

# Know Your Rights: Rutherford Institute Issues Guidelines for Parents to Protect Their Children From TSA Patdowns During Holiday Air Travel

[The Rutherford Institute](#)


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## PDF DOCUMENTS

[KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: Protecting Children from Airport Patdowns](#)

[FREEDOM RESOURCE BRIEF: Parents' Rights to Protect Their Children from TSA Patdowns](#)

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 CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – Seeking to protect parents’ rights and empower families who are traveling this holiday season, The Rutherford Institute has issued guidelines on how parents can protect their children from excessive, intrusive, inappropriate and overtly intimate screening procedures and pat-down searches by Transportation Security Administration (TSA) agents. Earlier this month, the Institute called on the TSA to revamp its screening and pat-down protocols for children citing the case of a Texas family who alleged a TSA agent groped their 13-year-old daughter during an unwarranted pat-down search in August 2018. The Rutherford Institute’s Freedom Resource Brief, “Parents’ Rights to Protect Their

Children from TSA Patdowns,” advises parents on how they can defend their constitutional rights when their family members pass through airport security screening. The Institute has also made available a concise “Know Your Rights” primer on the topic.

“No American should be subjected to a virtual strip search or excessive groping of the body, or have their underage children touched intimately by strangers as a matter of course in boarding an airplane when there is no suspicion of wrongdoing,” said constitutional attorney John W. Whitehead, president of The Rutherford Institute and author of [\*Battlefield America: The War on the American People\*](#). “In both word and deed, the TSA operates as if members of the public and their children have no rights and no defense against the agency and its employees even if an agent assaults them, wrongfully detains them, or fabricates criminal charges against them. However, parents do not forfeit their rights when they travel by air with their children.”

In its new Freedom Resource Brief, “Parents’ Rights to Protect Their Children from TSA Patdowns,” The Rutherford Institute advises parents that neither they nor their children lose their Fourth Amendment right to privacy when they enter airport screening. Additionally, parents have a constitutional right to the custody and care of their children which entitles them to protect their children during screening. According to Rutherford Institute attorneys, current TSA procedures for child screening show indifference to the emotional well-being of children and disregard for the constitutional rights of parents to be directly present during any pat down of a minor in order to the reassurance and comfort a child needs during this intrusive procedure. Institute attorneys cite several instances which undergird the need for security protocols that better respect the right of parents. For example, earlier this year, a Texas family asked The Rutherford Institute to intervene after one of their children suffered emotional

trauma in the course of a TSA screening that included a pat-down of the young girl's body. In August 2018, The Rutherford Institute was contacted by the McAdams family regarding a disturbing incident involving TSA screening at Reagan National Airport in which the family's 13-year old daughter was ordered by TSA agents to submit to a pat-down search even though the daughter and her parents asked that she be allowed to be screened using the scanner. Surveillance video obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request shows that the daughter was taken away from the area where her parents were and subjected to a full-body pat-down in which the TSA agent ran her hands over the entirety of the girl's body, including extremely sensitive areas on her legs and chest. All of this was done despite objections by the girl's parents, who made it clear to the agents that she had not previously experienced this kind of physical contact with a stranger and feared it could have a negative psychological impact upon her.

The Rutherford Institute, a nonprofit civil liberties organization, provides legal assistance at no charge to individuals whose constitutional rights have been threatened or violated and educates the public on a wide spectrum of issues affecting their freedoms.