

Southers leaves TSA leaderless



Erroll Southers, US president Barack Obama's pick to head the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has withdrawn from the nomination process. Obama has yet to name a replacement.

Southers, a counter-intelligence expert with the Los Angeles Airport Police Department and former FBI agent, had his confirmation blocked by Republican Senator Jim DeMint, who says he was worried that Southers would allow TSA employees to have collective bargaining rights.

The Airforwarders' Association (AfA), representing over 300 US members responded, "While we appreciate the concerns regarding TSA unionization, the absence of permanent leadership in the most senior position at TSA for more than a year has the potential to imperil many programs currently underway at TSA. Most notably, the deadline for screening 100 percent of air cargo on passenger planes is this August, just six months from now. Given the extensive resources and planning necessary to meet this critical mandate, it is imperative that a new TSA Administrator be nominated and approved as quickly as possible."

Brandon Fried, executive director of the AfA noted, "Freight forwarders have spent significant time and monetary resources in order to comply with the law without any financial assistance from Congress or TSA.

"We cannot stress enough how important it is to have recognized and effective leadership at the highest levels. Businesses around the country have spent millions of dollars and deserve a similar commitment from their regulatory agency," he added.