To amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a penalty for assault against journalists, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Swalwell of California introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a penalty for assault against journalists, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Journalist Protection Act”.

SEC. 2. ASSAULT AGAINST JOURNALISTS.

(a) In general.—Chapter 7 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:
§ 120. Assault against journalists

(a) IN GENERAL.—Whoever, in or affecting inter-
state or foreign commerce, intentionally commits, or at-
ttempts to commit—

“(1) an act described in subsection (b) shall be
fined under this title or imprisoned not more than
3 years, or both; or

“(2) an act described in subsection (c) shall be
fined under this title or imprisoned not more than
6 years, or both.

(b) BODILY INJURY TO A JOURNALIST.—An act de-
scribed in this subsection is an act that causes a bodily
injury to an individual—

“(1) who is a journalist;

“(2) committed with knowledge or reason to
know such individual is a journalist; and

“(3) committed—

“(A) while such journalist is taking part in
newsgathering; or

“(B) with the intention of intimidating or
impeding newsgathering by such journalist.

(c) SERIOUS BODILY INJURY TO A JOURNALIST.—
An act described in this subsection is an act that causes
a serious bodily injury to an individual—

“(1) who is a journalist;
“(2) committed with knowledge or reason to know such individual is a journalist; and

“(3) committed—

“(A) while such journalist is taking part in newsgathering; or

“(B) with the intention of intimidating or impeding newsgathering by such journalist.

“(d) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

“(1) BODILY INJURY.—The term ‘bodily injury’ has the meaning given such term in section 1365(h)(4) of this title.

“(2) JOURNALIST.—The term ‘journalist’ means an individual who—

“(A) is an employee, independent contractor, or agent of an entity or service that disseminates news or information—

“(i) by means of a newspaper, nonfiction book, wire service, news agency, news website, mobile application or other news or information service (whether distributed digitally or otherwise), news program, magazine, or other periodical (whether in print, electronic, or other format); or

“(ii) through television broadcast, radio broadcast, multichannel video pro-
gramming distributor (as such term is defined in section 602(13) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 522(13)), or motion picture for public showing; and (B) with the primary intent to investigate events or procure material in order to disseminate to the public news or information concerning local, national, or international events or other matters of public interest, engages in newsgathering.

“(3) NEWSGATHERING.—The term ‘newsgathering’ means engaging in the regular gathering, preparation, collection, photographing, recording, writing, editing, reporting, or publishing concerning local, national, or international events or other matters of public interest.

“(4) SERIOUS BODILY INJURY.—The term ‘serious bodily injury’ has the meaning given such term in section 1365(h)(3) of this title.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 7 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“120. Assault against journalists.”.