

## S 2298

Mens Rea Reform Act of 2015

**Congress:** 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

**Chamber:** Senate

**Policy Area:** Crime and Law Enforcement

**Introduced:** Nov 18, 2015

**Current Status:** Committee on the Judiciary. Hearings held.

**Latest Action:** Committee on the Judiciary. Hearings held. (Jan 20, 2016)

**Official Text:** <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2298>

### Sponsor

**Name:** Sen. Hatch, Orrin G. [R-UT]

**Party:** Republican • **State:** UT • **Chamber:** Senate

### Cosponsors (4 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Cruz, Ted [R-TX]	R · TX		Nov 18, 2015
Sen. Lee, Mike [R-UT]	R · UT		Nov 18, 2015
Sen. Paul, Rand [R-KY]	R · KY		Nov 18, 2015
Sen. Perdue, David [R-GA]	R · GA		Nov 18, 2015

### Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Judiciary Committee	Senate	Hearings By (full committee)	Jan 20, 2016

### Subjects & Policy Tags

#### Policy Area:

Crime and Law Enforcement

### Related Bills

No related bills are listed.

## **Mens Rea Reform Act of 2015**

This bill amends the federal criminal code to establish a default intent (state of mind) standard for a federal criminal offense, unless the provision of law that defines such offense specifically provides otherwise.

A federal criminal offense conviction under the default standard requires proof beyond a reasonable doubt that a defendant acted intentionally and willfully with respect to each element of the offense. If a state of mind is not specified for an element of the offense, it must be shown that the defendant acted willfully. A person who acts "willfully" does so with the knowledge that the conduct is unlawful. The bill sets forth certain exceptions where the default standard shall not apply.

Additionally, the bill requires that when a provision of law identifies an intent standard but does not specify which elements of the offense the standard applies to, the identified standard must apply to all elements of the offense.

## **Actions Timeline**

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- **Jan 20, 2016:** Committee on the Judiciary. Hearings held.
- **Nov 18, 2015:** Introduced in Senate
- **Nov 18, 2015:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.