



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Board of Supervisors

DATE: September 16, 2002

BOARD MEETING DATE: September 24, 2002

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Supervisor Mark Church and Supervisor Mike Nevin

SUBJECT: Security Measures at County Airports

Recommendation

Adopt an Ordinance requiring flight operators at San Mateo County's Airports to require applications from prospective students for the purpose of verifying identity.

Discussion

At its meeting of September 10, 2002, the Board continued, until September 24, 2002, the consideration of a proposed ordinance requiring background checks for flight school applicants, and appointed the undersigned as a subcommittee to explore revisions to the proposed ordinance. The subcommittee has consulted with the Sheriff and County Counsel, and has met with representatives from the flight schools. Based on these consultations and meetings, the subcommittee is now recommending that the Board consider a revised ordinance which focuses on the verification of the identity of proposed students, using information provided under penalty of perjury by the applicant. Such information will allow the County, through the Sheriff's office, to verify the identity of an applicant through resources readily available to the County.

The revised approach is focused on the threat presented by persons using false identities to apply to flight training school. The seriousness of the threat was underscored by the sentencing in February of this year of two men on federal charges of providing false identification documents to two of the hijackers involved in the events of September 11, 2001. The revised approach will provide both a deterrent to anyone contemplating the use of a false identity to obtain flight training and a means of early detection of anyone who attempts to use a false identity.

This approach is in keeping with the federal process developed to implement the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, passed by Congress in November 2001. The Act requires that flight schools that provide training in aircraft of more than 12,500 pounds provide the Attorney General with adequate identification of any alien seeking flight training so that it may be determined if the prospective student represents a risk to national security. The ordinance would allow the County to verify the identity of the prospective student, during an initial three working day period, and provide up to a forty-five day period to complete the investigation if necessary to verify the information provided. The verification process would use public information including computer databases. No information will be sought from an applicant concerning race or ethnicity, and these criteria will not be used in any way in completing the verification investigation. Failure of the prospective student to provide correct information, or to execute the required application under penalty of perjury, would result in rejection of the application.

Vision Alignment


The above recommendation is consistent with the County's commitment to "ensure basic health and safety for all." Specifically, it addresses goal number 7, which is to "maintain and enhance the public safety of all residents and visitors," as the identity verification in question will assist the schools in identifying applicants who may be a threat to the public safety of the residents of San Mateo County.

Fiscal Impact

There is no impact on the General Fund.

A form of ordinance has been approved by County Counsel.


Supervisor Mark Church


Supervisor Mike Nevin

cc: John L. Maltbie, County Manager
Neil R. Cullen, Director of Public Works
Don Horsley, Sheriff
Thomas F. Casey III, County Counsel