

State Senate
State of Tennessee



**Chairman Ketron and Speaker Pro Tempore Matheny
to offer Amendment to Anti-Terrorism Bill**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(NASHVILLE, TN), March 22, 2011 --- Senate Republican Caucus Chairman Bill Ketron (R-Murfreesboro) and House Speaker Pro Tempore Judd Matheny (R-Tullahoma) today said they will offer an amendment to their anti-terrorism bill aimed at curbing the incidence of homegrown terrorist acts in the state before they occur. The amendment, which ensures an even-handed and non-discriminatory approach, addresses those individuals that knowingly provide material support to known designated terrorist entities in Tennessee.

“As amended, this bill has absolutely no references to any specific religion,” said Representative Matheny. “It is about protecting our citizens from those who would use religious doctrine as a justification to commit criminal activities or terrorist acts.”

“The revision reflects our original intention to prevent or deter violent or terrorist acts, but does so without any room for misinterpretation regarding the language’s affect on peaceful religious practices,” added Senator Ketron. “Rep. Matheny and I asked our legislative attorneys to rework this bill to reflect this as clearly as possible so there would be no confusion regarding this matter. The result is a stronger bill that gets at the problem of material support for homegrown terrorism, without any doubt that it does not impact peaceful religious practices of any religion.”

The bill, named the Material Support to Designated Entities Act of 2011, builds on the Terrorism Prevention and Response Act of 2002 which passed the Tennessee General Assembly after the 9-11 terrorist attacks. That law only addresses terrorist acts after they occur by prescribing criminal penalties for those who are convicted under the act. Ketron and Matheny say their bill helps prevent terrorist acts by cutting off the avenues of support that often enable the violence.

“The existing Tennessee statute does not reach planned acts of terrorism because the existing law requires that the terrorist act must have already occurred,” added Ketron. “A material support statute is preventative in that it criminalizes the aid that makes an attack more likely to occur.”

The bill provides that the Director of Tennessee’s Office of Homeland Security can make a recommendation to the Attorney General and the Governor to “designate” a terrorist entity, effectively isolating them from support. Once designated, no material support or resources as defined in the bill may be provided to the designated entity. Thereafter, anyone who provides material support or resources knowing that the designation has been made, may be prosecuted or fined under the bill. In addition, it prescribes procedures to challenge, revoke, or amend a designation. The legislation is closely modeled after the federal anti-terrorism material support statutes which have been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

An August 2010 background report showed 21 U.S. citizens were charged in such cases in 2009 and another 20 were charged in 2010 between January and August.

“The amendment provides a powerful counterterrorism tool to state and local law enforcement enabling them to act decisively before acts of terrorism are committed,” added Matheny. “We have to get it right every time, they only have to get it right once. So far, I have received positive feedback regarding the revised amendment from those in my community who were concerned about the bill.”

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Reference: [Senate Bill 1028](#) / [House Bill 1353](#)



Amendment to
SB1028 Draft 3-21...