


(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend title 49, United States Code, to permit small, unmanned aircraft
pilot research for public safety, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. NEHLS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on _____

A BILL

To amend title 49, United States Code, to permit small,
unmanned aircraft pilot research for 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 “Drone Research and
5 Innovation for Law Enforcement Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT PILOT RESEARCH**
2 **FOR PUBLIC SAFETY.**

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

6 **“§ 44811. Small unmanned aircraft pilot research for**
7 **public safety**

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

12 “(b) PILOT RESEARCH PROGRAM.—

13 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 months
14 after the date of enactment of this section, the Ad-
15 ministrator of the Federal Aviation Administration
16 shall initiate a pilot research program to study the
17 potential use of non-lethal de-escalation unmanned
18 aircraft by law enforcement agencies.

19 “(2) CONTENTS.—The study required under
20 subsection (b) shall address—

21 “(A) the process of assessing and vali-
22 dating conducted energy devices or other non-
23 lethal de-escalation equipment that may be at-
24 tached to unmanned aircraft;

25 “(B) training protocols for law enforce-
26 ment and agents of the Administration; and

1 “(C) operational and safety protocols for
2 operators of non-lethal de-escalation unmanned
3 aircraft and agencies directly overseeing the op-
4 eration of such unmanned aircraft.

5 “(3) PARTNERSHIPS.—The Administrator shall
6 enter into interagency agreements with the
7 Department of Justice, Department of Homeland
8 Security, and large State metropolitan and rural
9 law enforcement agencies with regard to the pilot
10 research program established under this subsection.
11 The Administrator shall designate the Center of
12 Excellence for Unmanned Aerial Systems
13 designated under section 44814, in collaboration
14 with Federal, State, and large metropolitan law
15 enforcement as well as rural law enforcement
16 training facilities, as the location for such
17 program.

18 “(4) CONSULTATION.—The Administrator shall
19 solicit input from, and coordinate with, relevant
20 stakeholders as appropriate in carrying out the pilot
21 research program established under this subsection.

22 “(5) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the
23 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator
24 shall submit to the Committee on Transportation
25 and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives
 and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and

1 Transportation a report on the results of the pilot
2 research program that includes a plan outlining a
3 proposed process through which a law enforcement
4 applicant to such program may seek permission from
5 the Administrator to operate non-lethal de-escalation
6 unmanned aircraft.

7 “(c) RULEMAKING.—Not later than 90 days after
8 submitting the report set required under subsection (b)(5),
9 the Administrator shall initiate a rulemaking to create a
10 process through which the Administrator may provide ap-
11 proval to operate non-lethal de-escalation unmanned air-
12 craft.

13 “(d) MANUFACTURING REQUIREMENT.—Any non-le-
14 thal de-escalation unmanned aircraft used under the pilot
15 research program may be manufactured in the United
16 States, as defined by the Federal Trade Commission under
17 part 323 of title 16, Code of Federal Regulations.

18 “(e) DEFINITIONS OF NON-LETHAL DE-ESCALATION
19 UNMANNED AIRCRAFT.—In this section:

20 “(1) NON-LETHAL DE-ESCALATION UNMANNED
21 AIRCRAFT.—The term ‘non-lethal de-escalation un-
22 manned aircraft’ means an unmanned aircraft
23 equipped with 1 or more non-lethal weapons or de-
24 vices that is—

1 “(A) used by law enforcement personnel in
2 scenarios that present significant risk to human
3 life, including the life of law enforcement per-
4 sonnel, captives, uninvolved individuals, the
5 public, or a suspected criminal; and

6 “(B) in which the suspected criminal is in
7 an position through which he or she could po-
8 tentially escalate the situation and expose
9 human life to a high level of risk.

10 “(2) NON-LETHAL WEAPON.—The term ‘non-le-
11 thal weapon’ has the meaning given the term in used
12 in DOD Directive Number 300.03E, issued on Au-
13 gust 31, 2018, by the Department of Defense.”.

14 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chap-
15 ter 448 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by
16 adding at the end the following:

 “‘44811. Small unmanned aircraft pilot research for public safety.’”.