

Congressman Neal Dunn, M.D. (FL-02)

**Testimony to the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland
Security**

Chairman Carter, Ranking Member Roybal-Allard, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding my support for the Offshore Patrol Cutter Program.

As the Committee is aware, the Coast Guard's acquisition program of record calls for 25 Offshore Patrol Cutter to replace aging Medium Endurance Cutters. The Offshore Patrol Cutters will feature increased range and endurance, an improved communications and electronics suite, and the capability to accommodate safe launch and recovery of helicopters and small boats in all weather.

In accordance with the Coast Guard's acquisition strategy, \$530 million in funding is required in Fiscal Year 2018. The necessity for the substantial increase in funding for the program over the \$100 million enacted in Fiscal Year 2017 is derived from the scheduled procurement of the first Offshore Patrol Cutter and the purchase of Long Lead Time Material for the second ship.

As the Committee is aware, Eastern Shipbuilding Group is the shipbuilder under contract to produce the first tranche of Offshore Patrol Cutters. I can assure you of the skill and care the hardworking employees of Eastern Shipbuilding will invest in delivering the Offshore Patrol Cutter on-time and on-budget because it is my honor to represent them in Congress.

In fact, since 2002, in the highly competitive commercial marketplace, Eastern Shipbuilding Group has built 136 ships, all of which were on-time and on-budget.

My constituents can fulfill their end of the bargain if Congress does its part to provide the necessary resources in a timely manner.

For this reason, I respectfully request appropriation of \$530 million for the Offshore Patrol Cutter program, which will allow for uninterrupted procurement of the first Offshore Patrol Cutter and preparations for construction of the second ship.

My constituents are eager to assist the Coast Guard with performance of its statutory missions by delivering the next-generation capabilities the Offshore Patrol Cutter represents. I thank you for the opportunity to advocate on their behalf and for your attention to this important issue.