



December 2, 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 Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

RE: Counter-UAS authorities for state and local law enforcement and corrections

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

On behalf of the undersigned national public safety associations - representing thousands of state and local law enforcement and corrections agencies nationwide - we urge Congress to include comprehensive counter-UAS authority for state and local agencies in the final FY 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). State and local public safety personnel need clear authority to detect, track, identify, and, when necessary, mitigate drones that threaten public safety. The threat is growing far faster than current law allows agencies to respond, and we appreciate the

work underway to close this gap by ensuring state and local agencies have meaningful, operationally useful authorities in the conference agreement.

We appreciate the ongoing efforts in Congress and the Administration to advance updated counter-UAS language that would authorize trained state and local public safety personnel to conduct counter-UAS operations at large public events, critical infrastructure sites, and correctional facilities. The latest draft proposal reflects a meaningful step forward: it replaces the pilot program model with a comprehensive framework for state and local agencies, supported by federal training requirements, approved-technology lists, and strong oversight. This approach aligns with the scale of the threat and the operational readiness of public safety agencies, and incorporates protections to ensure public safety including airspace safety.

State and local public safety agencies across the country face a widening capability gap. Drones are increasingly used for criminal purposes - from smuggling contraband into correctional facilities to interfering with emergency response aircraft - yet agencies lack the legal tools to act. Limited pilot programs cannot meet this operational reality; they authorize only a handful of agencies and leave the vast majority of communities without any response capability. We respectfully urge Congress to establish a comprehensive counter-UAS framework that empowers trained state and local personnel to safely detect, track, and mitigate unlawful drone activity.

Timely action is essential. The United States is preparing for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, America 250 celebrations, and the 2028 Olympic Games - events that will bring millions of attendees to venues across multiple jurisdictions. Federal agencies alone cannot meet operational demand, and a pilot-based framework would leave most without the ability to respond to drone threats. State and local agencies need clear authority well before these events begin.

State and local public safety agencies are on the front lines of this threat and are prepared to implement these authorities responsibly and with full accountability. We urge Congress to act by providing clear, counter-UAS authority for trained state and local agencies in the final FY 2026 NDAA. Doing so will give public safety professionals the tools they need to protect the public, safeguard major events, and meet the growing operational demands posed by unlawful drone activity.

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 Association of Police Organizations (NAPO)
National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies (NASDEA)
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 (SBA)
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