

---

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: September 9, 2025

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso   
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No.: 25-0002-S84  
Assignment No.: 25-09-0754

SUBJECT: H.R. 4759 (Gomez)

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Resolution (Hernandez – Park – et al.) to include in the City’s 2025-2026 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for H.R. 4759 (Gomez), the Ban Military Drones Spying on Civilians Act, which would prohibit the use of certain unmanned aircraft in the United States to conduct surveillance of United States persons engaged in protests or civil disobedience, and increase congressional oversight of the use of these devices.

### SUMMARY

On August 27, 2025, a Resolution (Hernandez – Park – et al.) was introduced in support of H.R. 4759, which would prohibit the use of certain unmanned aircraft in the United States for the purposes of conducting surveillance over protests. The Resolution states that the use of unmanned aircraft, also referred to as drones, for surveillance has become increasingly widespread in the United States, and that the Department of Homeland Security flew a Customs and Border Patrol MQ-9 Reaper over the City of Los Angeles during protests against the Trump Administration’s immigration policies.

The Resolution further states that these drones are designed for war, and should not be used to surveil residents of American cities engaging in constitutionally protected activities. The Resolution, therefore, seeks an official position of the City of Los Angeles to support H.R. 4759.

### BACKGROUND

Over recent years, the use of unmanned aircraft for surveillance has grown significantly. The most powerful unmanned aircraft, such as the MQ-9 Reaper and its variants, were originally designed for military use and operated overseas. Some variants are equipped with technology that enable high-altitude surveillance. In recent years, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Customs and Border Protection has operated unnamed aircraft as part of its mission. These aircraft are used to monitor for illegal activities such as smuggling and drug trafficking.

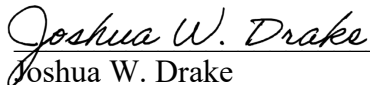
In June 2025 the DHS confirmed that it flew one of its MQ-9s over the City of Los Angeles during protests against the Federal Government’s immigration policies. DHS stated that the aircraft was not engaged in surveillance of constitutionally protected activities, but the presence of this aircraft over an American city has raised questions about the use of unmanned aircraft designed for military use over American cities.

H.R. 4759 was introduced in order to ensure that these aircraft are not used to monitor United States persons engaged in protests or civil disobedience. The bill would prohibit the use specified unmanned aircraft defined as: the MQ-9 Reaper or variants thereof; any unmanned aircraft that uses an airframe initially developed for use by the Armed Forces; medium-altitude, long-endurance aircraft; high-altitude, long-endurance aircraft; and any aircraft capable of flying at 10,000 feet or higher.

This bill would also require the President to transmit a report on the annual use of the unmanned aircraft covered by this legislation in the United States, and includes requirements for these reports. This legislation would increase congressional oversight over the use of specified unmanned aircraft in the United States, and ensure that these aircraft are not used in ways that violate the rights of persons in the United States to engage in protest.

#### BILL STATUS

07/25/2025	Introduced
07/25/2025	Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, 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.

  
Joshua W. Drake  
Analyst

Attachments: 1. Resolution

# RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council; and

WHEREAS, the use of unmanned aircraft, often referred to as drones, for surveillance has become increasingly widespread across the United States; and

WHEREAS, this includes the use of some drones designed for military use being operated by Federal agencies under the control of the executive branch; and

WHEREAS, recently it came to light that the Department of Homeland Security flew a Customs and Border Patrol MQ-9 Reaper over the City of Los Angeles during protests against the Trump Administration's immigration policies; and

WHEREAS, these drones are designed for war, and should not be used to surveil residents of American cities engaging in constitutionally protected activities; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 4759 (Gomez) seeks to address this issue by prohibiting the use of funds allocated to the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense or any other executive agency to operate certain unnamed aircraft in the United States to conduct surveillance of United States persons engaged in protests or civil disobedience; and

WHEREAS, this bill would specifically apply to the operation of the MQ-9 Reaper, or variants thereof, or any other unmanned aircraft that was developed initially for the Armed Forces to fly at medium altitudes for long periods of time; and

WHEREAS, this bill would also require the President of the United States, on an annual basis, to transmit to Congress a report on the use of covered unmanned aircraft for a novel purpose or a purpose not authorized by Congress; and

WHEREAS, this legislation is necessary to ensure that the Federal Government does not violate the constitutional right of people to assembly and engage in free speech;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2025 - 2026 Federal Legislative Program SUPPORT for H.R. 4759 (Gomez), the Ban Military Drones Spying on Civilians Act, which would prohibit the use of certain unmanned aircraft in the United States to conduct surveillance of United States persons engaged in protests or civil disobedience, and increase congressional oversight of the use of these devices.

PRESENTED BY:

EUNISSES HERMANDEZ  
Councilmember, 1<sup>st</sup> District

SECONDED BY:

Katy Yandovsky  
Jodi Park  
Laurie

jwd

AUG 27 2025

ORIGINAL