



**Michigan Corrections Organization
Service Employees International Union Local 526M**

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MCO DRONE POSITION STATEMENT

To: Unmanned Aircraft Systems Task Force

Topic: Drones and the unprecedented threat to the safety and security of correctional institutions

From: Michigan Corrections Organization

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One of the biggest threats to the safety and security of a correctional facility is the introduction of contraband inside the walls. Drones, also known as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), have only increased this threat. On any given day, drones can fly, undetected, over facility perimeters carrying prohibited items such as drugs and cell phones. Individuals are increasingly using this new technology to smuggle contraband and have done so successfully.

Over the past few years, there have been multiple incidents in Michigan prisons of drones being spotted, heard or found on facility grounds. In August of 2017, three men were arrested and charged for using a drone to smuggle drugs into a state prison near Ionia, Michigan.¹

It is a problem that is affecting prisons not only in Michigan, but around the United States. In 2015, there was a successful attempt smuggling 144.5 grams of tobacco, 65.4 grams of marijuana and 6.6 grams of heroin into the Mansfield Correctional Institution in Ohio.² As the technology improves, the real concern is that a drone will be used to carry and deliver weapons into facilities statewide.

It is the position of the Michigan Corrections Organization that the Governor of Michigan, the Michigan Department of Corrections and the State Legislature heavily invest in appropriate training and equipment to thwart off the threat of drones entering into Michigan prisons. Additionally, there needs to be adequate training for officers on drone detection and a reliable system to investigate all UAV perimeter breaches. We believe that proper defenses need to be implemented immediately to prevent future incidents from taking place and ensure the safety of institutional staff and those incarcerated.

¹ "3 arrested after drone drops drugs, cell phone at Michigan prison." Paul Egan, Detroit Free Press. August 17, 2017 edition.

² "Ohio prison yard free-for-all after drone drops drugs" Lorenzo Ferringio, Cable News Network (CNN). August 5, 2015 Edition