

Mr. Chairman, Committee Members, Ladies and Gentlemen:

On June 1, 2009, Pvt William “Andy” Long and Pvt. Quinten Ezeagwula were shot by a self-proclaimed Jihadist named Abdulhakim Mohamed in front of a Little Rock, Arkansas recruiting office while in uniform and present at their assigned post.

The news hit close to home. My son had just a couple of months earlier enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, and was doing his “poolie” recruit exercises while waiting to enter basic training in San Diego. He was spending considerable time with his recruiter and was in and out of the office on a regular basis. When a son or daughter enters the military services, a parent realizes that there is a high probability that, at some time during their service, they can be put in danger, whether in training, transport, or actually deploying to a war-zone, as my son did. The last place I was considering my son to be a potential target was at the recruiting office.

This event in Arkansas got my attention, and the next attack at Fort Hood, Texas occurred while my newly graduated Marine was heading for his Combat Infantry Training at Camp Pendleton, CA. Again, I realized that just because he is on an American base in the United States doesn’t mean he isn’t a target for a terrorist. Sadly, neither one of these attacks were ever classified as “acts of terrorism” by the Federal government, so in the case in Arkansas, the state was left to prosecute a “drive by shooter”, and the Army prosecuted a perpetrator of “workplace violence” in Texas. The families of the victims don’t even have the consolation of their loved ones being classified as ‘war casualties’ by the US Government.

While we cannot soon remedy that injustice at the state level, there are steps that can be taken to enable states and families to pursue the assets of individuals and organizations who provide training, encouragement, or materials to commit such an act. Carlos Bledsoe was a happy, vibrant, and thriving young man that met people who indoctrinated him; he changed his name to Abdulhakim Mohamed, was then convinced by his mentors to travel to Yemen and Somalia, where he received training and more indoctrination to commit violent jihad, came home to Tennessee, mapped out a plan for his terrorist activities which spanned several American cities, beginning in Nashville where he attempted to firebomb a Rabbi’s home, and then went to Little Rock where he shot up another Rabbi’s house and attacked two American soldier’s, killing Private Long.

But as we all know so well, you don’t have to be in uniform to be a target for a terrorist.

What if Terry Loewen of Wichita connected with some of same people that Abdulhakim Mohamed received help from, instead of the FBI agents who intercepted him? Wichita, Kansas may well be on that list of terrorist attacks not recognized by this Federal government as worthy of pursuing according to Federal anti-terrorism laws that were used to shut down several Islamic charitable organizations in 2008 who were funneling assets to known terrorist groups such as Hamas.

I hope Kansas joins Arkansas and Tennessee by passing HB2463. This will send a strong signal to any individual or organization who would fund, assist, or facilitate terrorist activities in Kansas, against persons or property, that they would not benefit from a complacent federal Department of Justice, but would be pursued for damages by those victims, and their families, as well as the State of Kansas.

Loved ones cannot be replaced, and broken bodies can never be made whole again, but at least there can be a mechanism for some small consolation of a sense of justice, as well as removing or crippling the ability of such terrorist minded entities to act with impunity and may even help to prevent further actions by them.

Committee members, I encourage you to move HB2463 out of this committee so that it may be considered by the Representatives of the People of Kansas.

Thank you.

Kirk Sours
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