and manage risk) more effectively, because (a) fewer dollars will be needed to market Global Entry and (b) fewer officers will be needed to oversee members of Global Entry, whose backgrounds have already been vetted and whose identities are verified, upon their arrival in the US. These dollars and officers can now be redeployed to processing non-Global Entry members upon arrival.

How soon can this happen?

Virtually immediately, because many of these RT elements (everything in regular type in the scenario above) are already functioning (as is CBP's Global Entry program, although its membership should be much higher). And, the rest (everything in *italics*) is waiting in the wings:

- (1) TSA was checking RT members against the Terrorist Screening Database until July 2008 – they could restart immediately;
- (2) Clear and LexisNexis proposed a private sector background check to TSA in Spring 2008 – it could be deployed within weeks;
- (3) Clear proposed a unified enrollment process for RT and Global Entry more than a year ago, and TSA and CBP started to pursue it – it could be deployed within months;
- (4) With approval from TSA, Clear could begin work immediately with air carriers to implement the “RT Line Only” boarding pass – it could be deployed within months; and
- (5) Clear and GE Homeland Security have sought approval from DHS/TSA to deploy the shoescanning and finger trace technology for more than two years – upon approval, it could be deployed within days.

How much will it cost DHS?

Nothing. All costs are paid by the voluntary members of Registered Traveler through their service providers.

What People Are Saying About Registered Traveler

Chairman Bennie G. Thompson, House Homeland Security Committee: Registered Traveler, “if implemented correctly, has the potential to dramatically improve security for all airline travelers, by allowing frequent travelers to get through the system more quickly, reducing the volume of passengers that go through traditional TSA screening, allowing them to focus more on the regular traveling public. The process for becoming a RT is rigorous, and through regular vetting against the various checklists used by TSA, we can be assured that passengers who go through this process are not a threat to national security. This program operates at no cost to the government, and it’s a great example of how the private sector can come together with the government to make progress on security that benefits all Americans.” (Press Release, 8/31/07)



Congressman Dan Lungren, Ranking Member, House Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee: “Another TSA change that would immeasurably improve the travel experience for airline customers and at the same time provide security, in my judgment, is a fully implemented registered traveler program... I am a strong believer that intelligence is our best weapon against terrorism, as I previously said. The more personal passenger information we have, the better our chances for identifying travelers who may pose a threat. Shouldn't we be encouraging programs that provide us with greater intelligence, particularly when that information is given voluntarily?” (Hearing, House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection, 10/16/07)

Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (Chairwoman, House Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law Subcommittee), Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (Chairwoman, House Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee), Congressman Dan Lungren, Congresswoman Yvette Clarke, Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton and Congressman Donald Payne: “We are writing to you to express our continued strong support for the Registered Traveler program as an effective way to enhance aviation security. Congress authorized the Registered Traveler Program in order to provide an effective risk management tool for enhancing our aviation security programs. By having the traveling public voluntarily submit their background information and biometrics to the Federal Government, we are enhancing aviation security. Registered Travelers pass a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) security threat assessment and can have their identities biometrically identified when they fly. Additionally, Registered Travelers move more quickly through security check points, allowing the entire screening process to work more efficiently and allowing screeners to better focus on potential threats from those travelers who have not been vetted.” (Letter to Secretary Chertoff, 11/5/07)

U.S. Senator Mel Martinez: “As a longtime member and supporter of the Registered Traveler (RT) program, I am proud that Orlando International Airport in my home state was the first airport to launch this initiative.” (Letter to Secretary Chertoff, 5/16/07)

Secretary Michael Chertoff, Department of Homeland Security: “I think a Registered Traveler [program]... is still the way to go. It still is better to get a little more information about people, and certainly on a voluntary basis, and then not have to put them into secondary [searches] than to put more people into secondary and have their stuff searched and have them asked questions.” (USA Today, 8/31/06)

