

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1755

To amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit unsafe operation of unmanned aircraft, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 3, 2017

Mr. WHITEHOUSE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit unsafe operation of unmanned aircraft, and for other purposes.

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 of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. UNSAFE OPERATION OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT.**

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

9 (1) in section 31—

10 (A) in subsection (a)—

1 (i) by redesignating paragraph (10) as
 2 paragraph (11); and

3 (ii) by inserting after paragraph (9)
 4 the following:

5 “(10) UNMANNED AIRCRAFT.—The term ‘un-
 6 manned aircraft’ has the meaning given that term in
 7 section 331 of the FAA Modernization and Reform
 8 Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–95; 49 U.S.C. 40101
 9 note).”; and

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

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

13 **“§ 39B. Unsafe operation of unmanned aircraft**

14 “(a) OFFENSE.—It shall be unlawful to operate an
 15 unmanned aircraft and, in so doing, knowingly or reck-
 16 lessly interfering with, or disrupting the operation of, an
 17 aircraft or other airborne vehicle carrying 1 or more occu-
 18 pants operating in the special aircraft jurisdiction of the
 19 United States, in a manner that poses an imminent safety
 20 hazard to such occupants.

21 “(b) PENALTY.—

22 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
 23 graph (2), a person who violates subsection (a) shall
 24 be fined under this title, imprisoned for not more
 25 than 1 year, or both.

1 “(2) SERIOUS BODILY INJURY OR DEATH.—Any
 2 person who attempts to cause, or knowingly or reck-
 3 lessly causes, serious bodily injury or death while
 4 violating subsection (a) shall be fined under this
 5 title, imprisoned for any term of years or for life, or
 6 both.

7 “(c) OPERATION OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT IN CLOSE
 8 PROXIMITY TO AIRPORTS.—

9 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The operation of an un-
 10 manned aircraft, including an operation covered by
 11 section 336 of the FAA Modernization and Reform
 12 Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–95; 49 U.S.C. 40101
 13 note), within a runway exclusion zone shall be con-
 14 sidered a violation of subsection (a) unless—

15 “(A) the operator of the unmanned air-
 16 craft received prior authorization for the oper-
 17 ation from the air traffic control tower at the
 18 airport; or

19 “(B) the operation is the result of a cir-
 20 cumstance, such as a malfunction, that could
 21 not have been reasonably foreseen or prevented
 22 by the operator.

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

1 “(A) centered on the centerline of a run-
2 way of an airport; and

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

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

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

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