

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2387

To amend the Arms Export Control Act to address arms export controls for certain unmanned aircraft systems and items, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 23, 2025

Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. COONS, and Mr. CORNYN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

A BILL

To amend the Arms Export Control Act to address arms export controls for certain unmanned aircraft systems and items, 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 “Leading Exports of
5 Aerial Drones Act of 2025” or the “LEAD Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. ARMS EXPORT CONTROLS FOR COVERED UN-**
7 **MANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS AND ITEMS.**

8 (a) ARMS EXPORT CONTROL ACT.—

1 (1) SECTION 38.—Section 38 of the Arms Ex-
 2 port Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2778) is amended by
 3 adding at the end the following:

4 “(m) COVERED UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS AND
 5 ITEMS.—

6 “(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of transfers
 7 of defense articles and defense services under this
 8 Act, covered unmanned aircraft systems and items—

9 “(A) shall be treated as manned aircraft
 10 systems items; and

11 “(B) shall not be considered launch vehi-
 12 cles, missile technology, or missile equipment
 13 subject to controls or export restrictions for
 14 purposes of adherence by the United States to
 15 the Missile Technology Control Regime.

16 “(2) DEFINITION OF COVERED UNMANNED AIR-
 17 CRAFT SYSTEMS AND ITEMS.—In this subsection,
 18 the term ‘covered unmanned aircraft systems and
 19 items’ means unmanned aircraft systems and related
 20 items that—

21 “(A) are controlled under the International
 22 Traffic in Arms Regulations and enumerated in
 23 the Missile Technology Control Regime Annex;
 24 and

25 “(B) are designed to be reusable.”.

1 (2) CHAPTER 7.—Chapter 7 of such Act (22
2 U.S.C. 2797 et seq.) is amended by inserting after
3 section 73B the following:

4 **“SEC. 73C. STATEMENT OF POLICY ON COVERED UN-**
5 **MANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS AND ITEMS.**

6 “It is the policy of the United States to treat covered
7 unmanned aircraft systems and items (as defined in sec-
8 tion 38(m)(2)(B)) as manned aircraft systems and items
9 for purposes of implementing the Missile Technology Con-
10 trol Regime.”.

11 (b) INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN ARMS REGULA-
12 TIONS.—

13 (1) UNITED STATES MUNITIONS LIST.—Not
14 later than 180 days after the date of the enactment
15 of this Act, the President shall amend section 121.1
16 of title 22, Code of Federal Regulations, to provide
17 that covered unmanned aircraft systems and items—

18 (A) are subject to the same export control
19 provisions as manned aircraft systems and
20 items and that, for purposes of part 121 of
21 such title, shall be reviewed under the same cri-
22 teria and guidelines as manned aircraft systems
23 and items; and

24 (B) are distinct from launch vehicles, mis-
25 sile technology, and missile equipment and are

1 subject to separate export control provisions
2 and that, for purposes of part 121 of such title,
3 shall be reviewed under criteria specific to their
4 technological and operational characteristics.

5 (2) MISSILE TECHNOLOGY CONTROL REGIME.—

6 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-
7 ment of this Act, the President shall amend section
8 120.23 of title 22, Code of Federal Regulations, to
9 provide that, for purposes of implementing the Mis-
10 sile Technology Control Regime, the United States
11 shall treat covered unmanned aircraft systems and
12 items—

13 (A) separately from missile technology, in-
14 cluding for purposes of co-production and co-de-
15 velopment agreements with allies and partners;
16 and

17 (B) as manned aircraft systems and items
18 that shall not be subject to controls, missile
19 technology reviews, or export restrictions for
20 purposes of adherence by the United States to
21 the Missile Technology Control Regime.

22 (3) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

23 (A) COVERED UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYS-
24 TEMS AND ITEMS.—The term “covered un-
25 manned aircraft systems and items” has the

1 meaning given that term in subsection (m)(2)
2 of section 38 of the Arms Export Control Act
3 (22 U.S.C. 2778), as added by subsection (a).

4 (B) MISSILE; MISSILE TECHNOLOGY CON-
5 TROL REGIME.—The terms “missile” and “Mis-
6 sile Technology Control Regime” have the
7 meanings given those terms in section 74(a) of
8 the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C.
9 2797c(a)).

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