

In 2009, Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad opened fire at a military recruiting station in Little Rock, Arkansas. He killed one and critically injured another.

According to press reports, Muhammad had been under investigation by the FBI for suspected links to terrorism after traveling to Yemen, where he was arrested for using a Somali passport. Those actions certainly would have placed him on terrorist watch lists, but would not have kept him from buying firearms.

The bill that we are introducing today is very simple.

It would close this dangerous loophole by giving the Attorney General discretion to prevent someone from buying explosives or a gun if that individual is a known or suspected terrorist and may use the firearm in connection with terrorism.

It would also give the Attorney General discretion to prevent someone from obtaining a license to sell guns or explosives if that individual is a known or suspected terrorist and may use the firearm in connection with terrorism.

The Attorney General could use a range of tools to make this decision, most notable terrorist watch lists and the no fly list.

In addition to making the decision at the discretion of the Attorney General, the bill includes other safeguards to make sure innocent individuals are not denied the ability to buy firearms or explosives.

The first safeguard is that very high standards already exist for an individual to be designated as a known or suspected terrorist.

The FBI or the National Counterterrorism Center must nominate the individual to be included in the Terrorist Screening Database.

There must be sufficient identifying data about the person to ensure they can be accurately matched with the terrorist on the watch list.

The circumstances must meet the "reasonable suspicion" standard. This means the facts of the case must be strong enough to reasonably determine the person is known or suspected to be engaged in terrorism.

The second safeguard is that every provision in current law allowing individuals to appeal the denial of a firearm or explosive purchase will also apply to this bill.

The office within the FBI that handles the background check system, known as the NICS Section, or the National Instant Criminal Background Check System Section, must provide the reason for denial upon request.

Individuals then have the right to correct any inaccurate records in the background check system. If a purchase is still denied, individuals can take the Justice Department to court to overturn the decision.

Gun safety bills are often labeled as Democratic bills. That is not the case here.

This bill was first proposed by the Justice Department under President

George W. Bush, who recognized that keeping guns away from terrorists is good policy.

Attorney General Holder has also testified that the Justice Department under President Obama continues to support this proposal.

The bill has also been endorsed by Everytown for Gun Safety. This group represents more than 1,000 current and former mayors, both Republican and Democrat.

The legislation has also been endorsed by the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, the Violence Policy Center, Americans for Responsible Solutions, and the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence.

I would also like to thank the bill's cosponsors: Senators WHITEHOUSE, SCHUMER, DURBIN, BLUMENTHAL, BOXER, REED, MENENDEZ, GILLIBRAND, MURPHY, WARREN, and MARKEY. All of you are champions for stronger gun safety laws.

The terrorist attack in Paris should be a wake-up call for everyone.

This sort of terrorist attack is very possible here in the United States, and the ability for known and suspected terrorists to buy guns and explosives makes it even more likely.

Congress should close this loophole in our background check system and ensure that known and suspected terrorists can't easily gain access to these weapons.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. AYOTTE, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 552. A bill to amend the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to provide for increased limitations on leverage for multiple licenses under common control; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I am pleased join my colleague, Senator RISCH, in introducing the Small Business Investment Company Capital, SBIC, Act of 2015. And I am pleased that Congressman Chabot, Chairman of the House Small Business Committee, is introducing the same bill on the House side today.

This bipartisan legislation makes a common-sense change to the Small Business Investment Company, SBIC, program run by the Small Business Administration, SBA. This change will provide increased support to some of the program's most successful participants, SBICs that run multiple funds at a time. At no additional cost to the taxpayer, the SBIC Act will raise the limit that a "family of funds" can borrow with an SBA guarantee from \$225 million to \$350 million.

The SBIC program guarantees loans to qualified investment funds, or SBICs. In turn, these SBICs invest in promising small businesses by combining the SBA loan with privately raised capital, often at a 2:1 ratio. It is important to note that while these

SBICs are licensed and regulated by the SBA, they are privately owned and operated.

Since its inception, the SBIC Debenure program has been incredibly successful. SBICs have invested more than \$70 billion in nearly 170,000 small businesses. Recently, the program has experienced rapid growth. In 2013, SBA guaranteed loans to SBICs equaling \$3.5 billion, a 70 percent increase in financing dollars from three years ago and the highest amount of financings in the past decade.

