

DETERRENCE Act

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

Foreign adversaries are increasingly [recruiting 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 [charged an Iranian asset and two members of his criminal network](#) for their roles in a murder-for-hire scheme aimed at a U.S. citizen who is a critic of the Iranian regime. The Department detailed how Iran's [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps \(IRGC\)](#), an Iranian military and counterintelligence agency, allegedly [told the asset that they would pay \\$1.5 million to have the critic killed](#). Additionally, the Department also provided information that the IRGC had allegedly [asked the asset to focus on surveilling and assassinating President-elect Donald Trump](#).

Senators Hassan and Ernst's bipartisan *Deterring External Threats and Ensuring Robust Responses to Egregious and Nefarious Criminal Endeavors Act (DETERRENCE Act)* takes on this threat by increasing criminal penalties for criminals who commit, or attempt to commit, violent crimes in the United States on behalf of our foreign adversaries.

Under the bill, criminals working for foreign adversaries can be sentenced to increased prison time on top of the original prison time that they face for their crimes. The bill applies to criminals who knowingly commit, attempt to commit, or conspire to commit certain violent federal crimes at the direction of a foreign government or in coordination with a foreign government – including any foreign government agent.

Increasing the amount of prison time that criminals face for attempting or committing violence in the U.S. on behalf of foreign adversaries gives law enforcement an additional tool to help take down these criminal networks. It will also deter criminals and criminal organizations from taking money from foreign adversaries in exchange for committing violent crimes.

The bill specifically increases criminal penalties for these federal crimes when the crimes are committed under U.S. jurisdiction on behalf of foreign governments:

1. Engaging in a murder-for-hire scheme
2. Murdering or attempting to murder certain federal officials, including Presidents-elect
3. Murdering or attempting to murder certain former federal officials, or their families, because of their official actions
4. Assaulting certain former federal officials, or their families, because of their official actions
5. Kidnapping or attempted kidnapping
6. Threats of violence using a dangerous weapon against certain current and former federal officials, as well as their families, because of their official actions
7. Stalking