

As a retired military officer and active airline pilot I am angry, incensed, stupefied, disturbed and horrified by the draconian rule recently promulgated by the Transportation Security Agency and, in an amazing abdication of authority, accepted by the Federal Aviation Administration WITHOUT PRIOR PUBLIC COMMENT. Actually, words cannot really express my disgust for this rule which tramples all over several long revered democratic principles and spits in the face of those who fought to preserve those principles. This rule allows people's livelihood to be taken away based merely on "suspicion" - suspicion based on unknown and unanswerable sources certified by some faceless bureaucrat. Further the only "appeal", such as it is, is back to the same bureaucracy that leveled the charges in the first place. There is no due process. A person is expected to defend his innocence without knowing what he is charged with or having the opportunity to face his accusers in an impartial court. It is a rule worthy of a Hitler, Stalin, or Mao, but certainly not one of a type that should ever be considered in the United States of America. Yes, we should attempt to keep terrorists away from airplanes, just as we should attempt to keep them from a whole host of other dangerous things, but this rule, even if made with the best intent, is not the way to do it. Trucks can be dangerous things. Will the TSA next determine who can have a driver's license and will that keep terrorists from driving? This country is not yet in such dire straits that we must destroy what is important about it while trying to save it. Such rules as this have too much potential for abuse without appropriate checks and balances. Think about it. What if the new Department of Homeland Security tomorrow declares YOU a security threat and, therefore, you can no longer work at your job? This rule should be withdrawn at once and rethought.