This success is largely attributed to Congressional action that raised the ceiling for maximum investments for the SBIC program each year from \$3 billion to \$4 billion. Senator LANDRIEU, Senator RISCH, and I worked with a bipartisan coalition to increase this ceiling and ensure SBIC funds have access to sufficient capital to invest in promising small businesses.

Nowhere is the success of this increase seen more than in Maryland. Since the start of fiscal year 2015, SBICs have already invested nearly \$65 million in Maryland small businesses. Yet, this success could be enhanced even more if Congress increased the amount SBICs with a family of funds can borrow from the SBA.

SBICs that run multiple funds at a time are known as "families of funds." While many of our Nation's most successful and reliable SBICs have a family of funds, their success is being restricted by the current lending limit. Simply raising the limit from \$225 million to \$350 million would provide these proven fund managers the additional capital needed to invest in small businesses and stimulate local economies.

Put simply, by increasing the "family of funds" lending limit to \$350 million, proven investors can invest in more promising small businesses. The SBIC Act enhances the SBA's ability to support these successful investors as they finance small businesses that will continue to create jobs in this country.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 4—SUPPORTING THE LOCAL RADIO FREEDOM ACT

Mr. BARRASSO (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance.

S. CON. RES. 4

Whereas the United States enjoys broadcasting and sound recording industries that are the envy of the world, due to the symbiotic relationship that has existed among those industries for many decades;

Whereas, for more than 80 years, Congress has rejected repeated calls by the recording industry to impose a performance fee on local radio stations for simply playing music on the radio, as such a fee would upset the mutually beneficial relationship between local radio and the recording industry;

Whereas local radio stations provide free publicity and promotion to the recording industry and performers of music in the form

of radio air play, interviews with performers, introduction of new performers, concert promotions, and publicity that promotes the sale of music, concert tickets, ring tones, music videos, and associated merchandise;

Whereas committees in the Senate and the House of Representatives have previously reported that “the sale of many sound recordings and the careers of many performers have benefitted considerably from airplay and other promotional activities provided by both noncommercial and advertiser-supported, free over-the-air broadcasting”;

Whereas local radio broadcasters provide tens of thousands of hours of essential local news and weather information during times of national emergencies and natural disasters, such as on September 11, 2001, and during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, as well as public affairs programming, sports, and hundreds of millions of dollars worth of time for public service announcements and local fund raising efforts for worthy charitable causes, all of which are jeopardized if local radio stations are forced to divert revenues to pay for a new performance fee;

Whereas there are many thousands of local radio stations that will suffer severe economic hardship if any new performance fee is imposed, as will many other small businesses that play music including bars, restaurants, retail establishments, sports and other entertainment venues, shopping centers, and transportation facilities; and

Whereas the hardship that would result from a new performance fee would hurt businesses in the United States, and ultimately the consumers in the United States who rely on local radio for news, weather, and entertainment, and such a performance fee is not justified when the current system has produced the most prolific and innovative broadcasting, music, and sound recording industries in the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress should not impose any new performance fee, tax, royalty, or other charge relating to the public performance of sound recordings on a local radio station for broadcasting sound recordings over the air, or on any business for such public performance of sound recordings.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 5—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

Mr. CARDIN submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. CON. RES. 5

Whereas, in recognition of the African Diaspora, on December 23, 2013, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 68/237, designating the decade commencing on January 1, 2015, and ending on December 31, 2024, as the “International Decade for People of African Descent”, with the theme “People of African descent: recognition, justice and development”;

Whereas the African Diaspora is expansive, spanning across the globe from the Americas and the Caribbean to Asia and Europe, with persons of African descent having had a historical presence and currently residing on every continent;

Whereas the historical bonds and shared experiences that tie the African continent with the world must be recalled;

Whereas the global contributions of people of African descent must be recognized as a means of preserving that heritage;

Whereas the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, done at Helsinki August 1, 1975, states that “participating States will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms . . . for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion”;

