

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4911

To impose criminal penalties for the unsafe operation of unmanned aircraft.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 12, 2016

Mr. LANGEVIN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To impose criminal penalties for the unsafe operation of
unmanned aircraft.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Drone Operator Safety
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDING; SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 (a) FINDING.—Congress finds that educating opera-
8 tors of unmanned aircraft about the laws and regulations

1 that govern such aircraft helps to ensure their safe oper-
2 ation.

3 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
4 gress that the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Ad-
5 ministration should continue to prioritize the education of
6 operators of unmanned aircraft through public outreach
7 efforts like the “Know Before You Fly” campaign.

8 **SEC. 3. UNSAFE OPERATION OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 2 of title 18, United
10 States Code, is amended—

11 (1) in section 31—

12 (A) in subsection (a)—

13 (i) by redesignating paragraph (10) as
14 paragraph (11); and

15 (ii) by inserting after paragraph (9)
16 the following:

17 “(10) UNMANNED AIRCRAFT.—The term ‘un-
18 manned aircraft’ has the meaning given such term
19 in section 44801 of title 49.”; and

20 (B) in subsection (b), by inserting “‘air-
21 port’,” before “‘appliance’”; and

22 (2) by inserting after section 39A the following:

23 **“§ 39B. Unsafe operation of unmanned aircraft**

24 “(a) OFFENSE.—Any person who operates an un-
25 manned aircraft and, in so doing, knowingly or recklessly

1 interferes with, or disrupts the operation of, an aircraft
2 carrying 1 or more occupants operating in the special air-
3 craft jurisdiction of the United States, in a manner that
4 poses an imminent safety hazard to such occupants, shall
5 be punished as provided in subsection (b).

6 “(b) PENALTY.—

7 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
8 graph (2), the punishment for an offense under sub-
9 section (a) shall be a fine under this title, imprison-
10 ment for not more than 1 year, or both.

11 “(2) SERIOUS BODILY INJURY OR DEATH.—Any
12 person who attempts to cause, or knowingly or reck-
13 lessly causes, serious bodily injury or death during
14 the commission of an offense under subsection (a)
15 shall be fined under this title, imprisoned for any
16 term of years or for life, or both.

17 “(c) OPERATION OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT IN CLOSE
18 PROXIMITY TO AIRPORTS.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The operation of an un-
20 manned aircraft within a runway exclusion zone
21 shall be considered a violation of subsection (a) un-
22 less such operation is approved by the airport’s air
23 traffic control facility or is the result of a cir-
24 cumstance, such as a malfunction, that could not

1 have been reasonably foreseen or prevented by the
2 operator.

3 “(2) RUNWAY EXCLUSION ZONE DEFINED.—In
4 this subsection, the term ‘runway exclusion zone’
5 means a rectangular area—

6 “(A) centered on the centerline of an ac-
7 tive runway of an airport immediately around
8 which the airspace is designated as class B,
9 class C, or class D airspace at the surface
10 under part 71 of title 14, Code of Federal Reg-
11 ulations; and

12 “(B) the length of which extends parallel
13 to the runway’s centerline to points that are 1
14 statute mile from each end of the runway and
15 the width of which is $\frac{1}{2}$ statute mile.”.

16 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
17 for chapter 2 of title 18, United States Code, is amended
18 by inserting after the item relating to section 39A the fol-
19 lowing:

“39B. Unsafe operation of unmanned aircraft.”.

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