

Also, the Navy has to lay out a clear top-level plan on how these ships will be used in response to reasonably foreseeable, relevant threats around the world. In other words, it needs to decide the concept of operation—or CONOPS—that this ship class will support. According to a declassified internal Navy report released last Tuesday, “There are two options: Building a CONOPS—that means concept of operations—to match LCS’ current capabilities or modifying the ship to better meet the needs of the Theater Commanders.”

The report goes on to say: “The ship’s current characteristics limit operations to a greater extent than envisioned by the CONOPS. . . .” The second option is to “modify the ship to support the warfighting requirements. Our review identified opportunities to modify several of the ships’ characteristics to more closely align with the intent of the original CONOPS.”

Right now, it seems as though whatever combat capability LCS can muster is driving its mission, not the other way around, as in most ships. In other words, the Littoral Combat Ship appears to be a ship looking for a mission. But just to perform its three currently intended primary missions, the Navy is looking at significant design changes and increasing Littoral Combat Ships’ crew size, even though it has already bought about 30 percent of all of the LCS ships it intends to buy. That could increase its procurement and life cycle operation and support costs well beyond current estimates and strain its affordability. Given how many frigates, minesweepers, and patrol crafts the Navy currently plans to retire over the next 5 years in favor of Littoral Combat Ships, this is particularly troubling.

Notably, the Government Accountability Office also reports: “Current LCS weapon systems are underperforming and offer little chance of survival in a combat scenario.”

In this regard, the Government Accountability Office appears to agree with the Pentagon’s chief independent weapons tester. As this top Pentagon official has noted, before proceeding beyond early production, this program should complete initial operational testing and evaluation to determine that it is effective, suitable, and survivable. But LCS is not doing so. Why not? We need an answer to that. If, for whatever reason, the Navy believes it must deviate from that practice, what plan will it put in place to mitigate the resulting concurrency risk?

Let me be clear. To justify the purchase of the remaining 32 ships in the program, the Navy must first provide credible evidence based on rigorous, operationally relevant and realistic testing and evaluation, that this ship will in fact be able to adequately perform its primary stated missions and meet combatant commander requirements. Congress must, at a minimum, thoroughly review this program before

authorizing funding in fiscal year 2015 to buy the next four LCS’s and require the Secretary of the Navy to certify, on the basis of sound written justification arising from sufficient initial operational testing and evaluation, that the LCS ships will be able to adequately perform their intended missions and provide our operational commanders with the combat capability they need.

The American people are—quite rightly—tired of seeing their taxpayer dollars wasted on disastrous defense programs such as the Air Force’s failed ECSS Program or the Army’s Future Combat System Program or the Navy’s VH-71 Presidential Helicopter Replacement Program. LCS must not be allowed to become yet another failed program in an already unacceptably long list of amorphous acronyms that—after squandering literally billions of taxpayer dollars—have long since lost meaning.

On the LCS program, the Navy must right its course—today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### RECESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly caucus meetings and that the time during the recess be counted postcloture, with the time charged equally to both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:40 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

#### NOMINATION OF KENT YOSHIHO HIROZAWA TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I would like to be recognized for the purpose of making brief remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

#### WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I am pleased to come to the floor—and I will be joined shortly by Senator MURRAY from the State of Washington—to announce that tomorrow in the HELP Committee—the Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee—we will be introducing the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act.

Quite honestly, the Workforce Investment Act was passed in 1998 and has not been reauthorized in the last 15 years. During that period of time, our country—particularly in the last 6 years—has gone through a sustained period of high unemployment. We also have periods where employers cannot find the match of workers who are actually trained for the jobs they have.

Workforce investment and training is important for those with disabilities, those without jobs, those with skill sets that need to be improved, and this bill addresses all of those areas.

Senator MURRAY has been a tireless Senator in working to find common ground on issues that have been critical to both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party but, more important, to the workers of the United States of America.

I wish to pay tribute to her staff who has worked tirelessly with my staff, and I wish to thank Tommy Nguyen on my staff, in particular, for his dedication and hard work.

This bill represents a real step forward, and I am pleased that this morning the Business Roundtable issued a release of their endorsement of the base bill we are putting forward tomorrow in the committee. Hopefully, it will be on the floor this fall when we return from the summer recess and we can move forward on job training, job opportunity, and lowering the unemployment rate in the United States of America.

In particular, I am very pleased this bill provides flexibility to our Governors in terms of transferability of funds. It provides for business majorities on the board and a business member to be a board chairman and the State chairman could also be a businessperson, which means those who are doing the employing will be those who will be guiding the Workforce Investment Act in their State.

I am also particularly proud of the fact that we focus on a regional approach to workforce investment. So often times, you get so many workforce investment boards in one metropolitan area that you have a very individualized focus and not a regional focus. A regional focus is important for workers. It is important for all of us.

So I am pleased to announce today on my behalf—Senator ISAKSON on the HELP Committee—that along with Senator MURRAY, today we are introducing and tomorrow we will mark up in committee the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act.

I look forward to the support of all Members of the Senate to help us do a better job providing jobs for working Americans.

I yield back my time and—no, I do not yield back my time. I can brag about Senator MURRAY while she is here now because I have been saying nice things while she was on her way.

I thank Senator MURRAY for her cooperation, the spirit of cooperation she has given us, and the fact that we are