

After Iraq War Authorization Repealed, Calls Grow to ‘Do the 2001 AUMF Next’

"We must keep up our fight to repeal the 2001 AUMF so that no future president has the unilateral power to plunge us into endless wars," said Rep. Barbara Lee.

By [Brett Wilkins](#)

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*As the U.S. House of Representatives on Thursday [easily passed](#) a bill by **Rep. Barbara Lee** to repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002, peace advocates called on Congress to enact similar legislation to end the 2001 AUMF upon which the open-ended so-called Global War on Terror has been waged for nearly 20 years.*

Appearing on NBC’s “Meet the Press Daily” on Thursday, Lee (D-Calif.), who was the [only member](#) of Congress to vote against the [post-9/11 AUMF](#) (pdf)—passed one week after the September 11, 2001 al-Qaeda attacks on the United States—[told](#) host Chuck Todd that [H.R. 256](#), her bill repealing the 2002 AUMF that passed by a bipartisan vote of [268-161](#), “is an important step toward repealing the 2001 authorization.”

WATCH: House passes bill to repeal 2002 Iraq AUMF. [#MTPDaily @RepBarbaraLee](#): “This has been on the books now ... [for] 20 years. It’s time to get it off. It’s not needed.” [pic.twitter.com/RQyhk0oGo4](#)

— Meet the Press (@MeetThePress) [June 17, 2021](#)

“We must keep up our fight to repeal the 2001 AUMF so that no future president has the unilateral power to plunge us into endless wars,” Lee [said](#) separately ahead of Thursday’s House vote.

Rep. Katie Porter (D-Calif.) also called to repeal the 2001 AUMF, [tweeting](#) Thursday that “the power to declare war belongs to Congress because we are the branch most accountable to the people.”

“Today, the House voted to repeal the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force, which has enabled endless war in Iraq,” Porter added. “Let’s do the 2001 AUMF next.”

The anti-war group Peaceful Tomorrows, founded by relatives of 9/11 victims, published a statement Thursday calling for a repeal of the 2001 authorization.

“It has been almost two decades since the deaths of our loved ones, and for the entirety of that time, the U.S. has been at war,” the group tweeted. “These wars have not brought justice for the crimes of 9/11. Instead, they have caused untold suffering and deaths among innocent civilians who bore no responsibility for 9/11. Rather than keeping Americans and other people throughout the world safer, these wars have inflamed and provoked violence.”

Now onto a Senate vote on S.J. Res. 10, then (hopefully) an effort to repeal the 2001 AUMF as well. See our full statement, backed by >250 family members of 9/11 victims, on the need to reject authorizations for endless war and bring the forever wars to a long overdue end. pic.twitter.com/MB9jj3Wfno

— Peaceful Tomorrows (@PeacefulTomorro) [June 17, 2021](#)

Peaceful Tomorrows noted that while the 2001 AUMF gave then-President George W. Bush “the authority to use force against those responsible for the 9/11 attacks,” the law “has been used by the Bush, Obama, and Trump administrations to authorize the use of force in 19 countries, against groups that did not even exist in 2001, and have no connection to the attacks.”

“To end the forever wars and end this chapter in American history, Congress must sunset the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force,” the group said.

In 2001, Lee presciently [warned](#) that the AUMF would allow presidents to wage war “anywhere, in any country, without regard to our nation’s long-term foreign policy, economic, and national security interests, and without time limit.”

“That was a blank check; it was passed right after the horrific attacks of 9/11, it was 60 words, and it just authorized the use of force forever,” Lee told Todd of the 2001 authorization. “So it set the stage for perpetual war.”

As debates kick off on H.R.256, you can find some more historical background by reading our joint letter from earlier this year, where we joined 24 other orgs in calling on Congress to repeal the 2002 [#AUMF](#) (and sunset the 2001 AUMF!). <https://t.co/hmY0I494sj>

— Win Without War (@WinWithoutWar) [June 17, 2021](#)

The U.S.-led anti-terror war—which includes the Afghanistan War, the longest in U.S. history—continues to this day. At least 800,000 Afghan, Iraqi, Libyan, Pakistani, Somali, Syrian, and Yemeni people, as well as thousands of U.S. and allied troops, have died, at a cost exceeding \$6.4 trillion, [according to](#) the Costs of War Project at Brown University’s Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs.

Stephanie Savell, co-director of the Costs of War Project, [told](#) *Esquire* in an article published

Wednesday that the 2001 AUMF is even more important than the 2002 authorization because it “grants the president broad authority to extend the war wherever and however he pleases.”

If the Senate Is Serious About Ending Endless Wars, It Should Focus on the 2001 AUMF <https://t.co/lPtHE9fpHY>

— Mass. Peace Action #FreePalestine (@masspeaceaction) [June 17, 2021](#)

Esquire politics editor Jack Holmes wrote:

The move to repeal the 2002 AUMF is welcome, particularly because, as the Trump administration demonstrated, it can also be exploited by the executive to justify unilateral decisions of war and peace. But if [Democratic Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York] is serious about reclaiming the war powers of Congress—and ending our endless wars—then the 2001 AUMF will have to go, too.

The Biden White House, like every administration, is fused to the extended military and intelligence apparatus... When the smoke clears, there are always new enemies. More bombs to drop, and give to our friends to drop. Eventually, this has to stop. It would help if the legislative branch, and its many individual members who have absolved themselves of responsibility for these endless conflicts by ensuring they never have to go on the record about them, would take some of that responsibility back.

On the House floor ahead of Thursday’s vote, Lee [cited](#) some of the [“lies and misinformation”](#) disseminated by the Bush administration in its attempt to sell the Iraq War to a [largely skeptical](#) American public. And while it was not based on as many outright lies as the Iraq War, the Bush administration nevertheless brushed off multiple opportunities to avoid a protracted war in Afghanistan.

In the weeks following 9/11, the Taliban—whose members were previously [supported](#) by the U.S. government and [courted](#) by American business interests despite their [human rights crimes](#)—[offered](#) first to try al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, and then to [turn him over](#) to the United States as Bush launched the invasion of Afghanistan.

We're grateful to our friends like [@WinWithoutWar](#) and champions like [@RepBarbaraLee](#), who have worked tirelessly for peace. We look forward to working with our allies and partners to finally [#StopEndlessWar](#).

— Indivisible Guide (@IndivisibleTeam) [June 17, 2021](#)

In April, President Joe Biden [announced](#) he plans to withdraw all regular American combat troops from Afghanistan by this year’s anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks. [According to](#) the Costs of War Project, the nearly 20-year war has claimed an estimated 241,000 lives and cost the U.S. \$2.26 trillion.

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