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Mayor Emanuel Secures Federal Resources Aimed at Reducing Wait Times At Chicago Airports

Passengers will see relief for 'unacceptable' wait times with additional canine units and TSA staff increase

Following phone calls today with U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson and TSA Administrator Peter Neffenger, Mayor Emanuel has secured additional resources from the federal government to reduce TSA wait times at Chicago's airports.

"The TSA wait times at Chicago's airports have been unacceptable. There is no excuse for passengers to wait in line for hours," Mayor Emanuel said. "The resources we have secured are an important step in providing needed relief for the traveling public, as well as ensuring the safety and security of our passengers. I want to thank Secretary Johnson and Administrator Neffenger for their time today, for recognizing how critical Chicago's airports are to the national aviation system, and for making Chicago a priority."

TSA has committed to the following:

- 1) In the coming days, 100 TSA staff members will shift from part-time to full-time employment, providing additional screeners at peak hours.
- 2) An extra 58 TSA officers will be assigned to Chicago's airports in the next three weeks, and nearly 250 extra will be assigned by mid-August.
- 3) The amount of authorized overtime has been tripled.
- 4) Additional morning shifts are being added for TSA screeners.
- 5) By this weekend, TSA will have brought on an additional 5 Canine Teams to Chicago from around the country, enabling TSA to screen an additional 5,000 passengers through TSA Precheck lanes per day. These teams will help double the number of passengers that receive expedited screening at these airports.
- 6) TSA is immediately sending a team of operational experts from around the country to Chicago, led by a Regional Director, to help diagnose and make additional recommendations to improve operations. The team arrived today.

7) TSA will work closely with the Department of Aviation and airlines to help manage checkpoint flows, manage lines and communicate with traveling public.

These steps come after months of discussions between city and federal officials on the need for more effective staff allocation at security checkpoints, the need for additional hiring and an increase in enrollment in the TSA PreCheck program. City officials have also been engaged with Senators Durbin and Kirk on this issue. The city will continue to work directly with the TSA and other airport partners on additional solutions to reduce TSA wait times and improve the passenger experience.

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