Kip Hawley, Administrator, TSA: “It's a new step for Registered Traveler that recognizes the security benefits that it has in the ID area.” (Congressional testimony, House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation, 7/24/08)

Kip Hawley, Administrator, TSA: “[W]e believe that an effective Registered Traveler Program can and will: Provide a significantly higher level of assurance that people in the program do not have terrorist intentions; Allow TSA to focus its screener resources on



passengers that present a potentially higher risk; Retain an element of randomness with regard to secondary screening in order to maintain uncertainty among terrorists who may attempt to thwart the program; Protect the privacy of individuals who participate in the program; and Make air travel easier for domestic passengers.” (Congressional testimony, House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Cybersecurity, 11/3/05)

Clark Kent Ervin, former Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security: “I’m a supporter of [Registered Traveler]. It’s a very good example of a partnership between TSA and the private sector.” (Congressional testimony, House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection, 4/15/08)

Bill Connors, President, National Business Travel Association: “NBTA believes that Registered Traveler (RT) programs enable a more secure, faster, and more consistent screening process. This, in turn, enables the more than 6 million frequent business travelers to be more productive while enhancing the security of our nation.” (Congressional Testimony, House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Transportation Security and Infrastructure Protection, 8/31/07)

Robert W. Poole, Jr. (Reason Foundation) and James Jay Carafano, Ph.D. (The Heritage Foundation): “An improved risk-based approach to identifying dangerous people would entail separating passengers within the terminal checkpoints into at least three defined groups, based on the quantity and quality of information known about each: 1. Low-risk passengers, about whom a great deal is known; 2. “Ordinary” passengers (mostly infrequent flyers and leisure travelers); and 3. High-risk passengers, about whom nothing is known or there is specific negative information. Different measures for passenger and bag screening should be applied to each group so as not to waste system resources and passenger time on procedures that contribute little to airport security. Low-risk passengers are defined as those who have a current federal security clearance or who have been issued a biometric identity card after passing a background check for a registered traveler (RT) program.” (“Time to Rethink Airport Security,” Backgrounder No. 1955, 8/26/06)

Harry Willis, a homeland security policy researcher at the Rand Corp.: Registered Traveler “represent[s] the potential to increase security capability and reduce the burden on the common traveler, but it requires some consideration of the level of security clearance that people go through.” (CQ Homeland Security, 6/2/2008)

Lee Macenczak, Delta Air Lines, Executive Vice president of Sales and Marketing: “Delta is committed to making the entire travel experience convenient and memorable... Enabling our customers to move through security faster, especially during the busy summer travel season, will be a welcome addition to the overall Delta experience and we are pleased to offer customers the choice of using [Registered Traveler] lanes in some of our largest hubs and focus cities.” (Statement, 6/16/08)



Bill Sherry, Director of Aviation, San Jose (CA) International Airport: “Since initiating [Registered Traveler] at SJC... we are hearing nothing but accolades on the convenience this process offers, and the consistency and efficiency it adds to the busy business traveler’s itinerary.” (Letter, 10/31/07)

Brigitte Goersch, Director of Security, Orlando International Airport: “The design of the Registered Traveler Program at Orlando embodies three principles: enhance security, encourage commerce and, three, protect the privacy of passengers' information.” (Congressional testimony, House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Economic Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Cybersecurity, 6/9/05)

Carolyn Fennell, Spokesperson, Orlando International Airport: "Our experience is that [Registered Traveler] works like express lanes on a toll road... Those in the express lanes clear up the other lanes for everyone else." (Associated Press Financial Wire, July 16, 2007)

Kathy Stauffer, Architect and RT member: Registered Traveler “is a time saver... I find great comfort knowing that when I arrive at the airport I will be through security, and now I no longer worry about missing flights... The time saved with a [Registered Traveler] card turns into dollars in terms of productivity. I know I can stay a bit longer at my desk or with a client since I can predict that I'll be through security.” (Statement, 5/6/08)