

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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

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**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)).