

LISA MURKOWSKI  
ALASKA

COMMITTEES:  
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
RANKING MEMBER

APPROPRIATIONS

HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,  
AND PENSIONS

INDIAN AFFAIRS

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0203

(202) 224-6665

(202) 224-5301 FAX

February 23, 2011

510 L STREET, SUITE 550  
ANCHORAGE, AK 99501-1956  
(907) 271-3735

101 12TH AVENUE, ROOM 216  
FAIRBANKS, AK 99701-6278  
(907) 456-0233

805 FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 105  
KENAI, AK 99611-9104  
(907) 283-5808

4079 TONGASS AVENUE, SUITE 204  
KETCHIKAN, AK 99901-5526  
(907) 225-6880

851 EAST WESTPOINT DRIVE, SUITE 307  
WASILLA, AK 99654-7142  
(907) 376-7665

The Honorable John Pistole  
Transportation Security Administration  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
301 7th Street SW - Mail Stop 0020  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Administrator Pistole:

It has come to my attention that the TSA barred Representative Sharon Cissna's departure from SEA-TAC International Airport to Juneau, Alaska because she would not submit to an invasive pat-down body search. Representative Cissna is a breast cancer-survivor and has had a mastectomy. On February 20, 2011 Representative Cissna received a full body image scan which apparently identified her mastectomy scars as something unusual. Thus, her surgical scars triggered a hand search by the TSA. She refused that invasive procedure and could not access her plane.

This kind of invasive probing should not be the price of travel. I appreciate that the TSA has a difficult task in keeping air transportation safe and that TSA Officers use their best efforts to implement effective security protocols. However, this incident highlights specific privacy concerns that must be addressed. I am concerned there is an imbalance between safety requirements and overly invasive procedures targeting air travelers who have undergone mastectomy surgeries or use prosthetics.

As you are aware, Juneau, Alaska is only accessible by air or a lengthy boat ride. Representative Cissna is still undertaking that boat ride today. There is no practical alternative for an individual in Representative Cissna's position. Air travel to Alaska should never require submission to a stranger's intrusive touching of one's sensitive body area. It should have taken Representative Cissna a couple of hours, not a couple of days, to reach Juneau.

I would appreciate clarification of what is being done to accommodate people who have had mastectomies and those who use prosthetics and suggestions on what can be done to prevent this situation from occurring in the future. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator