



## Action Sheet: April 2021

*We seek a world free of war and the threat of war*

Advocacy Teams have been calling for the repeal of the Authorizations for the Use of Military Force (AUMFs) since 2015. Finally, many in Congress are taking heed. **On March 25, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs approved Rep. Barbara Lee's (CA-13) bill to repeal the 2002 Iraq AUMF (H.R. 256) by a bipartisan vote of 28-19.**

This bill will be headed to the House floor in the coming weeks. The more co-sponsors this legislation has, the quicker House leadership will be in bringing H.R. 256 to a vote before the full chamber.

On the February National Call, Heather Brandon-Smith challenged us to reach 150 co-sponsors in the House. We are almost there! In the Senate, Sens. Tim Kaine (VA) and Todd Young (IN), have introduced **S.J. Res. 10** to repeal the 1991 and 2002 Iraq AUMFs. This bill now has 13 bipartisan co-sponsors, and much of this is due to Advocacy Team's persistent work.

As a Quaker organization, FCNL opposes all war. As a matter of public policy, we believe Congress should debate and vote every time the president proposes taking our country to war and evaluate the impact of those wars regularly. The first step is to get the 2002 Iraq AUMF off the books.

Advocacy Teams have been calling for AUMF repeal since 2015. Finally, many in Congress are taking heed.

## Get the Facts: Ending the Endless Wars

### The Constitution

The founders of the United States specifically placed the power to declare war in the hands of Congress. The 2001 and 2002 AUMFs have been interpreted by three presidents to give the executive branch the power to wage war without congressional approval.

### The 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force

Three days after 9/11, Congress gave the president advance permission to use military force against anyone who planned, authorized, committed, or aided those attacks, or who harbored such groups. By the authorization's own language, that should have only meant al Qaeda, who were responsible for the attacks, and the Taliban, who harbored al Qaeda in Afghanistan.

But later, the Bush administration developed the concept of "associated forces" – a term that does not appear in the 2001 AUMF – which three administrations have now used to expand the war to more than half a dozen groups around the world that had no connection to the 9/11 attacks, including ISIS. This is not what Congress intended in 2001; ISIS didn't even exist then.

Congress didn't intend to start wars against al-Shabaab in Somalia or al-Nusra in Syria, but that's exactly what has happened.

### **The 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq**

The 2002 Iraq AUMF authorized the 2003 invasion of Iraq to defend the United States against the threat of weapons of mass destruction possessed by the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq. The Trump administration claimed that the 2002 Iraq AUMF also authorizes war against ISIS in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere, saying it allows the president to fight any threat “to or emanating from Iraq.” Indeed, in January 2020, the administration asserted that the 2002 Iraq AUMF authorized the assassination of Iranian general Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad. *Read more.*

### **Bipartisan Support Exists**

Congress has twice voted to end U.S. military engagements abroad: first in April 2019, to end U.S. involvement in the Saudi-led war in Yemen, and second in April 2020, to terminate hostilities against Iran following the General Soleimani strike. The House has also twice voted, in 2019 and 2020, to repeal the 2002 Iraq AUMF. All these votes have been on a bipartisan basis. These actions demonstrate that there is bipartisan will in Congress to rein in presidential power and ever-expanding wars.

### **War Is Not the Answer.**

More war has not brought more peace. After nearly two decades of war, it is long past time for Congress to acknowledge that U.S. war policies have contributed to more instability and violence. They have failed to reduce the threat of terrorism or keep Americans safe. The world only becomes a safer place when lawmakers engage in robust debate prior to authorizing any military attacks, when we invest in peacebuilding, diplomacy, and other measures to prevent violent conflict, and when we learn lessons from our actions and reflect on what it means to truly protect American security.

## » Take Action

### **Help Us Reach 150 Co-Sponsors in the House and 20 in the Senate**

- Urge your representative to co-sponsors H.R. 256, a bill proposed by Rep. Barbara Lee (CA-13) to repeal *the 2002 Iraq AUMF*. *Check how your member voted on this amendment in 2019*—if they were supportive, they should be open to becoming a co-sponsor. If your representative has already co-sponsored, ask them to personally reach out to other lawmakers from their state. As of March 31, we have *112 co-sponsors*.
- Urge your senators to co-sponsor *S.J. Res. 10*, Sens. Tim Kaine (VA) and Todd Young's (IN) bill to repeal the 1991 and 2002 Iraq AUMF.

**Expand Our Reach:** Use social media and letters-to-the-editor to encourage more folks to act.

- Remember, you can direct folks to FCNL's *online action center*.
- *Use this helpful graphic* to make connections between endless war and other issues relevant to your community.