

[First Look: DHS Countering Unmanned Aircraft Systems Coordinator Act. \(HR 6438, 115th Congress\)](#)

Amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Department of Homeland Security to establish a coordinator for unmanned aircraft systems.

Updated last **July 31, 2018**

for the 07/19/2018 version of HR 6438.



WHAT IT DOES

[HR 6438](#) amends the [Homeland Security Act of 2002](#) to direct the [Department of Homeland Security](#) to establish a coordinator for unmanned aircraft systems (UAS). Specific duties of the Coordinator will include:

- Organize efforts within the Department of Homeland Security to develop plans and policies to counteract terrorist attacks involving UAS;
- Promote research and distribution of UAS threat countermeasures;
- Serve as the Department's point of contact for all inquiries regarding countering UAS attacks; and
- Carry out miscellaneous activities related to UAS, as needed by the Department.

Beyond these duties, the Department's Coordinator for UAS would also be responsible for collaborating with various applicable offices throughout the government to investigate how the Department's efforts to counter UAS are done so lawfully. The Coordinator will also work with the [Department's Office of Partnership and Engagement](#) and other relevant offices to share critical counter UAS measures with private sector UAS operators and mitigate any impacts to lawfully operated UAS

RELEVANT SCIENCE

While older radio-controlled aircraft and vehicles have posed a risk as potential weapons for many years, the technology was difficult to learn, and it took time, skill, and patience to build and operate. These challenges imposed some limits on their broader use. Modern control technology has made commercial unmanned vehicles and aircraft far easier to operate.

With respect to UAS, since 2015, the increased availability of commercial drones has led to increases in sales and public acceptance. For example, according to a [poll](#) from Saint Leo University, 72% of adults support using drones for community policing. The FAA projects growth in [annual UAS sales](#) from \$1.9 million in 2016 to \$4.3 million by 2020.

The use of commercial UAS as weapons has already become an issue in other countries. In 2014, the Islamic State (IS) began using commercial drones to make propaganda films and later used drones as [scouts](#). The IS has also fit explosive charges to UASs to make [inexpensive guided missiles](#). [Concerns have also been raised](#) about domestic attacks using commercial UASs.

STATUS

Bill [HR 6438](#) was first introduced in the House on July 19, 2018 and subsequently referred to the [House Committee on Homeland Security](#).

SPONSORS

Sponsor: [Representative Scott Perry](#) (R-PA-4)

Cosponsors:

- [Representative Michael McCaul](#) (R-TX-10)


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RECOMMENDED CITATION

Duke SciPol, "To amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish in the Department of Homeland Security an Unmanned Aircraft Systems Coordinator, and for other purposes. (HR 6438, 115th Congress)" available at <http://scipol.duke.edu/content/first-look-amend-homeland-security-act-2002-establish-department-homeland-security-unmanned#overlay-context=content/first-look-amend-homeland-security-act-2002-establish-department-homeland-security-unmanned> (07/31/2018).

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