

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. FRANK MASCARA

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2001

Mr. MASCARA. Mr. Speaker, on November 13, 2001, I was unavoidably absent and missed rollcall votes numbered 436 and 437. For the record, I would have voted aye on both of these votes.

**MORE THAN ONE ROUTE TO
SAFER SKIES**
HON. DOUG BEREUTER

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2001

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member commends to his colleagues the following editorial from the November 12, 2001, Norfolk Daily News. The editorial offers insightful comments on the issue of aviation security and the proper role for the Federal Government.

Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, much attention has been focused on the need to improve security at our nation's airports and in our airplanes. Clearly, there are a number of areas that need prompt improvement. The bill approved by the House on November 1, 2001, (with bipartisan support) would do much to strengthen our nation's aviation security.

The House-passed bill creates a new Transportation Security Administration within the Department of Transportation. It also Federalizes the airline security screening process and requires strict, new standards. However, the House version gives the President the flexibility to determine which option provides the highest degree of security—either using Federal employees or developing a Federal-pri-

vate sector coordination. This Member hopes that an agreement will be reached soon which allows the aviation security legislation to be sent to the President.

UNANIMITY NOT SAME AS RIGHT

SENATE, HOUSE HAVE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES
ABOUT FEDERAL ROLE

It was of special interest that in the debate about federalizing airport security personnel, the U.S. Senate was unanimously in favor. The rare 100-0 margin may have influenced the vote in the House, but not enough to carry the majority in the lower chamber.

A measure designed to change the present system, but not to the point of federalizing all the workers, passed the House by a narrow margin. That leaves the outcome to negotiations between members of the House and Senate.

Some believe these wide differences point to unnecessary partisanship. We see it based on important principles of governance. For the proponents of federalization, Sen. John McCain described it not altogether accurately: "This is about law enforcement, and law enforcement is a federal function." But law enforcement is also a local and state responsibility. There is actually a division of responsibilities, which need not be a weakness unless agencies do not cooperate.

The Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon succeeded not so much because of failures in airport screening procedures (box cutters and small knives were not considered dangerous as guns), as because of deficiencies in another system that is unarguably and totally a federal responsibility. That is, the system to protect America's borders, to bar illegal entry or access by those who intend harm. Of course, this is a virtually impossible task to perform error-free in so vast a land.

That it is an immensely difficult job—especially for a nation whose legal system has come near the point of ascribing the rights inherent in citizenship to aliens, legal and illegal—does not mean failures are to be excused. It means that they should be examined carefully, to try to reduce future risks to American citizens and legal immigrants.

The point is that efforts to date to meet this unique responsibility through the exclusive employment of agents of the federal government have not created a risk-free environment. Nor will adding airport screeners to the ranks of civil servants.

Competent people to help with that task, with better equipment and more authority to challenge passengers, and with extra direction from federal authorities, could do the screening. It is useful to remember that it is far easier to remove a poor performer from civilian ranks than from the civil service. There should be bipartisan acknowledgment of that fact.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, November 15, 2001 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

No committee meetings are scheduled.