



# Lawmakers introduce bipartisan bill to fight acts of mass violence

BY JULIEGRACE BRUFKE - 01/31/19 05:58 PM EST

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Reps. Brian Babin (R-Texas) and Val Demings (D-Fla.) introduced legislation on Thursday aimed at building a strategy to prevent future acts of mass violence.

The Threat Assessment, Prevention, and Safety (TAPS) Act's authors argue the bill would help entities including "law enforcement, mental health professionals, and even school districts" work together to evaluate and prevent potential threats.

Under the legislation, a task force consisting of behavioral threat assessment experts would be established to make recommendations for a national strategy to tackle potential attacks.

The bill would provide states with training and resources to help localities put "multidisciplinary behavioral threat assessment and management units" in place.

The national strategy would include school safety, operational training and unit support programs. After receiving congressional approval, the Department of Homeland Security would then allocate grants to states.

Republicans applauded the legislation for sparking "broader conversation on how to stop targeted violence."

"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,"

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Babin said in a statement.

“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.”

Demings, who previously served as the Orlando chief of police, argued the bill is necessary to provide the resources many state and local law enforcement agencies lack to prevent targeted attacks.

“You should have the right to attend concerts, schools, nightclubs, and places of worship without the fear of violence,” she said in a statement. “Fortunately, there are promising ideas to prevent targeted attacks before they ever occur.”

Sens. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), Kyrsten Sinema (D-Ariz.) and Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) introduced a companion bill in the upper chamber.

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