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For Immediate Release

National organization calls for end to invasive TSA screening methods

ENOLA, PA – The National Sexual Violence Resource Center is urging the Transportation Safety Administration to stop invasive new screening procedures. The security measures mandated by the TSA include invasive procedures that have caused some survivors of sexual violence to be traumatized. These procedures can violate an individual's feelings of personal safety and security.

“The National Sexual Violence Resource Center understands the need for national security,” said National Sexual Violence Resource Center and Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape CEO Delilah Rumburg. “However, we believe that our national security mechanisms should not cause thousands of travelers to relive or experience sexual trauma. In a culture wherein we encourage our children and fellow citizens to speak up if anyone touches them in an inappropriate manner, we want to encourage a society where feeling safe also includes mutual respect and dignity. That is why we urge the TSA to stop using these invasive procedures immediately.”

TSA's current policy, involving full-body scans and pat-downs, leaves little option for individuals who travel via air. Sexual assault survivors in particular may experience severe panic, anxiety, stress and confusion because of events of prior victimization. Some examples include:

- Feelings of re-victimization due to being touched by a stranger.
- The full-body scanner may cause strong reactions for adult and child sexual assault survivors whose assault/attack included photographs of them being taken and/or shared.
- Pat-downs administered by someone of the same gender may be difficult for adults and children whose perpetrators were of the same gender.
- Distressing emotional reactions may result for parent/caregiver survivors of child sexual assault after witnessing their children being patted down or required to submit to a full-body scan.

Current TSA policy states if travelers use airports that utilize the new security measures, they must comply with either a full-body scan or an enhanced pat-down, or they will be unable to continue with their travel plans and may face a civil suit with fines upwards of \$11,000.

These screening policies must change. A balance must be reached between security procedures and respect for survivors.

The NSVRC highlights prevention initiatives throughout the country and facilitates connections between anti-sexual violence advocates while offering training and technical assistance, referrals, consultation, systems advocacy, online tools and library resources. For more information, visit www.nsvrc.org or call 877-739-3895.

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