

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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Ranking Member Robert Garcia
House Committee on Oversight and Accountability
Subcommittee on National Security, the Border, and Foreign Affairs
Hearing on “Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena: Exposing the Truth”
November 13, 2024

We are here to have a bipartisan, serious conversation about our national security.

We should ground our conversation in the facts, the evidence, and the data.

Let’s start with an obvious fact. There are objects, or phenomena observed in our airspace, or, as one of our witnesses will testify, in our oceans.

In many cases we do not know what they are. This is what we mean by Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena.

The All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office, or AARO has reported hundreds of UAPs which remain “uncharacterized and unattributed,” and which “appear to have demonstrated unusual flight characteristics or performance capabilities and require further analysis.”

We shouldn’t pre-judge what they might be, without evidence. But we are detecting things we don’t understand, and that is worth investigating.

The American people have legitimate questions, and I believe it is critical that the Congress should help address them.

Transparency, and faith in our institutions is vital for our Democracy, now more than ever.

I am proud to say that this hearing builds on bipartisan work by our committee, including a hearing I held with Chairman Grothman last year.

In our hearing last July, we heard testimony that significant numbers of pilots for major airlines have witnessed UAPs but had no confidential way to report them to the government.

We heard that commercial pilots who encounter UAPs may be hesitant to speak openly due to stigma or fear of retaliation.

We also know that AARO has reported that, and I quote,

“most reports still reflect a bias towards restricted military airspace, a result of reporting from military personnel and sensors present in such areas.”

The evidence is clear: lack of reporting by civilian pilots raises safety concerns and limits our ability to understand UAPs.

Our last hearing inspired us to introduce the Safe Airspace for Americans Act, joined by Chairman Grothman, Chairwoman Mace, and a bipartisan group of cosponsors.

The Safe Airspace for Americans Act creates a safe reporting system for civilian pilots to report UAPs.

These reports can then be evaluated and studied.

I look forward to working across the aisle to get this bill enacted into law.

Members of both parties, and senior officials in multiple administrations have taken an interest in this issue, and I am proud to carry on their work to build confidence for the American people.

Now, I want to make clear to the American people that there are legitimate reasons for the Department of Defense to be careful about divulging information to the public.

Sharing the exact capabilities of our planes, drones, stealth technology, or sensors could put pilots in danger.

We don't want to hand China or Russia a user-manual on our most sensitive technologies. But should not all the Executive Branch to use excessive restrictions to hide information the American people have a right to know.

I believe we can always do more to be more transparent.

It's very important that we show that Democrats and Republicans in Congress can come together to cut through misinformation, and to look at the facts in a serious and thoughtful way.

I yield back.

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