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NEW YORK STATE SENATE

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**SENATOR GIANARIS FIGHTS FOR AIR TRAVELERS’ RIGHTS**

*Asks TSA officials to investigate strip-searching of elderly women at JFK Airport.*

Queens, NY – A staunch advocate for air passengers’ and senior citizens’ rights, Senator Michael Gianaris continues to fight for the dignity of air travelers and seniors by calling on the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to investigate search procedures at JFK Airport in New York City.

Following reports of alleged unnecessary strip-searches of two elderly women at Kennedy Airport, Senator Gianaris sent a letter to TSA Administrator John Pistole requesting an immediate and comprehensive investigation of both incidents.

 “We must use common sense as we preserve safety,” Senator Gianaris said. “There is no good reason why an individual should be violated in such an outrageous manner. I appreciate the TSA’s work to keep air passengers safe, but passengers should not be humiliated and degraded during their travels.”

Recently, separate incidents occurred in which two elderly women were apparently forced to remove their pants and underwear after requesting a pat-down instead of going through the metal detectors at a security checkpoint. Both women rely on portable medical devices for health reasons and are not able to go through metal detectors, which was the reason for the pat-down requests.

TSA officials, at the word of their employees, immediately denied that strip-searches took place. Senator Gianaris believes a much deeper probe of both incidents is necessary to examine what actually occurred.

Senator Gianaris wrote the New York Airline Passenger Bill of Rights, the first of its kind in the United States, which requires airlines to provide food, water, clean toilets and fresh air to passengers stuck on the ground for more than three hours. It has since been adopted and expanded nationally by the Obama Administration.

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