

Kennedy Airport Should Beckon Foreign Visitors

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Body

To the Editor:

Serious consideration should be given to your editorial "Traveler's Raid" (July 20), about the proposal by the Immigration Service to provide more inspections at **Kennedy Airport** by taxing **foreign visitors** and immigrants. Why should they have to pay for that service?

All this is reminiscent of how travelers at J.F.K. once had to pay 50 cents to ride the frequently overcrowded airline connection buses. Imagine the frustration of **foreign visitors** who did not have the exact fare required even though they had already exchanged some of their own currency for dollars.

Those same buses also used to waste much travel time by waiting at each of the terminals to fill before proceeding. Because of this, passengers could miss a connecting flight, as once happened to me, even though I had an hour to make my connection. Consequently, I wrote a letter to the Port Authority about this matter (as I imagine many other people also did), and soon after bus service was free and more efficient (although the **airport** needs a more modern system for moving people).

We may not realize it, but J.F.K. could be a symbol of welcome and hope to those who arrive from abroad, just as the Statue of Liberty was to the many people who came to this country by ship. It is the main aerial gateway to our country, just as New York Harbor was the gateway for ships. Surely, many **foreign visitors** who come here for the first time base their impressions of both New York and the United States on the kind of reception they get at the **airport**. Surely, they deserve to be treated with the same kind of courtesy, respect and understanding that we Americans demand when we travel abroad. Rather than looking for ways to take their money, we should try to make them feel welcome.

T. J. KLEIN

Groton, Conn., Aug. 8, 1986

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