

# U.S. Sen. Johnson: Joins U.S. Sens. McCaskill, Hoeven and Heitkamp to introduce legislation to protect against drone threats

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**WASHINGTON** — On Monday, Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), chairman of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Ranking Member Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), and Sens. John Hoeven (R-N.D.) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) introduced the Preventing Emerging Threats Act of 2018.

The bill provides the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) with the authorities they need to protect buildings and assets when there is an unacceptable security risk to public safety posed by an unmanned aircraft.

The Senators had this to say about the bill:

“The threats posed by malicious unmanned aircraft are too great to ignore,” **said Chairman Johnson**. “It is not enough to just tell drone operators not to fly in

certain high-risk areas; we must give federal law enforcement the authority to act if necessary. By providing the DOJ and DHS with more tools in their toolbox to keep up with emerging security threats we are working towards our shared goal of a safer and more prosperous America.”

“Advances in technology improve the lives of all Americans, but those advances can also create new ways for terrorists and other bad actors to attack our country,” **Ranking Member McCaskill said.** “This bill is about ensuring that we can quickly and responsibly respond to those emerging threats and keep communities and families around the country safe.”

“Developing UAS detection and counter-UAS technologies is a key component necessary for us to safely integrate unmanned aircraft into our National Airspace,” **said Sen. Hoeven.** “This legislation provides the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice with the tools they need to protect against UAS threats to our national security, which will help to ensure the safe use of legitimate UAS so this industry can continue to grow and develop.”

“The potential for the illicit use of drones presents border security officials with additional challenges as they work to protect our borders and prevent narcotics trafficking,” **said Sen. Heitkamp.** “As a member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, I’m committed to keeping American families safe by building the capacity to detect and intercept these advanced UAS threats. North Dakota remains a leader in UAS innovation, integration and, research, and it’s absolutely critical that we leverage our strengths in Grand Forks and across the state to both promote safe UAS development and protect against its misuse.”

### **Background:**

- Gives the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice the authorities they need to protect important buildings and assets (“covered facilities/assets”) when there is a security risk posed by a drone (“unmanned aircraft”).
- The legislation contains a sunset provision, Congress will reevaluate the authorities in five years.
- Directs DHS to perform research and testing of technology.
- Requires DHS to conduct several assessments to evaluate emerging threats that drones may pose to state or private critical infrastructure entities and domestic airports and that vehicles may pose if used to inflict violence and

intimidate people.

The bill text can be found [here](#).