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STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DUNCAN HUNTER
CHAIRMAN, MILITARY PROCUREMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
NAVY SHIP DONATION PROCEDURES

October 8, 1998

This afternoon, we welcome witnesses from both the Navy and the State of New Jersey. The purpose of today's hearing is to better understand the Navy's ship donation procedures and to share views and concerns of those in New Jersey who may participate in the transfer of the historic battleship, U.S.S. New Jersey.

As most of you know, the conference agreement in the National Defense Authorization Act for 1999 included a provision that would strike the USS New Jersey from the Naval Vessel Register and transfer that vessel to a non-for-profit entity, which would locate the vessel in the State of New Jersey.

To date, the Navy has donated 45 ships to private entities. These organizations have preserved these great naval vessels paying tribute to the courageous men and women of our Navy and Armed Forces who have served so honorably. The vessels, displayed in museum status, also serve to educate American citizens about military service and the contributions our American military men and women have made in the past and continue to make to preserve the freedom that we enjoy in America today.

Given the increasing interest in military forces of yesterday and today, it's fair to say that a distinguished ship, such as the USS New Jersey, should be a valuable asset to the community to which she is donated. We want to ensure that all participants understand the process, and have the opportunity to share views and concerns.