



## H.R. 5982 – Biometric Enhancement for Airport-Risk Reduction Act of 2008

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### FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 5982 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Bennie Thompson (D-MS) on May 7, 2008. The bill was ordered to be reported, as amended, by voice vote of the Committee on Homeland Security on May 20, 2008.

H.R. 5982 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on June 18, 2008.

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### SUMMARY

H.R. 5982 requires the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to issue a study, within 270 days of enactment of the Act, relating to how airports can transition to uniform, standards-based and interoperable biometric identifier systems for airport workers with access to secure airport areas. The study must include a risk-based analysis of selected airports.

*Note: "Biometric identifier system" means a system that uses biometric identifier information to match individuals and confirm identity for transportation security and other purposes. Examples of such systems include digital fingerprints and photographs.*

H.R. 5982 also establishes a working group to execute this study, comprised of stakeholders including Transportation Security Administration Aviation Security Advisory Committee personnel, airport representatives, airport workers representatives, and representatives of the biometric technology sector. The purpose of the study is to enhance transportation security against a potential act of terrorism by an airport worker who is allowed unescorted access to secure or sterile areas of an airport.

The Secretary is further directed to report to Congress within a year on best practices for the administration of biometric credentials at airports.

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### BACKGROUND

The Federal government, including the Department of Homeland Security, currently uses biometric identification in various security programs. For example, DHS currently administers the 'US-VISIT' program, which collects biometric data from international travelers at ports of entry and checks them against the terrorist watchlist and other databases.

Recently, there have been concerns raised about the vulnerability posed by workers using forged documentation to access secure airport areas. According to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, in November 2007, over two dozen illegal immigrants were arrested at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, Illinois. The airport workers were using falsified airport identification credentials, and many were working in critical areas of the airport, including the tarmac.

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### COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that "implementing H.R. 5982 would cost \$1 million in 2009 and \$250,000 annually thereafter." [Full CBO Cost Estimate](#)

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### STAFF CONTACT

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