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December 20, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House of Representatives
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: Expanding the Safeguarding the Homeland from the Threats Posed
by Unmanned Aircraft Systems Act to Address Contraband Cell Phones
in Correctional Facilities**

Dear Congressional Leaders:

The Safeguarding the Homeland from the Threats Posed by Unmanned Aircraft Systems Act is a crucial opportunity to address public safety challenges across the country. This legislation provides the framework to empower law enforcement with the necessary tools to detect and counter unauthorized drones, a rapidly growing threat to public safety and national security. However, I strongly urge Congress to expand its scope to include protections for state corrections departments and local jails to address the pervasive issue of contraband cell phones in correctional facilities. We must stay vigilant regarding evolving technology to appropriately mitigate its risks.

I am pleased that Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer is shedding more light on this issue and to see that this legislation has achieved bipartisan support across party lines. Senator Gary Peters of Michigan introduced this bill with multiple Republican co-sponsors who have also been very vocal on the topic, including Ron Johnson of Wisconsin. Their advocacy for proactive measures to detect and counter drones reflects the broader need to strengthen existing legislation so that we can effectively respond to evolving threats. Unauthorized drones and contraband cell phones go hand in hand. Contraband cell phones are often used to coordinate illegal drone drops of more contraband cell phones inside our prison system, creating a limitless supply to conduct

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crime. Used together, both tools have been proven to pose significant risks to public safety, including scams against the elderly, drug dealing, and violent crimes such as kidnapping and murder.

The devastating consequences of contraband cell phones hit very close to home here in Georgia. In 2021, an 88-year-old retired veteran, Bobby Kicklighter, was brutally murdered in Tattnall County as a result of mistaken identity. This crime was orchestrated from within a Georgia prison using contraband cell phones. It is heartbreaking to know that this innocent life could have been saved had the necessary tools, such as cell phone jamming technology, been in place. Violent offenders must not retain the ability to harm others from behind bars.

Despite the urgent need for action, current Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations prohibit the use of cell phone jamming technology by state and local governments, creating a significant barrier to public safety. Just as Congress recognizes the need to empower law enforcement to monitor and counter drones, the same commitment must be made to ensure state and local correctional facilities have the tools to neutralize internal threats. Without these measures, correctional officers, jailers, inmates, and the public will continue to face unnecessary and preventable harm.

Expanding the Safeguarding the Homeland from the Threats Posed by Unmanned Aircraft Systems Act to include corrections departments and authorizing cell phone jamming technology is imperative. Strengthening existing legislative efforts will ensure a safer future for our communities. By addressing these issues comprehensively, Congress has the opportunity to make meaningful progress in protecting public safety and national security.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical matter. I am committed to working with you to advance this legislation and protect the people of our great nation.

Sincerely,



Chris Carr, Georgia Attorney General