

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senators Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and Scott Brown (R-MA) and Congressmen Jason Altmire (D-PA) and Charlie Dent (R-PA) today introduced bipartisan, bicameral legislation that would update existing federal law to account for the enemy the United States is fighting today.

An existing federal statute, 8 U.S.C. § 1481, identifies seven categories of acts for which U.S. citizens lose their citizenship if they voluntarily perform one of those acts “with the intention of relinquishing United States nationality.” Under the Terrorist Expatriation Act, the State Department would also be authorized to revoke the citizenship of a U.S. national who provides material support or resources to a Foreign Terrorist Organization, as designated by the Secretary of State, or who engages in or supports hostilities against the United States or its allies.

“We’re fighting an enemy who doesn’t wear the uniform of a conventional army or follow the law of war,” said **Senator Lieberman**. “This proposal updates the existing law to include American citizens who are found to have joined and worked with a foreign terrorist organization whose aim is to attack and kill Americans. Those who join such groups join our enemy and should be deprived of the rights and privileges of U.S. citizenship and the ability to use their American passports as tools of terror.”

“In recent years, foreign terrorist organizations, like al Qaeda, have shown they remain determined to kill American citizens and bring violence to our homeland. We continue to defend our nation against shadowy extremist enemies whose tactics are ever-changing and evolving, but their goal of destroying our way of life remains the same,” said **Senator Brown**. “It is critical to our homeland security that we adjust and adapt our defense measures to keep terrorism out of our country. This bi-partisan legislation we are offering today closes a loophole on an existing 70-year-old law to better reflect the unique challenges of today’s war against violent extremists, both at home and abroad.”

“Individuals who actively support terrorist organizations dedicated to harming our nation do not deserve to enjoy the privileges of American citizenship,” said **Congressman Altmire**. “For decades, Americans have lost their citizenship if they joined the armed forces of a foreign state that is fighting against our country. Our bill updates existing law to ensure that individuals fighting with al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and other terrorist organizations face that same penalty.”

“Being an American citizen is more than a right, it is a responsibility,” said **Congressman Dent**. “When individuals, such as Anwar al-Awlaki and others take actions that are proven threats against our nation – they violate that responsibility. This bill will update existing federal law to ensure the United States can take appropriate action when addressing terrorists who wish to harm Americans and dismantle our way of life.”

The same due process that applies to the existing statute will apply to those whose citizenship could be revoked under the proposed amendment to the law. The State Department would make an administrative determination that a U.S. Citizen has indicated his intent to renounce his citizenship by supporting an Foreign Terrorist Organization. That individual will then have the right to appeal that determination within the State Department and, then, to a federal district court.