

***Statement of Rep. Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)
In support of H.R. 1095, the “TSA Loose Change Act”***

December 3, 2013

I rise in support of H.R. 1095, the “TSA Loose Change Act”. This legislation, introduced by the Chairman of the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, received the unanimous support of the Committee on Homeland Security in October.

It would require the Transportation Security Administration to transfer money left behind by passengers at airport security checkpoints to nonprofit organizations such as the United Services Organization.

Under this measure, places of rest and relaxation for service members and their families at our nation’s airports would have new resources to provide critical services.

Over the past few years, TSA has collected, on average, over \$400,000 per year at passenger screening checkpoints.

Last year, the agency collected over \$500,000. To be clear, this is money left behind by passengers that goes unclaimed. Currently, TSA is obligated by law to use those funds for security operations.

Given that TSA has a robust budget and troubling propensity for spending taxpayer dollars on programs that do not work, such as its behavior detection program, I am supportive of redirecting these unclaimed monies to the worthy cause of maintaining dedicated spaces for relaxation at our nation’s airports for our service members and their loved ones.

During the holiday season, service members and their families will be traveling through airports across the country to be with family, friends, and colleagues.

H.R. 1095 seeks to ensure that organizations, such as the United Service Organization, have the resources necessary to ensure their comfort as they do so.

I would like to point out that this legislation builds upon the Committee on Homeland Security’s previous work this Congress to support services members and veterans.

Earlier this Congress, the Committee saw enactment of the *Helping Heroes Fly Act*.

That legislation, introduced by Representative Gabbard, a Member of the Committee, requires TSA to provide expedited screening for severely injured service members and veterans.

I am hopeful that the legislation before us today is met with the same support as that measure and likewise becomes a public law. With that, I urge support for this measure.