

The US shell corporation - the perfect vehicle for corr...

Published: January 18, 2026, 6:29 pm

As [Thomson Reuters](#) have reported today:

As the District Attorney of New York County, my office, time and time again, finds its criminal investigations thwarted by an absurd system of secrecy whereby criminals can hide their money without even breaking a sweat -- or the law.

Welcome to the bizarre world of anonymous shell corporations.

The writer is, of course, Cyrus R. Vance Jr. And he continues:

The average American likely knows very little about them. But your average terrorist, drug-trafficker, tax evader or money launderer is well versed in the art of legal anonymity. Every day they make or move illicit money, and America's lax incorporation laws make it easy to hide the money behind anonymous shell companies and launder it through U. S. and foreign banks and their branches.

What is more, this is not by chance. This is by choice. As Vance notes:

There is no reason why anonymous corporations should exist in the United States. Congress could eliminate them overnight, at relatively little cost, by passing the bipartisan Incorporation Transparency and Law Enforcement Assistance Act, which would require states to collect information about the real people who own or control companies. The Senate bill, which is pending before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, is supported by a broad array of law enforcement groups, including the Justice Department, the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI, and the Fraternal Order of Police.

This bill is critical to the work of law enforcement and district attorneys, because all too often investigations are stymied when we encounter a company with hidden ownership. These nameless, faceless companies can do business just like any other, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to identify the real people behind them.

Odd then that it has so many opponents. Why could that be?

Isn't it time we limited limited liability for the sake of justice?

It has its uses, of course.

But only if we stop its abuses. And right now we're not.