



The Honorable Mark Steven Kirk
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

February 4, 2016

Dear Senator Kirk:

On behalf of the Association of Old Crows (AOC), I write to express our deepest appreciation for your leadership on Electronic Warfare (EW) in the US Congress and our strong support for your legislation, S. 2486, the Electronic Warfare Capabilities Enhancement Act. The bill represents a tremendous opportunity for military and defense industry leaders and our community — the scientists, engineers, managers, operators, educators, and military personnel — to advance innovative EW systems and capabilities that are a prerequisite for successful military operations in the twenty-first century.

The AOC, founded in 1964 and celebrating its 52nd year, is an organization for individuals who have common interests in EW, Electromagnetic Spectrum (EMS) Management Operations, Cyber Electromagnetic Activities (CEMA), Information Operations (IO), and other EMS-related capabilities. Our association connects members and organizations nationally and internationally across government, defense, industry, and academia to promote the exchange of ideas and information, and provides a platform to recognize advances and contributions in these fields.

Senator, you have been a champion of EW throughout your career — in both the Navy and as a public official. You were an original co-chairman of the congressional EW Working Group after you were elected to Congress and your support has continued during your service in the Senate. S. 2486 represents an important next step to advance EW and EMS Warfare to the forefront of defense reform. It establishes a positive framework to bring Congress and the Department of Defense (DoD) together to address important issues facing our national defense and military capabilities, especially the erosion of US EW superiority — a principle observation of the recent 2013 Defense Science Board Study on EMS Operations.

There are three key challenges facing EW and EMS Warfare for which S. 2486 begins to provide real solutions. First, DoD and Congress must work together to reform a cumbersome acquisition process to ensure the timely development and fielding of current and next-generation EW technologies and capabilities. The accelerated pace of change in the tactics, techniques, and procedures used by adversaries of the US has heightened the need for a rapid response to new threats. Another driver of acquisition reform is the development of multifunction systems. EW, radar, and communications systems are rapidly evolving from stand-alone systems into combined elements of multifunction systems. These trends represent a generational leap in defense electronics technology, and it presents significant challenges for the DOD and for industry. Fielding systems in response to urgent operational needs over the past half-decade has revealed that DoD lacks the ability to rapidly field new capabilities for the warfighter in a systematic and effective way. S. 2486 necessarily provides the Secretary of Defense more and better tools to acquire the capabilities necessary to regain US superiority in the EMS Domain. It also opens the door for additional reforms to ensure that critical US EW systems and capabilities keep pace with evolving threats from both near peer competitors and asymmetric actors.

Second, the DoD must move forward to reestablish a balance between investments in long-term research into the "state of the possible" and nearer term technological applications to existing EW

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systems or on-going programs of record. This requires establishing innovative pathways through investment in EW Science and Technology (S&T), including new guidelines and expectations that disentangle technological innovation and development from the systems acquisition process. DoD needs to leverage the successes from DARPA and the Service Labs, where research on EW critical technologies is managed relatively well, by increasing funding for R&D during the earliest stages and freeing the labs from a cumbersome requirements process so that they can be more agile and proactive in identifying solutions to emerging threats.

Finally, EW is sorely missing leadership, coordination and organizational coherence throughout DoD and the military services. The DoD must develop new EMS operational concepts and advance a new vision and strategy for EMS warfare through leadership and organizational change. Congressional support for the recently established EW Executive Committee is critical for the organization to effectively implement, as your bill states, “[A] strategic plan with measurable and timely objectives to achieve its mission.” The AOC especially applauds the bill’s call for “Progress on increasing innovative electromagnetic spectrum warfighting methods and operational concepts that provide advantages within the electromagnetic spectrum operational domain.” We also call on Congress to work with DoD to identify specific attributes needed in future EW capabilities, such as networking, adaptability, agility, multi-functionality, and miniaturization, and progress toward incorporating those attributes in new EW systems.

S. 2486 is an important initiative to strengthen US EW capabilities, investment, and leadership. We are facing new sophisticated challenges in the EMS due to the explosive growth of spectrum dependent systems (SDS), the global proliferation of highly innovative electronics technology, and the development of advanced cyber capabilities. It is imperative that we find new ways to work together to accelerate development of EW systems and technologies, balance investment to serve both near-term requirements and long-term vision, and strengthen leadership at every level in DoD and our military services.

We greatly appreciate your leadership and boldness in sponsoring this legislation to find creative solutions to the most pressing challenges facing our national defense. We look forward to working with you throughout the legislative process to advance these reforms and others necessary for EW revitalization. Please do not hesitate to call on us if we can be of any assistance to you and your colleagues in Congress.



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