

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0501

March 5, 2013

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

It has become clear that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is purchasing vast quantities of ammunition, considerably more than historical use would suggest is needed. Over the past ten months more than 1.6 billion rounds have been acquired, and recently the Department posted another solicitation for additional large purchases of ammunition.ⁱ

Unfortunately, the Department has yet to explain why ammunition purchases on such an astonishing scale are taking place. Estimates show that this much ammunition would be enough for 24 years of the Iraq war and comes out to five rounds for every person in the United States.ⁱⁱ

Aside from being hard to justify, the timing of these purchases is of great interest as well since, as we all know, the Obama Administration is proposing legislation to further restrict access to firearms and ammunition. The extraordinary level of ammunition purchases made by Homeland Security seems to have, in states such as my own, created an extreme shortage of ammunition to the point where many gun owners are unable to purchase any.

Additionally, the Department has spent, or is asking to spend, significant amounts of money on nearly two billion rounds of ammunition when across-the-board spending cuts are scheduled to go into effect under the President's sequester plan. According to your recent public statements, these cuts make our nation more vulnerable to a terrorist attack, yet the Department is still spending money on millions of bullets in addition to the billion and a half that have already been sought.

In light of these developments, the lack of transparency and questions that have been raised pertaining to these purchases, I ask that the following questions be answered:

1. For what purpose is the Department of Homeland Security purchasing over 1.6 billion rounds of ammunition?
2. How many rounds of ammunition does Homeland Security currently have in its possession?

3. Is the current level of ammunition purchases by the Department in line with previous levels of ammunition purchases made by the Department?
4. In response to inquiries into these purchases, why has the Department redacted, blacked out, or classified certain sections of its solicitations that had been previously available to the public?
5. Are these purchases being conducted in a manner that strategically denies the American people access to ammunition?ⁱⁱⁱ
6. How much has Homeland Security spent purchasing ammunition within the last year when it was clear the Department was likely to face a budget cut? Please include planned expenditures for current bid solicitations in this figure.

I greatly appreciated your attention to this inquiry. If any questions should arise, please do not hesitate to contact Kevin Eastman in my office at 202-225-3076.

Sincerely,

Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress

Doug LaMalfa

Bob Bricker

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