

New Bill Would Allow Rubio to Strip US Citizens' Passports Over Political Speech

The legislation would allow the Secretary of State to strip anyone's US passport with no legal due process.

By Stephen Prager, COMMON DREAMS

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U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio speaks to members of the media before departing for Israel at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, on September 13, 2025.

NATHAN HOWARD / POOL / AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

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Free speech advocates are sounding the alarm about a bill in the US House of Representatives that they fear could allow Secretary of State Marco Rubio to strip US citizens of their passports based purely on political speech.

The bill, introduced by Rep. Brian Mast (R-Fla.), will come up for a hearing on Wednesday. According to *The Intercept* [. \(https://theintercept.com/2025/09/13/marco-rubio-revoke-us-passports-terrorism/\)](https://theintercept.com/2025/09/13/marco-rubio-revoke-us-passports-terrorism/):

Mast’s new bill claims to target a narrow set of people. One section grants the secretary of state the power to revoke or refuse to issue passports for people who have been convicted—or merely charged—of material support for terrorism...

The other section sidesteps the legal process entirely. Rather, the secretary of state would be able to deny passports to people whom they determine “has knowingly aided, assisted, abetted, or otherwise provided material support to an organization the Secretary has designated as a foreign terrorist organization.”

Rubio has previously boasted of stripping the visas and green cards from several immigrants based purely on their peaceful expression of pro-Palestine views, describing [. \(https://theintercept.com/2025/03/10/mahmoud-khalil-palestine-columbia-immigration-deport/\)](https://theintercept.com/2025/03/10/mahmoud-khalil-palestine-columbia-immigration-deport/) them as “ Hamas supporters.”

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These include Columbia protest leader Mahmoud Khalil, who was arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) after Rubio voided his green card; and Rumeysa Ozturk, the Tufts student whose visa Rubio revoked after she co-wrote an op-ed calling for her school to divest from Israel [. \(https://www.commondreams.org/tag/israel\)](https://www.commondreams.org/tag/israel).

Mast — a former soldier for the Israel Defense Forces who once stated [. \(https://www.currentaffairs.org/news/our-leaders-and-media-have-totally-normalized-anti-palestinian-racism\)](https://www.currentaffairs.org/news/our-leaders-and-media-have-totally-normalized-anti-palestinian-racism), that babies were “not innocent Palestinian civilians” — has previously called for “kicking terrorist sympathizers out of our country,” speaking about the Trump administration’s attempts to deport Khalil, who was never convicted or even charged with support for a terrorist group.

Critics have argued that the bill has little reason to exist other than to allow the Secretary of State to unilaterally strip passports from people without them actually having been convicted of a crime.

As Kia Hamadanchy, a senior policy counsel at the American Civil Liberties Union, noted in *The Intercept*, there is little reason to restrict people convicted of terrorism or material support for terrorism, since — if they were guilty — they’d likely be serving a long prison sentence and incapable of traveling anyway.

“I can’t imagine that if somebody actually provided material support for terrorism, there would be an instance where it wouldn’t be prosecuted — it just doesn’t make sense,” he said.

Journalist Zaid Jilani noted on X (<https://x.com/ZaidJilani/status/1966884930790608967>) that “judges can already remove a passport over material support for terrorism, but the difference is you get due process. This bill would essentially make Marco Rubio judge, jury, and executioner.”

The bill does contain a clause allowing those stripped of their passports to appeal to Rubio. But, as Hamadanchy notes, the decision is up to the secretary alone, “who has already made this determination.” He said that for determining who is liable to have their visa stripped, “There’s no standard set. There’s nothing.”

As Seth Stern, the director of advocacy at the Freedom of the Press Foundation, noted in *The Intercept* (<https://theintercept.com/2025/09/13/marco-rubio-revoke-us-passports-terrorism/>), the language in Mast’s bill is strikingly similar to that found in the so-called “nonprofit killer” (<https://www.commondreams.org/news/nonprofit-killer-bill-removed>), provision that Republicans attempted to pass in July’s “One Big Beautiful Bill” Act. That provision, which was ultimately struck from the bill, would have allowed the Treasury Secretary to unilaterally strip nonprofit status from anything he deemed to be a “terrorist-supporting organization.”

Stern said Mast’s bill would allow for “thought policing at the hands of one individual.”

“Marco Rubio has claimed the power to designate people terrorist supporters based solely on what they think and say,” he said, “even if what they say doesn’t include a word about a terrorist organization or terrorism.”

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STEPHEN PRAGER [\(https://truthout.org/authors/stephen-prager/\)](https://truthout.org/authors/stephen-prager/)

Stephen Prager is a staff writer for *Common Dreams*.

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