

Testimony of Congressman Ron DeSantis (FL-6)

April 9th, 2014

House Armed Services Committee

Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, Members of the House Armed Services Committee, 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 you consider the Fiscal Year 2015 authorization for the Department of Defense, 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.

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