

## [H.R.4402, Foreign Fighter Review Act of 2016](#)

### FLOOR SITUATION

On Tuesday, February 23, 2016, the House will consider [H.R. 4402](#), the Foreign Fighter Review Act of 2016. The bill was introduced on February 1, 2016, by Rep. Will Hurd (R-TX) and was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security, which order the bill reported, by voice vote, on February 2, 2016.

### SUMMARY

H.R. 4402 requires the President of the United States, acting through the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, to conduct a review, within 120 days of enactment, of all known instances since 2011 in which a person traveled or attempted to travel from the United States to a conflict zone in Iraq or Syria to join or provide material support to a terrorist organization. The review shall include: all relevant information held by the U.S. government; factors that may have undermined efforts to prevent the travel of such individuals to Iraq or Syria; and lessons learned to prevent any additional travel.

### BACKGROUND

In March 2015, the Committee on Homeland Security launched a bipartisan Task Force on Combatting Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel. Eight Members of Congress were charged with examining the threat to the United States from foreign fighters. The Task Force assessed domestic and overseas efforts to obstruct terrorist travel and identified potential security gaps. They issued a final report on September 29, 2015.<sup>1</sup>

The Task Force found that despite concerted efforts to stem the flow, the U.S. government has largely failed to stop Americans from traveling overseas to join jihadists. Of the hundreds of Americans who have sought to travel to the conflict zone in Syria and Iraq, authorities have only interdicted a few dozen. The majority appear to have evaded authorities. In fact, around 40 have even made it back to the United States, and some individuals have gone back and forth to the conflict zone multiple times. The Task Force concluded that it was unacceptable that so many Americans have

<sup>1</sup> See [Final Report on the Task Force on Combatting Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel](#) at 2.

been able to make it to the world's most dangerous terrorist safe haven (and back) without being interdicted.

Unfortunately, the White House has not yet called for a comprehensive interagency investigation into why each of these Americans slipped through the cracks. Some agencies have done their own smaller scale assessments, but it is not enough. Accordingly, this bipartisan bill requires the Administration to launch an end-to-end review to determine what more can be done to stop keep U.S. persons from being lured to terrorist sanctuaries overseas—and, specifically, to report back to Congress regarding “lessons learned” from failures to prevent Americans from becoming foreign fighters in Syria.<sup>2</sup>

### **COST**

A Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate is currently unavailable. However H.R 4402 does not authorize new funding and requires the President and Secretary to carry out these requirements using currently appropriated funds.

### **STAFF CONTACT**

For questions or further information please contact [Jake Vreeburg](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 3-1555.

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<sup>2</sup> See Committee on Homeland Security Press Release, [“Committee Unveils Foreign Fighter Task Force’s Final Report”](#) September 29, 2015.