

DETERRENCE Act

Senators Hassan (D-NH) and Ernst (R-IA)

Foreign adversaries are increasingly [paying criminals to commit violent crimes against their critics](#), including those who reside in the United States. In a notable recent example, the Department of Justice [indicted a General in the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps](#), as well as members of an Eastern European criminal organization, for their role in an effort to kill a U.S. citizen who was critical of the Iranian regime.

Senators' Hassan and Ernst's bipartisan legislation would help strengthen criminal penalties for those who commit or attempt to commit violent crimes in the United States on behalf of foreign adversaries. These increased penalties would help reduce the willingness of criminals to commit violence against critics of foreign adversaries who are living in the United States.

The DETERRENCE Act would make changes to four current portions of the U.S. Criminal Code. The legislation would create minimum terms of imprisonment for criminals who knowingly act at the direction of or in coordination with a foreign government or an agent of a foreign government to commit (or generally attempt to commit) the following crimes:

1) **Murder-for-hire**

- Title 18, Section 1958: covering the use of interstate and foreign commerce and facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire.

2) **Threatening, assaulting, kidnapping, or murdering current or former U.S. officials (including federal judges and law enforcement), and their families**

- Title 18, Section 115(b): covering threats and violent crimes (including murder) against current or former United States officials, including United States judges and federal law enforcement officers, and their immediate family members, in an attempt to interfere with the duties of these officials or retaliate against them.

3) **Kidnapping**

- Title 18, Section 1201: covering kidnapping, conspiracy to kidnap, and attempted kidnapping.

4) **Stalking**

- Title 18, Section 2261A: covering traveling in interstate or foreign commerce with the intent to kill, injure, harass, intimidate, or surveil with intent to kill, injure, harass, or intimidate another person, when doing so places that person in reasonable fear of death or serious injury to themselves, their family, their loved ones, or their animals.