



August 20, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Steve Scalise
Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Thune, Leader Jeffries, Leader Schumer, and Leader Scalise:

On behalf of the undersigned national public safety associations - representing thousands of local and state agencies and personnel responsible for protecting communities across the country - we

urge Congress to prioritize and pass comprehensive legislation to address the threat posed by the criminal misuse of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), or drones. While we appreciate the growing bipartisan commitment to extending counter-UAS authority to state and local agencies, proposals centered on limited pilot programs do not meet the urgency or scale of the challenge we are seeing. State and local law enforcement and corrections agencies should be granted authority to detect, track, identify, and mitigate drones that threaten public safety.

State and local law enforcement agencies across the country face a widening capability gap. While drones are increasingly used for criminal purposes - from smuggling contraband into prisons and jails to interfering with emergency response aircraft - our agencies lack the legal authority to act. We respectfully urge Congress to establish a comprehensive, permanent counter-UAS framework that empowers trained local and state public safety personnel to detect, track, and, when necessary, safely mitigate unlawful drone activity. We are ready to implement these responsibilities and will do so within strict constitutional, operational, and oversight parameters.

The domestic drone threat is not theoretical. It is here, growing, and affecting the full spectrum of public safety. Emergency response and firefighting flights have been grounded mid-response, including in the Los Angeles wildfires and the Kerr County, Texas floods. Law enforcement tactical operations have been surveilled and disrupted. Correctional facilities are inundated with drone drops of drugs, weapons, and cell phones - allowing inmates to coordinate criminal activity beyond the walls in our communities.

We are also preparing for an elevated threat environment around the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the America 250 celebrations, and 2028 Olympic Games. These events will attract global attention and millions of attendees across multiple jurisdictions. Relying on a limited number of pilot programs or exclusive federal capabilities will not be enough. State and local law enforcement and corrections must be part of a unified national response - equipped with the authorities, tools, and training to act decisively and safely.

We commend Congress for supporting proposals that provide funding for drone detection and tracking systems. But without corresponding legal authority to mitigate threats, that funding cannot be fully leveraged to protect our people. Detection without mitigation is not a viable strategy for public safety. Moreover, we are concerned that an overly narrow focus on pilot projects will leave the vast majority of jurisdictions without any meaningful ability to respond to threats they see.

We urge Congress to deliver lasting, scalable authority that empowers public safety agencies across all 50 states - not just a handful of test sites. This framework must be paired with robust guardrails and oversight, and we welcome the opportunity to work with federal partners on establishing national standards, training protocols, and accountability mechanisms.

State and local public safety agencies stand ready to carry out this mission responsibly, and we remain committed to safeguarding constitutional rights in every aspect of our operations.

Again, we appreciate the progress that has been made and the serious attention Congress has given to this issue. Now is the time to act to provide law enforcement with the authority and tools necessary to meet this moment.

Sincerely,

American Correctional Association (ACA)
Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies (ASCIA)
Correctional Leaders Association (CLA)
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA)
Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA)
Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA)
National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies (NASDEA)
National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO)
National Fusion Center Association (NFCA)
National High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Directors Association (NHDA)
National Homeland Security Association (NHSA)
National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition (NNOAC)
National Real Time Crime Center Association (NRTCCA)
National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)
Sergeants Benevolent Association NYPD
Small and Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association (SRLEEA)

CC:

House Judiciary Committee
Senate Judiciary Committee
House Homeland Security Committee
Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee
House Armed Services Committee
Senate Armed Services Committee
House Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
Senate Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
House Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee
Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee