



**Senate Judiciary Committee  
February 12, 2025**

**Senate Bill 156  
Testimony of the BIDS Legislative Committee  
Presented by James Houston Bales  
Neutral**

Chairperson Warren and Members of the Committee:

SB 156 proposes to create the offense of unlawful use of a laser pointer. Much of the statute is concerned about the use of laser pointers to interfere with aircraft. The BIDS Legislative committee is NEUTRAL about this bill, but would urge the committee to take the time to understand how this law interacts with other provisions in Kansas and Federal law.

Immediately this bill forces the reader to ask a question: what is an aircraft? The criminal code doesn't define it, leaving Kansans to seek guidance elsewhere, such as the definition of an aircraft in K.S.A. 3-201. This definition is broad: "'Aircraft' shall include any machine or contrivance, except parachutes, used for exhibition purposes or for carrying persons or property, propelled through the air and controlled by man, regardless of how propelled or controlled." Drones, including consumer drones, are likely covered under this proposed legislation. We would urge the committee to consider providing a definition of "aircraft" to clearly define the behavior this bill seeks to criminalize.

The committee should also remember that laws already exist to criminalize this conduct. In 18 U.S.C. 39A, the Federal government criminalizes this same behavior, imposing a maximum sentence of five years in prison. This is not the sort of crime that will routinely happen outside the gaze of Federal law enforcement. Airports are heavily policed by Federal law enforcement, who are perfectly capable of enforcing Federal law.

The proposals here appear reasonable on their face, but the BIDS Legislative Committee would encourage this committee to consider the potential ambiguity in what is being criminalized, to craft definitions to ensure all Kansans understand the scope of the law, and to consider leaving this rather niche misconduct and its prosecution in the hands of the Federal government. For these reasons, we are NEUTRAL on this bill.

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