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WASHINGTON , DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA , USA, June 27, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Just a few short months after taking the helm at the Federal Air Marshal Service, the new Director Tirrell Stevenson is already wrapped up in scandal. No stranger to scandal the agency with only a couple thousand employees, tiny compared to most federal agencies, currently faces three class action lawsuits, several field office managers tied up in internal investigations, and several recent watch dog reports calling out agency managers for mismanagement. Add to that this latest scandal which seems eerily similar to a scandal that followed the last director out the door.

Former Federal Air Marshal Director Michael Ondocin left the agency shortly after a scandal where he similarly took air marshals off of high-risk flights and put them on flights with members of congress. That program, appropriately code named by the agency as the "VIP" program was forced to stop shortly after the AMNC/FSC filed a complaint with the DHS Inspector General alleging the program violated federal law. The scandal-plagued "VIP" program



Federal Air Marshal Badge

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We understand the resources are deficient on the border, however, we can not compromise Aviation Security to backfill this detail. We must remember the attacks on September 11, 2001.”

*David London, AMNC/FSC  
President*

that provided members of Congress with Federal Air Marshals (FAM) often yanked from high-risk flights created national media attention after numerous "Corruption Chronicles" reports by [Judicial Watch](#).

Flash forward to today, the new director has now decided to remove air marshals from high-risk flights to deploy them to the southern border to perform what the agency has described as "welfare checks, entry control, and transportation" of undocumented people who cross the border. All non-law enforcement duties that don't utilize any of the specialized training, skills, and tactics air marshals are known for.

Even more concerning this new directive comes out just after the Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas issued a National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin where he noted “the nation remains in a heightened threat environment.” Then went on to note “we expect the threat environment to become more dynamic,” and specifically noting that threat extended to “U.S. critical infrastructure” such as aviation which has always been a favorite target of terrorists.

The dubious deployments of air marshals to the border while the DHS Secretary warns of additional attacks on the homeland is causing a revolt of sorts within the air marshal community. What’s compounding the issue is apparently not enough air marshals have volunteered for the border duty so the agency has threatened its workforce with termination if they don’t deploy.

In one case, the AMNC/FSC has recently notified the DHS Secretary and members of congress about involves an air marshal who informed the agency he couldn’t deploy for the full thirty (30) days because he had no one to care for his young children. The agency’s response was to threaten him with severe disciplinary action for insubordination. A charge that routinely ends in termination for government employees. In the letter to congress and the secretary, the AMNC/FSC note the new directive “is forcing dedicated hardworking law enforcement agents to question their mission, and to choose their children over their career. The circumstances are creating an unprecedented divide within the FAMS.” The letter goes on to request that the program be stopped, and that only volunteers be asked to deploy in the future.

Dave Londo the President of the AMNC/FSC noted “this is not the first time the AMNC/FSC has had to file a complaint against Mr. Stevenson.” During the height on the COVID pandemic Mr. Stevenson was in charge of the agency’s Atlanta field office. While the agency had very few flights to cover Mr. Stevenson ordered his FAMS to literally go sit in their personal unmarked cars at small regional airports and told them if they observed suspicious activity to call the local police. To put that into perspective an agency tasked with preventing terrorist attacks on commercial aircraft and given an almost 800 million dollar budget to protect the country, assigns



Aircraft waiting for FAMs to board



Border Crossing

air marshals to sit at private airports in their cars. “The AMNC/FSC immediately reported that gross neglect of duty and it was stopped within 24 hours after it began.” Londo said.

The union letter to the Secretary and congress also questions the legality of the deployment. The letter notes, “Moreover, the deployment of FAMS to perform mostly civilian duties at the southern border may violate 49 U.S.C. 44917 governing the deployment of FAMS on high-risk flights. It certainly goes against the congressional intent of the statute.” Londo said that the union recently filed a complaint with the Office of Special Council for “fraud waste and abuse” of government resources and funding based upon the possible illegality of the border deployments. Sonya Hightower Labosco, the Executive Director for the AMNC/FSC filed the complaint along with the FSC legal team. The union has repeatedly warned and requested assistance from [DHS Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction](#) Office( DHS CWMD) regarding compromising Federal Air Marshals duty assignments as well as the insufficient reporting of detainees in completing the required Report of Medical Examination and Vaccination Record (Form [I-693](#)). The DHS Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office (CWMD) is supposed to lead DHS efforts and to coordinate with domestic and international partners to safeguard the United States against CBRN and health security threats. To date, DHS CWMD has failed to uphold its mission or respond to union request. The continued failure of reporting on the Form-1693 creates a serious public health risk for not only the first responders assigned to these details but the entire public.

All this is occurring at the same time legislation is sitting in congress that could profoundly change the issues plaguing the air marshal program. A bill to bring Title 5 rights to the workforce has been championed by the AMNC/FSC and has passed the house but awaits a vote in the Senate. “Title 5 can’t come fast enough” Londo noted. That bill would grant the air marshals full protections that most other federal agencies enjoy that also would force air marshal managers to comply with long held workforce protections that shield employees from corrupt and incompetent managers.

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