Whereas the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Organization of American States, and other international organizations have undertaken efforts to address the human rights situation of people of African descent;

Whereas, on December 10, 2014, United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations Samantha Power stated, “The United States comes to the International Decade for People of African Descent with a full and robust commitment to ensuring the rights of persons of African descent, and to combating racism and discrimination against them.”; and

Whereas a central goal of the International Decade for People of African Descent is to strengthen national actions and regional and international cooperation for the benefit of people of African descent in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, cultural, social, civil, and political rights for people of African descent; the participation and integration of people of African descent in all political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of society; and the promotion of greater knowledge of, and respect for, the diverse heritage and culture of people of African descent; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of the “International Decade for People of African Descent”;

(2) encourages the recognition and celebration of the collective history and achievements made by people of African descent;

(3) reaffirms the importance of inclusion and the full and equal participation of people of African descent around the world in all aspects of political, economic, social, and cultural life;

(4) recognizes bilateral and multilateral efforts to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, including those efforts that target the eradication of poverty, hunger, and inequality; and

(5) reaffirms the commitment of Congress to address racism, discrimination, and intolerance in the United States and around the globe.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 252. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. MENENDEZ) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 65, supporting efforts to bring an end to violence perpetrated by Boko Haram, and urging the Government of Nigeria to conduct transparent, peaceful, and credible elections.

SA 253. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. MENENDEZ) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 65, supra.

SA 254. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. RUBIO) proposed an amendment to amendment SA 253 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. MENENDEZ) to the resolution S. Res. 65, supra.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 252. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. MENENDEZ) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 65, supporting efforts to bring an end to violence perpetrated by Boko Haram, and urging the Government of Nigeria to conduct

transparent, peaceful, and credible elections; as follows:

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following: “That the Senate—

(1) condemns Boko Haram for its violent attacks, particularly the indiscriminate targeting of civilians, especially women and girls, and the use of children as fighters and suicide bombers;

(2) stands with—

(A) the people of Nigeria in their right to live free from fear or intimidation by state or nonstate actors, regardless of their ethnic, religious, or regional affiliation;

(B) the people of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger who are increasingly at risk of becoming victims of Boko Haram’s violence; and

(C) the international community in its efforts to defeat Boko Haram;

(3) supports the Abuja Accord, and calls on candidates, party officials, and adherents of all political movements to comply with the code of conduct spelled out therein, by refraining from any rhetoric or action that seeks to demonize or delegitimize opponents, sow division among Nigerians, or otherwise inflame tensions;

(4) condemns any and all abuses of civilians by security forces of the Government of Nigeria;

(5) urges the Government of Nigeria to—

(A) adhere to the new timeline for elections announced by INEC on February 7, 2015;

(B) refrain from using security concerns as a pretext for impeding the democratic process and using the security apparatus for political purposes in connection with the elections;

(C) ensure elections are credible, transparent, and peaceful;

(D) prioritize the safety and security of Nigerians vulnerable to Boko Haram attacks;

(E) implement a comprehensive, civilian security-focused response to defeat Boko Haram that addresses political and economic grievances of citizens in the north;

(F) improve the capacity and conduct of Nigeria’s security forces, including respect for human rights, and take steps to hold accountable through a transparent process those members of the security forces responsible for abuses;

(G) recognize that security forces are intended to protect the safety and security of all citizens equally; and

(H) cooperate with regional and international partners to defeat Boko Haram;

(6) urges all Nigerians to engage in the electoral process, to insist on full enfranchisement, and to reject inflammatory or divisive rhetoric or actions; and

(7) reaffirms that the people of the United States will continue to stand with the people of Nigeria in support of peace and democracy.

SA 253. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. MENENDEZ) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 65, supporting efforts to bring an end to violence perpetrated by Boko Haram, and urging the Government of Nigeria to conduct transparent, peaceful, and credible elections; as follows:

Whereas Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa, with the largest economy;

Whereas the Governments of the United States and Nigeria have had a strong bilateral relationship, and Nigeria has been a valued partner of the United States since its transition to civilian rule;

Whereas the Government of Nigeria is currently confronted with threats to internal security by terrorists, insurgents, and communal violence that have caused considerable population displacement, and at the