



Trump's anti-immigrant 'Kate's Law' was hatched from a series of racist Bill O'Reilly rants

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A controversial immigration bill racing through Congress has inadvertently revealed how the Republican Party is relying upon Fox News for political policy.

"Kate's Law" passed the House of Representatives with a vote of 257 to 157 on Thursday. The bill would require automatic, lengthy prison sentences for certain undocumented immigrants who return to the United States.

Only one Republican voted "no" in the House, while two dozen Democrats crossed the aisle to vote for the legislation. A similar bill died in the senate during the last congress, but this bill passed less than one week after being introduced.

"A version of the bill was championed by President Trump on the campaign trail, making it notable that two dozen Democrats cast their votes to support it this week," the Washington Examiner reports. "With Trump's approval ratings low, Democrats are under pressure from an increasingly vocal base to resist his agenda in full."

While the bill, introduced by Congressman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA), was pushed by Donald Trump during the election, the idea for the legislation originated from fired Fox News Host Bill O'Reilly in 2015.

O'Reilly named the idea, "Kate's Law" after Kate Steinle, 32-year-old who was fatally shot in San Francisco. Juan Francisco Lopez-Sanchez, a Mexican national, has been charged with second degree murder for the crime, which set off a national debate over San Francisco's sanctuary city policy.

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"Like others in right-wing media, O'Reilly immediately fixated on the alleged assailant's immigration status and exploited Steinle to push his anti-immigration policy ideas to the forefront," Salon reported. "After he first proposed it on air, a Nexis search of transcripts of The O'Reilly Factor during the month of July in 2015 shows the former host devoted at least sixteen episodes to hyping his proposed policy."

The legislation could pass Congress and be on the President's desk only two years after Bill O'Reilly began his crusade, which **even included a petition** for Fox News viewers to pressure Republican leadership into voting on the bill.

“O'Reilly's campaign for Kate's Law employed the familiar right-wing media tactic of wildly stereotyping and fear-mongering about immigrants,” Salon explained. “One of these outlets' favorite constructed narratives is the false link between immigrants and crime.”

While only one Republican no in the House, not everyone on the right wants to increase the prison population based on a false link between immigration and crime.

“The U.S. Sentencing Commission estimated that the original mandatory minimums version of Kate's Law would increase the federal prison population by almost 60,000 in 5 years—a massive 30 percent increase in the total federal prison population,” **the CATO Institute noted** while opposing the bill prior to the vote. “Unfortunately, the House will vote on this new version—revealed late last week—without an estimate of either its financial impact or its impact on the federal prison population.”

“Immigration offenses are already the top reason for a federal arrest, composing half of all federal criminal arrests—a share that has doubled since 2004. From 1998 to 2010, 56 percent of all federal prison admissions were for immigration crimes. Locking up immigrants requires taxpayers to pay to watch, house, clothe, and feed them, and unlike U.S. citizens who are released into the interior, they would otherwise be deported, so their incarceration does not even prevent other U.S. residents from being exposed their criminal behavior,” CATO continued.