

and bronze hourglass device), Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon (with Bronze Star), Air Force Training Ribbon Massachusetts Medal of Merit, Massachusetts National Guard Service Medal (with gold eagle), Massachusetts National Guard Desert Storm Service Award and an Award for Heroism for the City of Northampton, Massachusetts.

Major General Keefe has four sons, Gary, James, Patrick and Timothy. Three of his sons are current members of the Massachusetts National Guard. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the nation owe Major General Keefe an enormous debt of gratitude for his service to his country. On behalf of my colleagues in the Massachusetts delegation, I commend Major General George W. Keefe for such a distinguished military career and I wish him continued success in all his future endeavors.

INTRODUCING A BILL TO ENHANCE
THE SECURITY OF THE U.S. PAS-
SENGER AIR TRANSPORTATION
SYSTEM

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2005

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, yesterday Congressman OBERSTAR, Congressman DEFAZIO and I have introduced a bill to enhance the security of the U.S. passenger air transportation system—The Airport Screener Technology Improvement Act of 2005. We are currently collecting over \$1.5 billion a year from the passenger security fee for aviation security services. Our bill will put this fee into two funds that will guarantee that TSA will spend the authorized amounts of \$650 million a year and \$250 million for the installation of in-line baggage screening systems and passenger checkpoint explosive detection, respectively.

Mr. Speaker, last week the Department of Homeland Security Inspector General (DHS IG) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) both released reports that indicate that our airport screening system still needs improvement. While the traveling public is more secure today than before September 11th, 2001, airport screeners are not detecting prohibited items at the level we need.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress has arbitrarily capped the number of airport screeners at 45,000, and has provided neither the resources nor the technology for the screeners to get the job done. Without a significant investment and commitment by Congress and this Administration to upgrade our technology, our screening system will continue to fail. We must and can do better!

Last year, the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (“the 9/11 Commission”) specifically recommended that the TSA and the Congress improve the ability of screenings checkpoints to detect explosives on passengers. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (P.L. 108-458) authorized \$250 million for the research and deployment of advanced passenger screening technologies, such as trace portals and backscatter x-ray systems. To date, only about \$30 million has been appropriated specifically for the general deployment of these types of technologies.

The 9/11 Commission also recommended that the TSA “expedite the installation of ad-

vanced (in-line) baggage screening equipment.” The Chairman of the 9/11 Commission testified before Congress that the Commission supports moving explosives units out of airport lobbies and into a secured area which will allow for movement of bags from the check-in counter to the loading area in a seamless, in-line process, promoting greater security and efficiency.

In addition to these benefits, in-line baggage screening systems have a much higher throughput than stand-alone systems. If we install in-line systems, more bags will be screened by explosive detection systems instead of less reliable, alternative methods.

The TSA and airport operators rely on commitments in letters of intent (LOIs) as their principal method for funding the modification of airport facilities to incorporate in-line baggage screening systems. The TSA has issued eight LOIs to cover the costs of installing systems at nine airports for a total cost to the federal government of \$957.1 million over four years. The GAO reports that TSA has estimated that in-line baggage screening systems at the nine airports that received LOI funding could save the federal government \$1.3 billion over seven years. TSA further estimated that it could recover its initial investment in the in-line systems at these airports in a little over one year.

In total, the GAO reports that 86 of 130 airports surveyed are planning or are considering installing in-line baggage screening systems throughout or at a portion of their airports. Yet, the TSA has stated that it currently does not have sufficient resources in its budget to fund any additional LOIs. While \$650 million is authorized for the installation of in-line baggage screening systems, annual appropriations have not allowed for any new LOIs to be signed.

Mr. Speaker, the recommendations, findings and statements of the 9/11 Commission, the DHS IG, GAO and TSA all indicate that we need better technology to improve security at our airports. We have been put on notice, and we must take action now. We must demonstrate leadership and deploy technologies that will keep the American public safe and secure. I urge my colleagues to join me in working to pass this important legislation.

CONGRATULATING MR. BERNIE
DITTMAN ON RECEIPT OF THE
2005 ALABAMA BROADCASTERS
ASSOCIATION’S BROADCASTER
OF THE YEAR AWARD

HON. JO BONNER

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 27, 2005

Mr. BONNER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and pleasure that I rise to honor Mr. Bernie Dittman on the occasion of his being honored with the 2005 Alabama Broadcasters’ Association’s Broadcaster of the Year Award.

This award recognizes outstanding contributions made by members of the Alabama radio and television broadcast community in both their professional field and in the life of their local cities and towns. Bernie Dittman, a long-time friend and resident of Alabama’s First Congressional District, as well as an active member of the state broadcasters’ association, is a very worthy choice to receive this year’s award.

Bernie purchased WABB-AM in Mobile, Alabama, in 1959. This station, previously owned

by the Mobile Register newspaper organization, first went on the air in 1948 with call letters that stand for “Alabama’s Best Broadcasters.” One year later, Bernie moved to Mobile and completely changed the broadcast format of the station. His conversion of WABB from a country station to Top 40 propelled WABB to the position of the leading station in that format and one of the premiere stations anywhere on Alabama’s Gulf Coast. In 1973, Bernie took WABB in a new direction when the station added a new FM signal and began to broadcast a progressive rock format. At a time when most automobiles were not equipped with FM receivers, Bernie and his team ran an extensive series of on-air promotions encouraging the installation of low-cost FM receivers.

Under Bernie Dittman’s leadership, WABB has become one of the longest-running and most successful Top 40 radio stations in the United States. The station has also spearheaded over the years the move to more equality in the hiring of on-air personalities and staff members; in fact, WABB was one of the stations in south Alabama which early on began to hire women and African-Americans for important announcer positions. WABB has also been a critical part of Mobile’s emergency broadcast community and played a crucial role in providing information to listeners during Hurricane Frederic (1979) and Hurricane Ivan (2004). During Ivan, in fact, WABB was one of the few stations in the area able to transmit continuously during the storm without losing power. Following the end of the storm, the station also spearheaded the effort to collect and distribute relief material to neighboring states which had also been severely affected.

Aside from his professional obligations, Bernie has also ensured that WABB and its family of employees take an active role in the life of the Mobile community. For the past 47 years, the station has operated the WABB Community Club Awards Program of Greater Mobile, which has during its existence provided over \$250,000 in financial awards to local civic, religious, and cultural institutions. Additionally, the station has been a 40-year sponsor of the Greater Gulf State Fair, a 35-year sponsor of the Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo, and a long-time sponsor of both the Senior Bowl and GMAC Bowl college football games. The Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Mobile, the United States Marine Corps Toys for Tots program, the Mobile Ronald McDonald House, and numerous other organizations advocating area youth have also benefited tremendously from Bernie Dittman’s leadership and community involvement. In fact, the area Toys for Tots program holds the record for the single largest toy collection anywhere in the United States, with over 100,000 toys collected—due in large part to the efforts of Bernie and his entire team.

Bernie has also been a longtime member of the Alabama Broadcasters’ Association and the National Association of Broadcasters, and in 2000 was the recipient of the Greater Mobile Advertising Federation Silver Medal Award.

Mr. Speaker, there have been few individuals more important to the broadcast profession in Alabama or to the life of their local