



## H.R. 2297—Hezbollah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 (Rep. Royce, R-CA)

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**FLOOR SCHEDULE:** SCHEDULED FOR CONSIDERATION ON MAY 14, 2015 UNDER A MOTION TO SUSPEND THE RULES AND PASS THE BILL, WHICH REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY VOTE FOR PASSAGE.

**TOPLINE SUMMARY:** [H.R. 2297](#) would require the president to inform Congress of communications providers that transmit al-Manar TV, a Lebanese satellite television station affiliated with Hezbollah.

**COST:** No Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate is available. The CBO estimate for H.R. 4411 can be found [here](#).

**CONSERVATIVE CONCERNS:** There are no substantive concerns.

- **Expand the Federal Government?** No.
- **Encroach into State or Local Authority?** No.
- **Delegate Any Legislative Authority to the Executive Branch?** No.
- **Contain Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits?** No.

**DETAILED SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:** H.R. 2297 would direct the president to submit an unclassified report to Congress that includes a list of satellite, broadcast, or other providers that knowingly transmit the content of al-Manar TV, a Lebanese satellite television station affiliated with Hezbollah.

The report would also include an identification of those providers that have or have not been sanctioned pursuant to [Executive Order 13224](#). The bill would also direct the Secretary of the Treasury—with the concurrence of the Secretary of State and in consultation with the heads of other applicable departments and agencies—to prohibit or impose strict conditions on U.S.-based correspondent or a payable-through accounts by a foreign financial institution that knowingly:

- facilitates the activities of Hezbollah, including its agents, instrumentalities, affiliates, or successors;
- facilitates the activities of a person acting on behalf of or owned or controlled by an agent, instrumentality, affiliate, or successor;
- engages in money laundering to carry out such an activity;
- facilitates a significant transaction or provides significant financial services to carry out such an activity, including services that involve a transaction of a precious metal; or
- facilitates any of these activities, conspires to facilitate or participate in such an activity, or is owned or controlled by a foreign financial institution that knowingly engages in such an activity.

The bill would authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to waive such requirements if such a waiver is deemed in the interest of U.S. national security, but requires congressional notification. The legislation would mandate that the Secretary of the Treasury identify to Congress every 180 days each foreign central bank that carries out an activity prohibited under the bill and establish a set of penalty requirements for specified violations.

H.R. 2297 would also direct the president to determine whether or not Hezbollah should be designated as a significant foreign narcotics trafficker under the [Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act](#), and as a significant transnational criminal organization. The bill would also mandate that the president submit (1) a justification if Hezbollah is not determined to be a significant narcotics trafficker; and Furthermore, (2) details on actions taken by the Department of State rewards program to obtain information on fundraising, financing, and money laundering activities of Hezbollah and its agents and affiliates.

Hezbollah is a Shi'a Islamist terrorist organization based in Lebanon. The group has been [designated](#) as a foreign terrorist organization by the United States. The U.S. holds Hezbollah responsible for the largest number of American deaths by a terrorist organization prior to the attacks of September 11, 2001, including a number of hostage takings targeting Americans in Lebanon during the 1980s, the bombing of the United States Embassy in Beirut in April 1983, and the bombing of the United States Marine barracks in October 1983 which killed 241 American servicemen.

Hezbollah continues to provide material assistance to and to Syria, including aiding the Assad regime in suppressing the ongoing armed rebellion against it. The organization continues to serve as a proxy militia on behalf of Iran in its effort to threaten the U.S. and its allies in the region, including Israel. In April 2013, the Department of the [Treasury blacklisted](#) two Lebanese exchange houses, Kassem Rmeiti & Co. and Halawi Exchange Co., for laundering drug profits for Hezbollah, and characterized Hezbollah as operating like an international drug cartel. Al-Manar TV, the Lebanese satellite station affiliated with Hezbollah, was officially designated as a [Specially Designated Global Terrorist](#) entity by the Department of the Treasury in 2004, but the station continues to propagate Hezbollah's propaganda.

A similar bill ([H.R. 4411](#)) was introduced in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress and passed under suspension of the rules and passed the House by the yeas and nays: [404-0](#). The RSC's legislative bulletin for H.R. 4411 can be found [here](#).

**COMMITTEE ACTION:** This bill was introduced on May 13, 2015 and was referred to the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

**ADMINISTRATION POSITION:** No statement of administration position is available.

**CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY:** "Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following: Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution."

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