



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Alabama Flight Standards District Office

1500 Urban Center Drive
Suite 250
Vestavia hills, Alabama 35242
([REDACTED]) 1656

October 5, 2005

CERTIFIED MAIL—RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. Mike Derrick
Transportation Security Administration
Washington, DC

Dear Sir,

I am writing today to bring to your attention a TSA policy and procedure which is fostering illegal flight training by foreign individuals who are in the United States on improper visa's.

Currently, according to Steven Geary, TSA, foreign flight students who submit their credentials to TSA for scrutiny and approval, as mandated by TSA 1552, are being issued letters, via email, authorizing training in the United States without regard to their visa status.

In conversation with Mr. Geary on Tuesday, October 4, 2005, at approximately 10:00 am CDT, I, along with Inspector William McNease of this office, was informed that TSA "is not going to look at the VISA status" as a criteria for disapproval, despite his assurance to Immigration and Customs officials some 3 months ago that the program would be changed and would scrutinize visa status and reject on that basis.

Mr. Geary went on to say that it is "not a TSA responsibility to look at VISA status" and asked, "What is the BIG deal anyway." I informed Mr. Geary that part of the "BIG deal" was that "(1) to condone the training of foreign persons holding improper visa's is against the laws and constitution of the United States which we all, as government officials, have sworn to uphold, (2) it creates difficult and time consuming problems in the field with both government officials trying to uphold the laws and industry officials trying to comply with those laws, and (3) **ALL** of the persons that were connected with the flight operations events of 9/11/2001 had been flight training in this country on improper visa's. How much more basis do you need?"

To that, Mr. Geary responded that he knows, with certainty, that all of the foreign persons that he has approved for flight training in this country "are NOT TERRORISTS." I would submit that Mr. Geary knows nothing of the sort. What he does know is that his unit has approved flight training for foreign individuals who are in this country on other than appropriate visas for such activity. I find his attitude, personal demeanor, and administration of his unit, with regard to this issue, unacceptable and a threat to the security of our country.

I would be pleased to come to Washington and meet with you, or any other TSA official in order to discuss this matter. Regardless of my input, this situation warrants immediate attention and corrective action. Unlike some of the excuses made shortly after 9/11/2001, we are connecting the dots however, in this case, have run up on one who either is unable to see the seriousness of the situation or unwilling to do anything about it.

Please let me know what I can do to further aid you in your efforts.

Sincerely,

Edward H. Blount
Aviation Safety Inspector