



Mario C. Diaz
Director of Aviation
Houston Airports
16930 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77032
fly2houston.com



CITY OF HOUSTON

SUPPORT HB 1168

Anchia | P. King | Tinderholt | C. Turner | West

- State law does not impose a penalty for an airline, airport, or contract employee that carries a firearm onto the Airport Operations Area (AOA) of an airport. The AOA is also called the airside, ramp, or tarmac. Hundreds of thousands of vehicles enter AOA security checkpoints on an annual basis. The AOA portion of the airport is where commercial airplanes park (also called taxiing) next to the airport terminal.
- Current state law only defines the secure side of the terminal building as an area where firearms cannot be brought. This legislation would mirror existing state law affecting the secure side of the terminal building to now include the AOA or the backside of the terminal.
- Current Texas law restricts employees from carrying firearms into the secure side of the terminal but does not address the problem of employees bringing firearms into the AOA.
- Airport security experts have increasingly grown concerned about the prospect of insider-based threats. The urgency to act has become more pressing after numerous incidents at major Texas airports and around the nation. Last year TSA officials discovered that baggage handlers had smuggled drugs and over 120 firearms from Hartsfield Jackson Airport in Atlanta to New York. In addition, Delta Airline employees working at Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport were successfully recruited to join ISIS.
- Of note, HB1168 will create an exception for general aviation areas of an airport to allow customers (and their employees) that own or operate private aircraft to legally carry their firearms within the general aviation portion of a commercial airport.
- Key firearm stakeholders are either *neutral* or *support* this important safety legislation.
 - **Neutral** – NRA, TSRA and Gun Owners of America
 - **Support** – Combined Law Enforcement Association of Texas (CLEAT), Game Warden Peace Officers Association, City of San Antonio, DFW International Airport, Houston Police Department, City of Dallas

SUPPORT HB 1168