

John Ensign and Joe Lieberman: Senators unveil anti-WikiLeaks bill

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Sens. John Ensign (R-Nev.), Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) and Scott Brown (R-Mass.) introduced a bill Thursday aimed at stopping WikiLeaks by making it illegal to publish the names of military or intelligence community informants.

Ensign accused WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and his “cronies” of hindering America’s war efforts and creating a “hit list” for U.S. enemies by outing intelligence sources.

“Our sources are bravely risking their lives when they stand up against the tyranny of al Qaeda, the Taliban and murderous regimes, and I simply will not stand idly by as they become death targets because of Julian Assange,” Ensign said. “Let me be very clear, WikiLeaks is not a whistleblower website and Assange is not a journalist.”

Assange has been under fire in recent weeks thanks to his site’s dissemination of thousands of classified diplomatic cables, some of which have proved embarrassing to the Obama administration because of their frank tone. Attorney General Eric Holder recently pledged to close gaps in the law that allow sites like WikiLeaks to continue to operate.

The Securing Human Intelligence and Enforcing Lawful Dissemination Act (SHIELD) would give the government the flexibility to pursue Assange for allegedly outing confidential U.S. informants. Brown said the law would prevent anyone from compromising national security in a similar manner, while Lieberman said its passage was essential to restore the international diplomatic community’s faith in the U.S.

“Our foreign representatives, allies and intelligence sources must have the clear assurance that their lives will not be endangered by those with opposing agendas, whether they are Americans or not, and our government must make it clear that revealing the identities of these individuals will not be tolerated,” Lieberman said.

Earlier this week, Lieberman reportedly convinced Amazon.com to stop hosting WikiLeaks, forcing the website to relocate to Switzerland.

Amazon denied government pressure influenced the decision, which they [attributed](#) to WikiLeaks’s violating the company’s terms of service and putting innocent lives at risk.

“It’s clear that WikiLeaks doesn’t own or otherwise control all the rights to this classified content,” Amazon said in a statement. “Further, it is not credible that the extraordinary volume of 250,000 classified documents that WikiLeaks is publishing could have been carefully redacted in such a way as to ensure that they weren’t putting innocent people in jeopardy.”

WikiLeaks responded on [Twitter](#) by calling Amazon cowardly and dishonest.

“Amazon’s press release does not accord with the facts on public record. It is one thing to be cowardly. Another to lie about it.”

Assange is also currently facing a warrant in Sweden concerning accusations of sexual assault of two young women. Assange has said the encounters were consensual and has called the investigation an international plot to stop WikiLeaks.

A well-known recluse, Assange has gone underground, only resurfacing to conduct remote interviews with the press.

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