



## Senator Herb Kohl

United States Senator for Wisconsin



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Today, I was honored to participate in laying the keel for the USS Milwaukee in Marinette Wisconsin. Littoral Combat Ships like the Milwaukee are a triumph for both the United States Navy and for the State of Wisconsin. For the Navy, they are the ship of the future – light, fast, and flexible. For Wisconsin, they mean thousands of jobs and a rebirth of shipbuilding on the Great Lakes.

The Littoral Combat Ship – and its remarkable flexibility – helps our Navy be ready for anything. If the mission changes, the LCS changes. Whether it's clearing mines, patrolling coasts, or responding to future threats we don't even know about yet, the LCS will be ready.

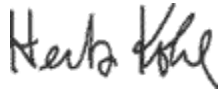
Budget cuts are putting pressure on every government program, which makes the LCS more important than ever. To remain a global force, our Navy needs a more flexible, cost effective fleet. The LCS is a vital part of that plan.

But we celebrated more than a new ship today. Every time I visit the shipyard I see the high expectations Marinette Marine sets for themselves. The workforce is second to none, and will remain so for years to come. New workers get more than a paycheck, they acquire skills and experience learned from almost sixty years of shipbuilding at Marinette Marine. And there are going to be a lot of new employees. By 2013 Marinette expects to have about 2,000 workers at the shipyard and suppliers across Wisconsin are hiring so they can handle the increased demand from Marinette. All told, the LCS will mean thousands of Wisconsin jobs for years to come.

My first priority as your senator is to help create jobs and bring prosperity to Wisconsin. In December, the Senate approved the Navy's plan to purchase ten Littoral Combat Ships from Marinette Marine over the next five years, the first of which is the USS Milwaukee. I worked with the Secretary of the Navy and other officials to bring the contract to Wisconsin and finalize the deal in the Senate. I will continue to do my part to make sure the Navy gets the support it needs from Congress to continue the LCS program.

It was truly an honor to be present today for the keel laying and to see firsthand that the USS Milwaukee represents the best of American shipbuilding. It has the finest craftsmanship from an outstanding workforce. It's affordable for the Navy in a time of tight budgets and it gives our sailors the tools they need to keep America safe and protect our interests around the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Herb Kohl". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.