

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4309

To amend title 49, United States Code, to establish a pilot program for small, nonlethal deescalation unmanned aircraft to be used for law enforcement and public safety, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 15 (legislative day, APRIL 14), 2026

Mr. JUSTICE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To amend title 49, United States Code, to establish a pilot program for small, nonlethal deescalation unmanned aircraft to be used for law enforcement and public safety, 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 “Deescalation Drone
5 Pilot Program Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT PILOT PROGRAM**
 2 **FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFE-**
 3 **TY.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 448 of title 49, United
 5 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
 6 lowing:

7 **“§ 44815. Small unmanned aircraft pilot program for**
 8 **law enforcement and public safety**

9 “(a) PROHIBITION REGARDING WEAPONS.—The pro-
 10 hibition regarding unmanned aircraft armed with dan-
 11 gerous weapons under section 363 of the FAA Reauthor-
 12 ization Act of 2018 (49 U.S.C. 44802 note) is reaffirmed.

13 “(b) PILOT PROGRAM.—

14 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 months
 15 after the date of enactment of this section, the Ad-
 16 ministrator of the Federal Aviation Administration
 17 shall establish a deescalation drone pilot program to
 18 review the potential use of nonlethal deescalation un-
 19 manned aircraft by Federal, State, local, or Tribal
 20 law enforcement responding to an active shooter
 21 event.

22 “(2) CONTENTS.—The pilot program required
 23 under paragraph (1) shall—

24 “(A) address the process of reviewing and
 25 validating nonlethal weapons that may be af-
 26 fixed to an unmanned aircraft;

1 “(B) address training protocols for law en-
2 forcement and agents of the Administration for
3 the use of nonlethal deescalation unmanned air-
4 craft;

5 “(C) address operational and safety proto-
6 cols for operators of nonlethal deescalation un-
7 manned aircraft and agencies directly over-
8 seeing the operation of such unmanned aircraft;
9 and

10 “(D) assess the efficacy of nonlethal dees-
11 calation unmanned aircraft in indoor active
12 shooter events and the safety benefits associ-
13 ated with increasing the safe engagement dis-
14 tance between a law enforcement officer and an
15 active shooter.

16 “(3) PARTNERSHIPS.—In carrying out the pilot
17 program under this subsection, the Administrator
18 shall use existing partnerships with the unmanned
19 aircraft system test ranges designated under section
20 44803, in collaboration with Federal, State, and
21 large metropolitan area law enforcement.

22 “(4) INTERAGENCY AVIATION AGREEMENTS.—
23 The Administrator may enter into interagency avia-
24 tion agreements, as necessary, with the Department
25 of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security,

1 and State large metropolitan and rural law enforce-
2 ment agencies to support the pilot program under
3 this subsection.

4 “(5) CONSULTATION.—The Administrator shall
5 solicit input from, and coordinate with, relevant
6 stakeholders as appropriate in carrying out the pilot
7 program established under this subsection.

8 “(6) REPORT.—Not later than 3 months after
9 the conclusion of the pilot program, the Adminis-
10 trator shall submit to the Committee on Transpor-
11 tation and Infrastructure of the House of Represent-
12 atives a report on the results of the pilot program
13 that includes a plan outlining a proposed process
14 through which a law enforcement applicant to such
15 program may seek permission from the Adminis-
16 trator to operate nonlethal deescalation unmanned
17 aircraft.

18 “(c) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 60 days after
19 submitting the report required under subsection (b)(6),
20 the Administrator shall initiate a rulemaking to create a
21 process through which the Administrator may provide ap-
22 proval—

23 “(1) for Federal, State, local, or Tribal law en-
24 forcement to operate nonlethal deescalation un-
25 manned aircraft during an active shooter event; and

1 “(2) for manufacturers of nonlethal deescala-
2 tion unmanned aircraft to operate such devices for
3 testing, validation, and law enforcement demonstra-
4 tions.

5 “(d) MANUFACTURING REQUIREMENT.—Any non-
6 lethal deescalation unmanned aircraft used under the pilot
7 program shall be manufactured in the United States, as
8 defined by the Federal Trade Commission under part 323
9 of title 16, Code of Federal Regulations.

10 “(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 “(1) ACTIVE SHOOTER EVENT.—The term ‘ac-
12 tive shooter event’ means an event in which—

13 “(A) an individual is actively engaged in
14 unlawfully killing or attempting to kill people
15 using explosives as defined under chapter 40 of
16 title 18, United States Code, or weapons sub-
17 ject to chapter 44 of title 18 or chapter 53 of
18 the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

19 “(B) responding to the event poses a sig-
20 nificant risk to human life, including the lives
21 of law enforcement personnel and other individ-
22 uals; and

23 “(C) absent an immediate use of force, the
24 individual described in subparagraph (A) would
25 continue posing a threat to human life.

1 “(2) NONLETHAL DEESCALATION UNMANNED
2 AIRCRAFT.—The term ‘nonlethal deescalation un-
3 manned aircraft’ means an unmanned aircraft oper-
4 ated by law enforcement that—

5 “(A) is only equipped or armed with 1 or
6 more nonlethal weapons, including those that
7 may be subject to the definition provided in sec-
8 tion 930(g)(2) of title 18, United States Code;
9 and

10 “(B) may be equipped with other nonlethal
11 devices, including intense sound distraction
12 emitters, cameras, targeting sensors, speakers,
13 strobe lights, and other similar collateral equip-
14 ment.

15 “(3) NONLETHAL WEAPON.—The term ‘non-
16 lethal weapon’ means a weapon, device, or munition
17 that—

18 “(A) is explicitly designed and primarily
19 employed to immediately incapacitate targeted
20 individuals or property in the target area while
21 minimizing—

22 “(i) fatalities;

23 “(ii) permanent injury to individuals;

24 and

1 “(iii) undesired damage to property;

2 and

3 “(B) is intended to have reversible effects

4 on individuals and property.”.

5 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chap-

6 ter 448 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by

7 adding at the end the following:

“‘44815. Small unmanned aircraft pilot program for law enforcement and public
safety.’”.

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