The Benefits of Drone Use

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Imagine the capabilities of an Unmanned Aerial System, privately-owned drones in a job-creating industry having the capability to be used for videography, video security, rescue, and more. Now imagine the government and U.S. citizenry disregarding all these benefits. This is what is happening with drones. A falsely-educated public is opposed to the use of commercial drones. Laws are being implemented to eliminate the use of drones, which limits technological advancements and capabilities. There is controversy over security, and congress is creating laws against the use of drones. However, this is an unreasonable opposition to the benefits of drone use and a violation to the First and Eighth Amendments, therefore, the government should not outlaw the use of commercial drones.

Opponents of commercial drone use lean on illogical arguments against drones. The most illogical argument claims that drones would violate our privacy because of the ability to fly anywhere. However, to spy on someone using a drone is much more difficult than it might seem. Brendan Schulman, a Drone Defense Lawyer, states, “Drones' size, price, and noisiness also make them faulty surveillance devices. If people want to spy, they'd achieve better results installing a hidden camera in a tree or on a windowsill” (Business). This means that I could more effectively go to a store and buy a forty dollar cheap mini camera than buy an eight hundred dollar drone that is loud, big, and noticeable.

The many benefits of drone technology outweigh the privacy argument that may arise. These technological advancements include many life-saving features such as search and rescue, video security, and disaster support. All these are possible options, but there is one substantial benefit; no human is involved on the field. Imagine a drone flying over a fallen populous building recently effected by an earthquake. This drone flies over with a heat signature sensor and identifies where humans are, then flies away after documenting the locations of the humans, all before any rescue personnel can arrive. Saving precious minutes saves lives. This technology can be used very diversely and definitely outweighs privacy concerns. Business Insider states, "I think people have heard primarily about privacy and safety concerns," the drone attorney, Schulman, says. "And they're overlooking the vast benefits of this technology.”

Another benefit of these drones is their capacity for film making. Taking a beautiful picture or video now only takes one operator with a low impact, efficient vehicle. No longer are expensive helicopters or camera cranes needed. Commercial drones make beautiful shots cheaper and more efficiently. Patrick Smith in an interview for Entrepreneur Magazine states, "There were [production crews] paying between $5,000 and $10,000 an hour to rent planes to film the same kind of stuff I could do with an RC," he recalls.”

In addition to their potential for technological advancement, drones create jobs. The process of manufacturing and using drones is growing. An industry is being built for the creation of drones. However, the Federal Aviation Administration is limiting this process by outlawing drone use. This goes against Capitalism and liberty. Milton Friedman, a libertarian and famous economist stated, “Underlying most arguments against the free market is a lack of belief in freedom itself.” This means that by limiting profit gain with the involvement in drones, the freedom is revoked from the industry. The industry is bigger than many think. According to the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International, “The commercialization of drones would add 34,000 manufacturing jobs in the next three years and 70,000 new jobs overall in the same time period. The overall economic impact equates to $82.1 billion between 2015-2025”. Allowing the use of drones would bring a lot of monetary gain and produce jobs for many people.

Outlawing drone use is a violation to the First Amendment. The First Amendment states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” Many drone users consist of journalists. The Washington Post states, “The Washington Post, the New York Times, the Associated Press and Gannett, among others are saying the FAA is restricting free speech by not allowing drones to fly.” Journalists have been attempting to use drones as a tool for documenting in various ways such as surveying and recording an area of interest. However, the FAA prohibits journalists from using drones as a tool and are restricting what can and cannot be documented and later written and published. This means freedom of press is ignored and violated.

The fines for flying commercial drones are also a violation to the Eighth Amendment. The eighth amendment states, “Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted”. This issue arose with Raphael Pirker vs. the FAA. Pirker was fined a large amount of money for flying over a university campus. In this case in 2011, “The FAA slapped Pirker with a $10,000 fine after he flew his Styrofoam drone around the University of Virginia while filming an ad for the university’s medical school” (Politico Magazine). The university granted Pirker permission, but he was still fined a large sum of money. To put this in perspective, the fine for illegal discharge of a firearm in the state of Virginia is $50 to $1,000 (Theoharis). It seems unreasonable to be fined $10,000 for throwing a five pound foam airplane in the air.

To resolve this issue, the public must educate themselves. They to realize the reality of the benefits of drone use, and the privacy opposition needs to be put into perspective. The public needs to recognize that security isn't a very relevant issue, but rather liberty and constitutionalism. Congress needs to allow commercial drone users to use drones for profit, videography, surveying, and more.

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