

Bill Introduced in Congress to Place Restrictions on Submunition Sales

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Washington, D.C. Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Ca) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) announced that they have introduced legislation to restrict U.S. Federal funds for the use, sale or transfer of cluster bombs (i.e. submunitions) unless specified that they will only be used against clearly defined military targets and not where civilians are known to be present or areas normally inhabited. It would also restrict the sale or transfer of cluster bombs with a failure rate of more than one percent.

The bill would also require that a plan be established by either the U.S. or the country to which the U.S. cluster bombs are sold or transferred to cleanup any unexploded submunitions. Time will tell if the Act will gain any traction in Congress. A similar bill introduced in Congress last year failed to make it through.

Like landmines, submunitions provide a unique tactical capability to U.S. military and its Allies which may make it difficult to get such a bill passed. The requirement for a cleanup plan may also be a tough sale due to the high cleanup costs associated with UXO. Currently, DoD UXO cleanup programs such as the Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP) do not allow funds to be spent to cleanup UXO from acts of war or military conflicts.

To view the press release from Senator Feinstein's office, click the download button below.