Security Screening for Public Charter Operations

Recently, there have been several Part 135 Public Charter Operations, of which the largest is JSX, that have been selling tickets to the public as "hop-on" tickets, where a passenger is able to "stroll right in, just 20 minutes before your flight"[1] and get to a destination with less hassle than a traditional airline.

This should be disconcerting to all Americans. Our collective memory cannot be this short. The United States endured devastating a terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, in which lax aviation security was a factor. This attack led to the deaths of 2,977 innocent victims, thousands of injuries, and other immeasurable damage to lives, property, and prosperity. Following this attack, Congress enacted the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, making the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) responsible for day-to-day security screening of passengers and bags in commercial air transportation.

The Allied Pilots Association strongly supports a single security standard for the operation of **any** aircraft with more than nine seats, offering scheduled service, and selling individual tickets. Requiring passengers on certain scheduled airlines to go through a TSA-operated checkpoint, while allowing passengers on other scheduled airlines to bypass TSA and other critical security protocols, defies logic and creates glaring security vulnerabilities that those who wish to cause harm can exploit.

Reintroduced in the 119th Congress in March 2025, the **Safer Skies Act of 2025** aims to fix this vulnerability by specifically addressing passenger screening for certain charter operations. The bill aims to close the security "loophole" that allows some charter companies to bypass the rigorous screening required for commercial airlines. It would require the TSA to mandate the same security screening standards for certain charter operators (operating under Part 135 and Part 380) as required for commercial airlines (Part 121). The legislation primarily targets public charter flights that sell seats individually, operate on publicly available schedules, and have more than nine passenger seats. This includes specific operators like JSX, Aero, and XO. A bipartisan group reintroduced the bill, and it has the backing various major aviation and pilot groups.

Beyond the pending legislation, the TSA and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have already taken steps to increase security for charter operations. In January 2025, the TSA finalized changes to its Twelve-Five Standard Security Program (TFSSP) for Part 380 public charters. These rules went into effect in July 2025 and require affected operators to perform TSA-approved screening of passengers and belongings. Additionally, the FAA announced its intent to initiate a rulemaking process to amend the regulations defining "scheduled" and "on-demand" operations. This aims to ensure that public charters operating like scheduled airlines must comply with the same safety rules.

"The APA urges Congress to enact the **Safer Skies Act of 2025** promptly to ensure public charter operators are held to the same security standards as any other commercial airline," APA President Silva said. "As professional pilots, we are concerned that memories of the 9/11 terrorist attacks have grown short. We cannot allow charter operators to lose focus on security for the sake of profit. There should be no more aviation security loopholes, period."

For questions or additional information, please email GAC-Chairman@alliedpilots.org

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[1] https://www.jsx.com/home/search

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