

Mikulski Behind Jamming Prison Phones

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(view clip)



Senator Barbara Mikulski jokes that the boot she wears to rehab her badly broken ankle will come in handy to kick butt in the senate.

She means it, one of the bills she's co-sponsored would allow local authorities to jam cell phone signals in prisons. It's already passed committee and soon could find its way to the floor.

"We want to jam the criminals as we're going to jam the cell phones they have out there organizing more violence," said Mikulski.

Governor Martin O'Malley pushed for the legislation following the high-profile Maryland case involving Carl Lackl. This past spring a federal jury convicted Patrick Byers of ordering the hit on Carl Lackl from a cell phone in his prison cell.

State authorities say despite their efforts, nearly a thousand cell phones were recovered from prison cells last year, a 71 percent increase from 2006.

Mikulski says that's why jamming is necessary, not just a ban on cell phones.

"I believe it will pass, I think Maryland has brought this to the attention of others as well, it is coming out all over the country."

Other states are now also beginning to see the connection between cell phones behind bars and the type of violence that ended Carl Lackl's life.

Mikulski says look for her to start fighting for this bill when the senate reconvenes in September.

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