



For Immediate Release
April 9, 2010

Conservatives abandon safety commitment at Canada's airports

OTTAWA –With the quiet move to eliminate funding to Canada's largest airports for the airport policing contribution program, the Harper Conservatives have deserted their commitment to aviation security, while at the same time adding yet more charges for air travellers.

"This is another broken promise by the government," said Liberal Transport Critic Joe Volpe. "They say they are committed to protecting Canadians, but when it comes to paying the bill, they completely abdicate their obligations. And it's passengers who will pay the price for this."

The cancelled program gave Canada's eight busiest airports a total of \$15.6 million a year to hire police officers to patrol the terminals. The termination of the funding will mean the costs will be transferred to air passengers.

News of these cuts comes at the same time that passengers are faced with a 50% increase in the air traveller tax that the Conservatives announced they require to recoup the \$1.5 billion they say they are spending on airport security.

Passengers will now need to foot the \$15.6-million cost for policing in addition to the extra \$8.91 per flight travel tax increase on international flights, \$4.37 extra for flights to the U.S, and \$2.50 extra on domestic flights. Money generated from the travel tax goes directly into the government's general revenue fund.

"The Conservatives need to come clean about what they are doing with taxpayer's dollars," said Mr. Volpe. "The government is taxing Canadians, but not providing security services to protect Canadians.

"If the Harper Conservatives honestly believe in public safety, they would live up to their responsibilities and stop making empty promises." Mr. Volpe concluded.

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