



FACT SHEET: Senate Republicans' Failure to Keep America Strong and Safe

Instead of working to pass bipartisan measures that will keep America strong and safe, Senate Republicans adjourned for seven weeks and left a series of critical security priorities completely unaddressed. Senate Republicans have blocked Democratic proposals to prevent terrorists from buying guns and explosives, provide needed emergency funding to the FBI for counterterrorism, and improve efforts to combat the recruitment of extremists by ISIS on social media. It is time for Senate Republicans to get back to work and pass these common sense security proposals that would improve our ability to fight terrorism.

Senate Republicans blocked common-sense proposals to close the “terror gap” loophole to prevent suspected terrorists from buying firearms, including assault weapons used in mass shootings.

- On two separate occasions, Senate Republicans voted against Senate Democrats' proposal to prevent those on terrorist watch lists from purchasing guns and explosives. [Roll Call Vote [319](#), 12/3/15; Roll Call Vote [106](#), 6/20/15]
 - Senate Republican leadership failed to even allow a vote for Republican Senator Susan Collins' (R-ME) bipartisan bill that would have closed the terror gap for a narrow subset of terrorism suspects. [[link](#)]
- **The Denying Firearms and Explosives to Dangerous Terrorists Act of 2015 (S. 551)**, introduced by Senator Feinstein and cosponsored by 33 Senate Democrats, empowers the U.S. Attorney General to deny the transfer of firearms or the issuance of firearms and explosives licenses to suspected terrorists if it is reasonably believed those individuals may use firearms or explosives in connection with an act of terrorism, all while protecting legitimate gun owners' rights to acquire guns or explosives. Under current law, a member of a terrorist organization is not prohibited from, “possessing firearms or explosives,” or from being able to purchase handguns or assault-style rifles. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that between 2004 and 2014, suspected terrorists attempted to exploit this loophole and purchase guns at least 2,233 times, succeeding in 2,043 of those instances, or 91 percent of the time.

Senate Republicans failed to hold a vote on a Democratic proposal to provide necessary emergency funding to the FBI for counterterrorism efforts and active shooter training grants for state and local law enforcement.

- Senate Republicans failed to vote on a Senate Democrat proposal that would provide \$175 million in emergency funding for the FBI and \$15 million for active shooter training grants to law enforcement. Despite the FBI pleading with Congress for emergency funding needed to track and stop domestic terrorists plotting to kill Americans in what is

currently a high threat environment, Senate Republicans have failed to bring to the floor a proposal led by Senators Mikulski, Leahy, Baldwin, and Nelson that would provide an additional \$190 million to S. 2837, the FY 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. Of this amount, \$175 million is dedicated to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) counter-terrorism efforts and \$15 million to active shooter training. This raises funding for the FBI to \$73 million above the President's request and \$24 million more than the amount provided by House Republicans. This funding would enable the following security priorities to be realized:

- *Strengthens the FBI's Counterterrorism Workforce.* The FBI would be able to restore more than 350 positions, including at least 225 Special Agents, for critical FBI investigations and operations related to Counterterrorism and Counterintelligence. The amendment also gives the FBI the training tools they need. The number of terrorism threats disrupted by the FBI grew from 214 in FY14 to 440 in FY15. As threats grow, the FBI needs increased resources to hire and retain the agents and intelligence analysts who interrupt these plots.
- *Supports funds for active shooter training.* An additional \$15 million in funding would support DOJ grant programs for active shooter training. The Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Initiative provides funding to state, local, and tribal law enforcement, "to reduce and prevent law enforcement officer line of duty injuries and deaths by training officers in techniques for approaching violence encounters." [DOJ, accessed [6/14/16](#); DOJ, [10/26/10](#)]

Senate Republicans have failed to bring to the floor bipartisan legislation that would establish a dedicated unit at the Department of Homeland Security to counter ISIS' messages of violent extremism and the radicalization of terrorists within our borders.

Despite being reported out of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on February 10, 2016, Senate Republicans have not brought to the floor legislation from Ranking Member Carper that would establish within the Department of Homeland Security an Office for Partnerships against Violent Extremism.

- Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson has made clear that the Office for Community Partnerships is critical to counterterrorism efforts by enabling DHS to find innovative ways to support communities that seek to discourage violent extremism and undercut terrorist narratives. [[DHS](#)]
- The bill would require the DHS Secretary to submit a strategy for countering violent extremism that includes, among other things, the Department's plans for countering the social media abilities of terrorist groups, a description of how the Department will ensure that civil rights and civil liberties are protected, and how the Department will measure the office's performance and success;

Senate Republicans have failed to vote and confirm Adam Szubin, the chief treasury official charged with stopping funds from flowing to ISIL, AL-Qaeda, and other terrorist groups worldwide. His nomination has languished over 460 days.

On April 20, 2015, 482 days ago, President Obama nominated Adam Szubin to be the Undersecretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence at the Treasury Department. This post is the key point person in the Obama administration to track and disrupt the finances of terrorist groups.

Senate Republicans have failed to provide additional funding for countermessaging programs to thwart ISIS' efforts to recruit and inspire terrorists online through social media.

- ISIS is adept at recruiting and fundraising through online propaganda. The group utilizes professional-caliber web design, video production, and social media strategies. ISIS has turned social media into an effective recruitment tool as well as a way to inspire lone wolf attacks around the world.
- Senate Democrats have introduced the Defeat ISIS and Protect and Secure the United States Act of 2015 that would provide grants to counter ISIS propaganda through the augmentation of online counter messaging activities. This would enable the State Department to increase its in-house production of mash-up videos and stand-alone banners with original films, animated clips, and mobile apps using proven leaders in the field. The bill would also require a digital “rapid response” team that would be responsible for countering violent extremist messaging and propaganda.