

## Murphy Challenges Army to Reverse Decision to Contract with Italian Firm for Dog Tag Machines

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - As the Department of Defense awards contracts for goods and services for our armed forces, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) is continuing his efforts to urge the government to buy American and support domestic manufacturing by challenging a recent Army contract for a machine that makes dog tags awarded to an Italian firm.

"Dog tags are iconic placards that are not only a symbol of the life and death faced by our American soldiers, but they serve a crucial function in the field. We have a U.S. manufacturer which can supply our men and women in uniform with this machine, yet we are sending them into theater with an Italian product, putting American jobs at risk in the process. It makes no sense," said Murphy.

Last month, the Army offered a solicitation for 96 machines that will make dog tags for our service men and women. An American company, NewBold, which manufactures its dog tag machines in Virginia and has a sales office in Newtown, Connecticut, lost the bid to a company that manufactures those machines in Italy. While the NewBold machine was marginally more expensive, they offered seven-day-a-week technical support for our soldiers in the field, a service the Italian firm could not match. Due to the loss of this contract, NewBold may have to lay off some workers, resulting in lost income and payroll taxes to the federal government and increased costs for unemployment compensation and other benefits.

Mike Kelly, the National Sales Manager for NewBold who is based out of Newtown, Connecticut, said: "In over 30 years of providing ID dog tag machines to all branches of the military, I thought I had seen it all. NewBold's bid, which fit every aspect of the Army's specifications and included 7 day a week technical support and a warranty, which the Italians didn't provide, was the best deal for the military and those serving in Iraq and Afghanistan and would support American jobs. NewBold stands ready to provide our warfighters with a superior product should the Army reverse its decision."

Murphy, who laid out his concerns in a letter to the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Materiel Command this week, is the co-chair of the bi-partisan Buy America Caucus. He and other members of Congress have been pushing for months for changes in the way federal agencies spend tax dollars. The federal Buy American laws, which generally require that 50% of federal purchasing dollars be spent on U.S. goods, are full of loopholes that allow agencies like the Department of Defense to waive requirements to spend tax dollars at home for a variety of reasons.

"Adding moral insult to economic injury is the knowledge that the tags that hang around the necks of our soldiers are not made with an American machine. At what point do we wake up and stop sending our tax dollars overseas and invest in small manufacturers here at home?" said Murphy.

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