

Group of Alaskans sues TSA over screening system

By **Chloe Albanesius**, [National Journal's Technology Daily](#)

A group of four Alaskans on Monday filed suit at the U.S. District Court in Anchorage against the Transportation Security Administration for violating privacy rights with its passenger-screening system.

"We are asking the courts to ensure some sort of judicial review on infringements upon the civil liberties of citizens," said James Harrison, the California-based attorney for the plaintiffs. "If the laws are promulgated in a secret fashion, then it forecloses judicial review and an entire branch of government."

The government in March said it would require airlines to provide passenger data so TSA can test the Computer Assisted Passenger Pre-screening System (CAPPS II). Revelations from several airlines that they secretly provided the government with passenger information after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks prompted at least one lawsuit from passengers angry over the distribution of their personal information.

Harrison said he wants clear guidelines on when the government can collect certain information about his clients: John Davis and Charles Beckley, superintendent and coordinator of technology, respectively, for the Bering Strait School District; Sally Huntley, owner of Frontier Travel; and William Beck, owner of Airlines Online.

Due to the large area covered by their school district, Davis and Beckley must frequently fly to their destinations and would be "isolated if they really had problems with flying," Harrison said. On the group's Web site, Davis said CAPPS II is "an excessive incursion on individual privacy" and Beckley said he was not willing to "blindly accept" that CAPPS II would make air travel any safer.

Harrison wrote a letter to TSA Acting Director David Stone on May 3 requesting that he make available previous and future requests for personal information under CAPPS II, but did not hear from the agency.

Harrison's clients "don't believe that this system will make things safer," he said. "I am deeply troubled by secret laws ... that are not reviewable by the court."

TSA did not return calls for comment.