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Senate bill would create national strategy for threat assessment

Wednesday, February 6, 2019 by [Dave Kovaleski](#)



A bill introduced in the U.S. Senate this week seeks to create a task force to provide recommendations for a national strategy on threat assessment and management.

The Threat Assessment, Prevention, and Safety (TAPS) Act of 2019 (S. 265) would provide resources, training, and assistance in establishing locally driven threat assessment and management units.

“We cannot allow mass casualty events to become the new normal in America, and it is imperative that we take strong proactive steps to prevent them,” Sen. Thoms Tillis (R-NC), one of the bill’s sponsors, said. “The bipartisan TAPS Act utilizes an innovative approach that is proven to be effective, creating a uniform program to identify threats and provide states with the opportunity to receive the training and resources necessary to save lives and keep our communities safe.”

The bipartisan bill was also sponsored by Sens. Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ).

“We must proactively engage with experts in the field of threat assessments in order to help prevent future tragedies,” Rubio said. “We have the expertise to implement systems to identify and stop dangerous individuals before they commit an act of violence, but we have yet to fully and effectively develop and utilize it to prevent future attacks. By bringing threat assessment experts together and utilizing evidence-based behavioral threat assessment and management processes, this bill will help equip our communities with the tools they need to prevent future tragedies.”

Specifically, the bill would set guidelines and best practices on threat assessment and provide states with the training, resources, and support they need to establish community-based behavioral threat assessment and management units.



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Further, it would establish a temporary task force made up of experts in behavioral threat assessment and management to make recommendations to Congress for a National Strategy for preventing targeted violence.

“We must provide law enforcement with the tools they need to keep Arizona families safe and secure,” Sinema said. “I will work every day to protect Arizonans from senseless, tragic acts of violence.”

U.S. Rep. Brian Babin (R-TX) introduced companion legislation in the House, H.R. 838, on Jan. 29.

He noted that the process of behavioral threat assessment and management was developed by the Secret Service after the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan.

“Our nation is desperately looking for solutions to stop the senseless violence that affects too many of our communities and schools,” Babin said on Jan. 31. “This bipartisan bill will save lives by focusing efforts on prevention rather than simply reaction, because once the first shot is fired, it is too late. The TAPS Act will provide our states and local communities with the resources, training, and support needed to stand up community-driven, multidisciplinary behavioral threat assessment units – allowing us to connect the dots and manage threats before an attack can occur.”

Babin also introduced the legislation in the 115th Congress.

The legislation has been endorsed by the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals, Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, National District Attorneys Association, and the Association of University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD), among others.

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