



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 | www.oig.dhs.gov

January 29, 2025

The Honorable Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Merkley,

Thank you for your November 20, 2024, letter requesting that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) evaluate the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) use of facial recognition technology for passenger verification from both an authorities and privacy perspective.

We have reviewed the concerns raised in your letter as part of our work planning process and shared the letter with our program offices for their consideration. When determining which projects to undertake, DHS OIG uses a risk-based, data-driven approach that takes into consideration numerous factors – for example, Congressional input, DHS OIG Hotline complaints, and reports from various oversight groups and non-governmental organizations - to name a few.

On January 21, 2025, my office announced an audit titled, *TSA's Modernization of Identity Authentication and Biometric Technology to Enhance Passenger Screening at U.S. Airports*, that will determine the extent to which TSA's facial recognition and identification technologies enhance security screening to identify persons of interest and authenticate flight traveler information while protecting passenger privacy.

We greatly appreciate the information you provided, as it aided our review process. We are also considering this request in future work project determinations and will be glad to share the results of this review and any other future reports on this topic with your office.

Please call me with any questions, or your staff may contact Kristen Fredricks, Chief of Staff, at 202-981-6000.

Sincerely,

Joseph V. Cuffari, Ph.D.
Inspector General

cc:

John Kennedy
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

Ted Cruz
Chair, Senate Commerce Committee

Steve Daines
United States Senator

Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Peter Welch
United States Senator