

Over the past year and a half the Department of Defense and the Navy have been discussing moving an aircraft carrier from Norfolk, VA to Mayport, FL. Just this week the Defense Department released its Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and the President released his proposed budget. Both the QDR and the President's budget call for moving a carrier to Mayport. I and my colleagues who represent the Hampton Roads region know that this is not the best decision for the Navy or Hampton Roads.

I had the opportunity to question both Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, regarding this decision and you can watch it here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKjTHpRjKSI>

I and others believe that the Navy ought to be focusing on rectifying backlogs in ship repairs and other Navy priorities, before they spend up to an estimated \$1 billion creating a second homeport for nuclear aircraft carriers on the East Coast. This would result in a greater burden on the Navy's budget while we're fighting two wars and are actively deployed around the globe.

I along with Sens. Warner and Webb and Reps. Scott, and Nye, met privately with Under Secretary Michele Flournoy, the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, on Thursday to get a brief on the decision making process behind moving a carrier to Mayport. Secretary Flournoy led the effort inside the Pentagon to draft the QDR. I questioned her on the process and relayed my concerns that the full decision was not vetted with a true risk management strategy but rather and was much more of a "judgment" type decision. I will continue to ask more questions of the Department of Defense as we move along in the budget process.