Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Criminal Alien Visa Denial Act of 2001 to ensure the State Department and Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) have access to U.S. criminal databases before they let aliens into the country.

The State Department and INS currently lack the ability to access the FBI’s National Criminal Information Center’s Interstate Identification Index (NCIC–III) database. That means an alien can come into our country, commit a crime, leave, and get a reentry visa from our State Department or cross the border without being stopped.

There is evidence this has already happened. Between 1998 and 1999, serial killer Angel Maturino Resendiz, the “Texas Railroad Killer,” a Mexican with a lengthy criminal record in the United States, was allowed to cross the border because the INS didn’t know he had a record. And when he got here, he killed at least six people before his capture. And just last week, we heard unconfirmed reports one of the terrorist hijackers may have been allowed to cross the Canadian border even though he too had a criminal record in the United States.

Strengthening national security, particularly border security, against dispersed but deadly criminals and terrorists requires interagency cooperation and coordination on an unprecedented scale. Data matches between federal agencies today are often the product of good luck and the happenstance of personal relationships. The modern threat demands a more systematic collection and dissemination of the information needed to identify suspects or prevent known criminals from entering the United States.

The gap in data-sharing between Departments is no longer simply a matter of bureaucratic inertia, but a threat to national security.

In 1996, the FBI and State Department issued a joint report recommending the State Department receive limited access to the NCIC–III database so the State Department could better identify aliens with a criminal background in our country and prevent their entry. Nevertheless, for four years this report lay dormant while the Departments could not cross the border without being stopped.

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