

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 21, 2006

Mr. Kip Hawley
Director for the Transportation Security Administration
TSA 7th Floor
601 South 12th Street,
Arlington, VA 22202

**RE: Explanation of Travel Restrictions on Gerry Adams and Sinn Fein Representatives;
Removal of Names from Watch List Requiring Extra Scrutiny at Airports**

Dear Director Hawley:

On Friday March 17, 2006 Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams was scheduled to fly from Washington, DC's Dulles Airport to Buffalo, New York as the guest of Representative Brian Higgins to take part in local St. Patrick's Day celebrations. Unfortunately, Mr. Adams never made it to Buffalo as he and a Sinn Fein representative were detained at the airport in Washington because of security concerns.

In the simplest terms, such restrictions on domestic U.S. travel for a legitimate political and elected leader, recognized by both the British and Irish governments, is unacceptable. Gerry Adams is the leader of the largest nationalist party in the north of Ireland. He is a principal representative in the peace process, was crucial to the decommissioning of the Irish Republican Army and is essential to the implementation of the Good Friday Accords. Placing Mr. Adams, and Sinn Fein representatives, on a watch list that serves as a de facto restriction on movement in the U.S. is wrong, unjustified, and harmful to the peace process.

As no other Irish leaders are under such restrictions, Sinn Fein and its leaders ought to be afforded the ability to travel in the U.S. unrestricted. Anything less undermines the U.S.'s role and influence in promoting lasting Irish peace.

In summation, we want an explanation into the events that kept Gerry Adams from boarding a plane to Buffalo this weekend, specifically regarding any systematic restrictions in his, or other Sinn Fein representatives', files with TSA or DHS. We also want to know how Mr. Adams was cleared into the White House for a meeting with President Bush Friday morning, but was delayed by airport security at Dulles just a few hours later.

The incident Friday night was not the first time Mr. Adams and Sinn Fein representatives have been restricted from domestic travel in the U.S., but it should be the last time. It seems that

while one arm of our government is embracing change and encouraging peace in Ireland, another is blocking recognition of the leaders essential to a negotiated peace.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Brian M. Higgins
Member of Congress



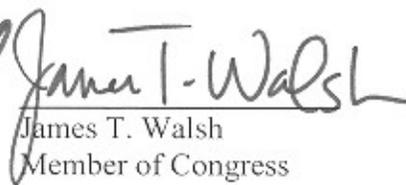
Peter King
Member of Congress



Joe Crowley
Member of Congress



Richard Neal
Member of Congress



James T. Walsh
Member of Congress



John Sweeney
Member of Congress

Cc: Secretary Chertoff
Ambassador Reiss