

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9119

To provide a prohibition on certain reductions to MQ-9 aircraft units, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 3, 2026

Mr. BABIN (for himself and Ms. HOULAHAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To provide a prohibition on certain reductions to MQ-9 aircraft units, 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. PROHIBITION ON CERTAIN REDUCTIONS TO**

4 **MQ-9 AIRCRAFT UNITS.**

5 (a) PROHIBITION.—Except as provided in this sec-
6 tion, during the covered period, the Secretary of the Air
7 Force may not—

8 (1) divest, deactivate, redesignate, consolidate,
9 transfer, initiate any action to retire, place in
10 backup aircraft inventory status, or otherwise reduce

1 the mission capability of any MQ-9 aircraft or MQ-
2 9 aircraft unit in existence on the date of the enact-
3 ment of this Act, including by—

4 (A) reducing the total primary aerospace
5 vehicle authorization (PAA) number of MQ-9
6 aircraft assigned to any unit of the Air Na-
7 tional Guard below the levels in effect on such
8 date of enactment; or

9 (B) reducing the primary mission aircraft
10 inventory of MQ-9 aircraft of the Air Force
11 below the levels in effect on such date of enact-
12 ment;

13 (2) modify the designed operational capability
14 statement for any MQ-9 aircraft unit, as in effect
15 on the date of the enactment of this Act, in a man-
16 ner that would reduce the capabilities of such a unit
17 below the levels specified in such statement as in ef-
18 fect on such date; or

19 (3) reduce, below the levels in effect on such
20 date of enactment, the number of personnel assigned
21 to units responsible for the operation and mainte-
22 nance of MQ-9 aircraft if such reduction would af-
23 fect the ability of such units to meet the capability
24 described in paragraph (2).

1 (b) EXCEPTION FOR INDIVIDUAL AIRCRAFT.—The
2 prohibition under subsection (a) shall not apply to an indi-
3 vidual MQ–9 aircraft if the Secretary of the Air Force—

4 (1) determines, on a case-by-case basis, that the
5 aircraft is unsafe to operate, uneconomical to repair,
6 or no longer mission capable due to mishap damage,
7 structural condition, airworthiness, obsolescence, or
8 other material sustainment issue; and

9 (2) meets the requirements of subsection (c)
10 with respect to the MQ–9 aircraft unit concerned.

11 (c) EXCEPTION FOR MISSION CONVERSION.—The
12 prohibition under subsection (a) shall not apply to an MQ–
13 9 aircraft unit if the Secretary of the Air Force, with the
14 approval of the applicable governor pursuant to section
15 104(c) of title 32, United States Code—

16 (1) assigns to such unit a new primary mission;

17 (2) certifies to the congressional defense com-
18 mittees that such mission will maintain or enhance
19 the operational capability of such unit within the
20 total force; and

21 (3) submits to the congressional defense com-
22 mittees a plan describing—

23 (A) the personnel impacts of mission con-
24 version;

1 (B) the projected operational capability of
2 the new mission, including programmed funding
3 and required manpower;

4 (C) the timeline for transition; and

5 (D) any associated aircraft, systems, or in-
6 frastructure requirements.

7 (d) **CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT.**—The Secretary
8 of the Air Force shall consult with the Chief of the Na-
9 tional Guard Bureau and the Director of the Air National
10 Guard before taking any action to retire, divest, reduce,
11 realign, restructure, redesignate, consolidate, transfer, or
12 otherwise modify any MQ–9 aircraft or MQ–9 aircraft
13 unit assigned to the Air National Guard.

14 **SEC. 2. REPORT ON RECAPITALIZATION PLAN.**

15 (a) **REPORT REQUIRED.**—Not later than 180 days
16 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
17 of the Air Force, in coordination with the Director of the
18 Air National Guard, shall submit to the congressional de-
19 fense committees a report on the plan of the Department
20 of the Air Force to recapitalize the MQ–9 aircraft fleet.

21 (b) **ELEMENTS.**—The report required by subsection
22 (a) shall include the following:

23 (1) An assessment of the current operational
24 status, projected service life, and mission require-
25 ments of the MQ–9 aircraft fleet.

1 (2) A description of planned modernization ef-
2 forts, sustainment activities, and capability upgrades
3 for MQ-9 aircraft through fiscal year 2035.

4 (3) An assessment of options for recapitaliza-
5 tion or modernization MQ-9 aircraft.

6 (4) A description of the role of the Air National
7 Guard in the future MQ-9 aircraft force structure
8 and recapitalization strategy.

9 (5) A projected timeline and estimated funding
10 requirements associated with recapitalization of the
11 MQ-9 aircraft fleet.

12 (6) An identification of any legislative authori-
13 ties required to implement the recapitalization plan.

14 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

15 In this Act:

16 (1) CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES.—
17 The term “congressional defense committees” has
18 the meaning given that term in section 101(a) of
19 title 10, United States Code.

20 (2) COVERED PERIOD.—The term “covered pe-
21 riod” means the period beginning on the date of the
22 enactment of this Act and ending on September 30,
23 2032.

24 (3) DESIGNED OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY
25 STATEMENT.—The term “designed operational capa-

- 1 bility statement” has the meaning given that term in
- 2 Air Force Instruction 10–201.

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