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## Reviving Fast Lanes at Security

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The stereotype of the [business traveler](#) dashing to catch a plane with minutes to spare was long ago retired; 9/11 and unpredictable security lines took care of that. And any hopes that private companies could run faster alternative lanes proved too optimistic after the companies closed down a year ago.

But there may be life yet in the E-ZPass-style lanes.

A new crop of successors has risen up, and in recent weeks two airports, Indianapolis and Denver, have been named as the first airports to get the revived programs. While the companies' odds of success this time around remain uncertain, one factor working in their favor may be pressure from members of Congress, business travel groups and some airports for a reprieve from the sometimes lengthy waits at checkpoints.

Legislation is pending in Congress that would direct the [Transportation Security Administration](#), which balked at the earlier private efforts, to support a new registered traveler program for passengers deemed to be low risk.

At the same time, a two-year-old United States [Customs and Border Protection](#) program called Global Entry, which allows fliers undergoing background checks to bypass [immigration](#) lines returning home at the end of the trip, is getting a lift from a new publicity campaign aimed at increasing enrollments. Global Entry is now at 20 airports in the United States, including [Kennedy Airport](#) in New York, Miami, Los Angeles and other large international gateways.

Enrollment increased to 54,000 members from 16,000, in the last nine months, said Joanne Ferreira, a spokeswoman for Customs. She estimated that a user could swipe an ID card at a kiosk and clear immigration in 60 seconds.

Travel experts say that while these security and immigration programs differ in many details, including price — Global Entry costs \$100 for five years, while the private programs charge from about \$150 to \$180 a year — the result is the same to the business traveler: both can eliminate hours of unproductive time.

“One of those wild cards for travelers is how long they’re going to have to wait on line,” said Steve Lott, an official in Washington with the airlines’ trade group, the International Air Transport Association.

Mr. Lott said he had used Global Entry often on international trips. “It eliminates one of the pain points for many travelers,” he said.

For many fliers, the main point of pain is at the start of the trip where they are often cooling their heels behind vacationers and other inexperienced travelers.

“My biggest frustration is the infrequent travelers who hold the rest of us up,” said Doug Murray, a technical producer for film and television from Larkspur, Calif.

Mr. Murray said he was a customer of Clear, the largest of the previous registered traveler providers. “I was extremely upset when they closed down, because I really used it a lot,” he said. While he said he flew around 75,000 miles a year, he does not fly enough on one airline to take advantage of the V.I.P. lanes that give the airlines’ premium fliers a similar shortcut through the security line at many airports.

“I am constantly on the go, and I am often running behind schedule,” he said.

Still, some business travelers are skeptical about the new private programs, questioning whether enough customers will be willing to pay simply for the right to go to the head of the line. And some previous customers are still smarting over the sudden shutdown of Clear because of a lack of financing. (The new companies, however, have said that they will honor those memberships at no additional fee and will purge the personal data of customers who choose not to re-enroll.) The former companies had a combined membership of around 200,000 at the time of their demise.

In recent weeks, AIClear, which purchased the assets of Clear’s parent company, Verified Identity Pass, said it had reached an agreement with Denver International Airport to start up this fall. Another entrant, iQueue, has begun enrolling members at Indianapolis International Airport, where the new express lanes are expected to open in August.

Joe Brancatelli, who runs the business travel Web site joesentme.com, said he was pessimistic that programs like Clear could work the second time around.

“It’s a waste of resources and it is not a registered traveler program in the sense we originally meant — a meaningful security program,” he said. “It’s simply a line-cut program” because of the lack of participation by the T.S.A.

In fact, the original incarnation of the registered traveler program was similar to Global Entry. It, too, was to have included a thorough background check and biometric identity card. Those signing up were fingerprinted and asked to hand over detailed personal information. But the vetting was done by the T.S.A., whose leaders eventually cooled to the private programs, announcing in 2008 that the agency would no longer handle the background checks.

Caryn Seidman-Becker, a former investment manager who is the chief executive of AIClear, said that she was aware of resistance from both past users and the government, but said that there were benefits in having a fraud-proof identity card.

“Knowing someone is who they say they are is incredibly important for security,” she said. She said the company was also looking into member services like reduced-rate parking at airports.

As for the question of the T.S.A.'s support this time, she noted that [Michael Chertoff](#), former secretary of Homeland Security, is on the company's board.

A T.S.A. spokesman said it was still not involved in vetting staff or participants of the new airport services, but "remains open to considering proposed programs."

Meanwhile, airports are predicting fuller flights this year, which could contribute to peak-hour backups at checkpoints. At busy airports like Atlanta's, wait times at security checkpoints have sometimes exceeded 30 minutes at peak times this year, according to information posted on the T.S.A.'s Web site.

Kevin Mitchell, chairman of the Business Travel Coalition, a consortium of corporate travel managers, described interest in the renewed registered traveler programs as "medium to high," but said that ultimately, "The new business model will need to be sound."

"No one will want to stick his neck out twice on this one," he said.