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May 8, 2008

Mr. Dean G. Popps
Acting Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisitions, Logistics & Technology
103 Army Pentagon
Room 2E532
Washington, DC 20310

Dear Mr. Popps,

It has come to my attention that the United States Army will be seeking to re compete the procurement contract for M4 carbines in June 2009. Current procurement procedures for the M4 require manufacturing exactly to the technical data package, which does not allow for industry innovation to produce design improvements that might increase weapon reliability or lower weapon costs. While the M4 is a good weapon, it can certainly be improved upon: the Army, after all, has made improvements to the M4 more than 50 times in the past.

I believe our nation's soldiers would be better served if the Army were to examine and incorporate potential improvements to the M4. To that end, I ask that you ensure an open process will exist to request, accept, evaluate and procure improvements to the M4 when the contract is re competed in 2009. One possibility might be to request weapon modifications that meet or exceed certain performance based requirements, instead of only competing the strict specifications of the technical data package. Innovative small arms companies across the country would respond to such a competition, and the Army could then evaluate their proposals on the basis of military performance and production cost.

If I can be of any assistance in ensuring that our troops receive the most innovative and reliable equipment available, please do not hesitate to contact me or Dr. John Plumb in my office at john_plumb@salazar.senate.gov or by phone at 202-224-5852.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar
United States Senate

cc: Brigadier General R. Mark Brown, PEO Soldier