

I strongly believe that allowing licensed commercial pilots to carry guns onboard should not only be allowed, but encouraged insofar as such pilots should receive training and a step-up in "rank" by their airline.

Furthermore, I also strongly believe that concealed handgun license holders (CHL) should be allowed to check in with the airline and security, and be allowed to carry onboard. Both pilots and CHL holders must use frangible ammunition, and the failure to do so should be a class B felony. I base this on a number of points:

1. A pilot is captain of his/her ship. An aircraft is a "ship" by tradition. A captain is expected to defend his/her ship from attack, and by law and tradition has a duty to do so. Failure to do so has historically resulted in court martial, dismissal, and other sanctions.
2. CHL holders have been investigated by the FBI, and have a MUCH lower rate of crime than non-CHL citizens. If the law was changed so that only citizens can obtain a CHL, citizens can help defend aircraft and passengers. We are, generally speaking, excellent shots. It would not be inappropriate to require a CHL holder to undergo extra training (and his/her own expense) before allowing said CHL holder to carry on planes, but it should be reasonable and not excessive.
3. It is impossible to put armed Sky Marshalls on every flight. What the FAA, and the US Government, has done now is to simply "create" smarter, more cunning terrorists by weeding out the more incompetent idiots. These smarter terrorists, however, will think twice about striking if they know that armed citizens are fully prepared to defeat them.
4. The US Government has, so far, failed to protect its citizens from attack, and therefore cannot morally and ethically deny the right of citizens to protect themselves. It can, however, insist upon reasonable safety measures to assure itself that said armed, licensed citizens are safe with their weapons considering the close proximity of innocents that are to be, collaterally, protected.
5. The US Government *cannot* protect its citizenry against terrorism inside of terminals and onboard airplanes unless measures at LEAST as drastic as those used by Israeli airline El Al are adopted immediately, and indeed it could be successfully argued that El Al style security will need to be beefed-up due to reason #3, above. Unless the US Government AND private industry is willing to do that, immediately and with perfect performance, it is violating ethics and morality, for it is unable to guarantee safety (see reason #4, above).

I am a CHL holder (State of Texas), a businessperson and business owner, and have dramatically cut back on both business travel and pleasure/recreational travel for myself, my employees, and my family because the FAA and the US Government has failed to do much more than "Potemkin Village" style security measures - and simply saying "please get back to traveling" do not address my security concerns. Nor are they going to work, in general, with a citizenry that is ready to renew its obligation to protect itself and those around them.

Thank you for your time.

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