

Testimony of Congressman Ron DeSantis (FL-6)
April 4th, 2014
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense

Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Visclosky, Members of the Subcommittee on Defense, thank you for having me here to testify today. I know this is a particularly busy period for this committee, and I appreciate your time and consideration.

I'm here to talk about the E-2D Advanced Hawkeye – which as you know is the Navy's carrier-based Airborne Early Warning and Battle Management Command and Control system. Variants of this aircraft have been serving our military well since the 1960's. As the FY15 Budget request is considered, I ask that you support the E-2D program as well as an additional fifth E-2D Advanced Hawkeye aircraft.

The E-2D is equipped with new, cutting edge communications capabilities and radar systems. These advancements enable the E-2D to synthesize information from multiple onboard and off-board sensors to provide increased missile protection to our carrier defense groups, while also improving the aircraft's offensive capabilities, which are key to supporting our combatant commands.

The addition of the fifth E-2D aircraft in FY15 is necessary for providing Carrier Strike Groups with the E-2D's advanced Integrated Air and Missile Defense capabilities to pace the rapidly evolving Pacific threat. Without this fifth aircraft, a carrier will be forced to deploy with the less advanced E-2C's, preventing carriers from having the additional capability that E-2D's bring

against multiple threats. Furthermore, additional funding would be needed to keep multiple variants of the Hawkeye in service longer.

This program is critical for our Navy and our military. As our friend, and E-2 pilot, Rep. Jim Bridenstine puts it:

“Given the threat to the strike groups, multiyear procurement of E2-D is absolutely necessary. The only question is, “Are we purchasing enough E-2Ds and missile interceptors to counter the high volumes of incoming missiles that our sailors and soldiers could face?”

The E-2D program has met every major milestone on schedule since the program’s inception in 2003. As the program moves forward, full funding for the E-2D, as well as funding for a fifth aircraft, ensures that carrier air wings will fully realize the capabilities provided by this state-of-the-art early warning and battle management command and control weapons system.

The role technology plays in modern warfare can never be discounted, and the technological advances of the E-2D will ensure that our military maintains its critical edge. Your support for the Navy’s E-2D Advanced Hawkeye program in the FY15 President’s Budget and an additional fifth aircraft is essential to maintaining the safety of our carriers in a changing environment where we are facing new threats.

As an appendix to my submitted written testimony, I've attached an April 2nd letter from myself, Rep. Bridenstine, Rep. Brown, Rep. Brownley, Rep. Carson, Rep. Posey, and Rep. King in support of the E-2D program.

Thank you again for having me here today and thank you for all you do for our warfighters and our country.

RON DeSANTIS
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April 2, 2014

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Defense
2306 Rayburn House Office Building
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The Honorable Peter Visclosky
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Defense
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Visclosky:

As you consider Fiscal Year 2015 appropriations for the Department of Defense, we ask that you support the FY15 President's Budget request for E-2D and an additional fifth E-2D Advanced Hawkeye (AHE) aircraft. FY15 is the second year of a planned five-year fixed-price Multi-Year Procurement (MYP), which will provide the Navy with significant savings over annual single-year contracts. The addition of the fifth aircraft in FY15 is needed to provide Carrier Strike Groups with the E-2D's advanced Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD) capabilities to pace the rapidly evolving Pacific threat. Carriers will deploy with five E-2D aircraft per squadron. Without this fifth aircraft in FY15, a carrier will be forced to deploy with E-2C's, instead of the newer E-2D's. Delayed introduction of E-2D will require additional funding to maintain multiple variants of the Hawkeye in service longer. It also means carrier groups deploy without the additional capability E-2D's bring against multiple threats. We represent constituents across the country who engineer, manufacture, maintain, operate and depend upon the E-2D system.

As you know, E-2D is the Navy's carrier-based Airborne Early Warning and Battle Management Command and Control (BMC2) system. The E-2D provides Theater Air and Missile Defense, synthesizing information from multiple onboard and off-board sensors, making complex tactical decisions, and disseminating actionable information to Joint Forces in a distributed, open-architecture environment. Using the newly-developed radar, the E-2D works with surface ships and tactical aircraft to provide force protection and allow the Navy to project forces into the littorals and overland to ensure access in contested areas. The Naval Integrated Fire Control-Counter Air (NIFC-CA) allows the Navy to defeat threats in challenging environments.

The E-2D program, which is currently in production and development, has met every major milestone on schedule and cost target since the program's inception in 2003. Full funding for the E-2D in FY15, as well as funding for a fifth aircraft ensures that the carrier air wings will fully realize the capabilities provided by this state-of-the art early warning and battle management command and control weapons system.

As we continue to deal with significant fiscal constraints and have to make hard choices, one thing remains true today: The E-2D is critical to national security in an ever dangerous world, and there is no substitute. No matter what decision is made with the George Washington's refueling and the total number of carriers in the fleet, we will need the E-2D to protect those Carriers. It is truly critical to the survivability and lethality of the Carrier Battle Group, especially as the United States refocuses on the Pacific.

Your support for the Navy's E-2D Advanced Hawkeye program in the FY15 President's Budget and an additional fifth aircraft is essential to providing the Navy with this critical airborne electronic attack capability at a significant cost savings.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and your support for our men and women in uniform.

Sincerely,



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Member of Congress



JIM BRIDENSTINE
Member of Congress



CORRINE BROWN
Member of Congress



JULIA BROWNLEY
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ANDRE CARSON
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