

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4229

To direct the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to conduct a study and submit a report on the effects of unmanned free balloons on aviation safety.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 20, 2023

Ms. SHERRILL (for herself, Mr. GIMENEZ, and Ms. GARCIA of Texas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to conduct a study and submit a report on the effects of unmanned free balloons on aviation safety.

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 “Balloon Location and
5 Identification Pronouncement Study Act” or the “BLIPS
6 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. STUDY AND REPORT ON EFFECTS OF UNMANNED**
2 **FREE BALLOONS ON AVIATION SAFETY.**

3 (a) STUDY.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The officials concerned shall
5 conduct a study on the effects on aviation safety of
6 domestically launched unmanned free balloons that
7 do not emit an electronic or radio signal that is able
8 to be located or tracked by the owner of the balloon
9 or by civil or military airspace authorities.

10 (2) ELEMENTS.—The study described in para-
11 graph (1) shall include an analysis of—

12 (A) how flights of the balloons described in
13 paragraph (1) have or could affect aviation
14 safety;

15 (B) how such balloon flights have contrib-
16 uted or could contribute to misidentified threats
17 to civil or military air vehicles or infrastructure;
18 and

19 (C) how such balloon flights have impacted
20 or could impact defense readiness and air traf-
21 fic control operations.

22 (b) REPORT.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 12 months
24 after the date of enactment of this section, the offi-
25 cials concerned shall submit to the appropriate con-

1 gressional committees a report detailing the results
2 of the study described in subsection (a)(1).

3 (2) DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—

4 The report described in paragraph (1) shall include
5 discussion and recommendations pertaining to—

6 (A) the efficacy, feasibility, technical speci-
7 fications, and potential civil and military im-
8 pacts of mandating that each domestically
9 launched unmanned free balloon be equipped
10 with an electronic or radio emitter that can be
11 tracked with near real-time, geolocational, and
12 altitudinal precision, and which can transmit
13 identifying information of the balloon or its
14 owner; and

15 (B) how the officials concerned can collect
16 and use the data of such emitters for airspace
17 deconfliction and maintaining a safe airspace
18 picture by integrating the data into a real-time
19 or near real-time digital system that supports
20 the operations of the Federal Aviation Adminis-
21 tration and the Department of Defense.

22 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

23 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
24 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
25 mittees” means—

1 (A) the Committee on Armed Services of
2 the House of Representatives;

3 (B) the Committee on Transportation and
4 Infrastructure of the House of Representatives;

5 (C) the Committee on Armed Services of
6 the Senate; and

7 (D) the Committee on Commerce, Science,
8 and Transportation of the Senate.

9 (2) OFFICIALS CONCERNED.—The term “offi-
10 cials concerned” means the Secretary of Defense
11 and the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Ad-
12 ministration.

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