

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
89R2354 MCF-D

S.B. 1197
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current law prohibits the operation of unmanned aircraft over military installations and airports, but that prohibition does not apply to the air space above spaceports. This legislation seeks to remedy this situation by prohibiting the operation of unmanned aircraft over spaceports. The bill would create a Class B misdemeanor offense for certain instances of operating an unmanned aircraft over an airport or military installation and would increase the penalty to a Class A misdemeanor in the case of a previous conviction. The language mirrors the existing law for military and airports, closing a gap that leaves spaceports vulnerable.

Military installations, airports, and spaceports report instances of suspicious activity of unidentified unmanned aircrafts flying in or around their airspace, posing potential national security threats and air traffic safety hazards.

As proposed, S.B. 1197 amends current law relating to the operation of an unmanned aircraft over a spaceport and creates a criminal offense.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends the heading to Section 42.15, Penal Code, to read as follows:

Sec. 42.15. OPERATION OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT OVER AIRPORT, MILITARY INSTALLATION, OR SPACEPORT.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 42.15(a), Penal Code, by adding Subdivision (3) to define "spaceport."

SECTION 3. Amends Sections 42.15(b) and (c), Penal Code, as follows:

(b) Provides that a person commits an offense if the person intentionally or knowingly:

(1) operates an unmanned aircraft over an airport, military installation, or spaceport; or

(2)-(8) makes conforming changes to these subdivisions.

SECTION 4. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2025.