



GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
1600 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1600

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MAY 26 2010

GENERAL COUNSEL

The Honorable Carl Levin  
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

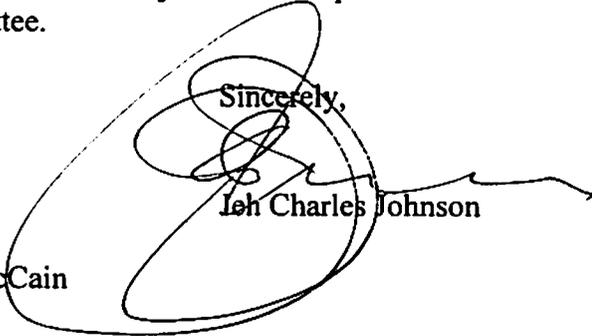
The Department of Defense (DoD) opposes S. 504, a bill "to re-designate the Department of the Navy as the Department of the Navy and Marine Corps."

The DoD recognizes that the Navy and Marine Corps team has operated in the defense of our Nation's interests for over 234 years. It appears that the evident intent of this legislation is to provide specific recognition to the U.S. Marine Corps, which is otherwise not apparent in the existing name of the Department of the Navy. That commendable objective is recognized and appreciated; however, the name change would have no practical effect on the office of the Secretary of the Navy or the strong leadership triad of the Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps.

The Navy and Marine Corps have been one team led by one Secretary since Benjamin Stoddert was named the first Secretary of the Navy by President Adams in 1798. The tremendous sense of unity and jointness that have been the hallmark of the Navy and Marine Corps team for well over 200 years is unique among the Services. Navy support is integral to the operation of the Marine Corps, and the Marine Corps is a fully integrated, equal part of a great Navy and Marine Corps team within the Department. In our view, the renaming of the Department is unnecessary, would incur additional expense of several hundred thousand dollars a year over the next several years (according to a Congressional Budget Office cost estimate) and would not enhance the standing or reputation of the Marine Corps. A re-designation could be viewed as more than symbolic, and could easily be misinterpreted as a step away from the heritage and tradition of a strong Navy and Marine Corps team.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that, from the standpoint of the Administration's program, there is no objection to the presentation of this report for the consideration of the committee.

Sincerely,

  
John Charles Johnson

cc: The Honorable John McCain  
Ranking Member

