

U.S. Congress Approves \$380 Million For NATO Missile System

By [Stop NATO](#)

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Congress approves \$380 million for Lockheed Martin's MEADS anti-missile program

The MEADS missile defense project is the single largest radar contract in the history of Lockheed Martin's plant at Electronics Park in Salina

U.S. Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., was among MEADS critics who tried to cancel the final year of funding for a system that the Pentagon has no plans to deploy. Ayotte has called MEADS "the missile to nowhere."

Ayotte offered in the Senate this week to take away the \$380 million for MEADS. She represents about 1,200 New Hampshire residents who work in nearby Andover, Mass., for Raytheon, the defense contractor that makes the Patriot missile systems that MEADS was initially intended to replace.

Lockheed Martin is the lead contractor working with MEADS International, the partnership among NATO allies Germany, Italy and the United States that are paying for the missile defense project.

Washington: A House bill approved today to keep the federal government operating through September includes \$380 million for a missile defense project that has employed hundreds in Central New York.

The House voted 318-109 to approve the \$984 billion spending plan, a day after the Senate passed the measure that leaves in place \$85 billion in automatic spending cuts.

U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., said he was able to successfully defeat attempts in the Senate to take away \$380 million for the Medium Extended Air Defense System or MEADS.

The project has supported up to 235 jobs at Lockheed Martin's plant at Electronics Park in Salina, which developed the surveillance radar used in the mobile missile defense system.

The final approval by the House today means that the MEADS project can proceed with its final year of development work. The House had restored funding for MEADS in the bill it sent to the Senate.

But U.S. Sen. Kelly Ayotte, R-N.H., was among MEADS critics who tried to cancel the final year of funding for a system that the Pentagon has no plans to deploy. Ayotte has called MEADS "the missile to nowhere."

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Schumer said in an interview that he was able to block Ayotte's amendment to the government-wide funding bill for fiscal 2013. He also obtained guarantees from the Pentagon that the money would be spent on MEADS development.

"Ayotte kept trying to get her amendment on the floor, but we blocked it each time," Schumer said in an interview today. The amendment never made it to a floor vote.

Schumer said he made sure that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and Appropriations Chair Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., knew about the importance of MEADS to New York.

Even though the Pentagon does not plan to deploy the system, military officials say they want to "harvest" the technology for other programs.

Schumer said he received commitments from the Department of Defense that the \$380 million would be spent for the final year of MEADS development, rather than toward program termination costs as requested by some members of Congress.

"The whole Department of Defense establishment was on our side," Schumer said. "We'll keep pushing DOD to stick to their promise."

Earlier House and Senate bills over the past year had denied President Barack Obama's initial request of \$400.9 million to pay for the final year of MEADS development. In fact, the Defense Authorization Act for 2013 explicitly barred any spending on MEADS.

Rep. Dan Maffei, D-DeWitt, was among 115 Democrats who joined the majority of Republicans today to pass the legislation that funds the federal government for the rest of the fiscal year.

"Today we saved hundreds of jobs in Central New York," Maffei said in a statement after the vote.

"After spending the last few weeks urging leaders in Washington from both parties to continue the MEADS program which supports hundreds of jobs in Central New York, I am pleased that we were able to work together to pass the continuing resolution and save these jobs," Maffei said.

The local share of MEADS work at Lockheed Martin in Salina, initially valued at \$625 million, is the single largest radar contract in the history of the Central New York plant.

Greg Larioni, vice president and general manager of Lockheed Martin's Syracuse operations, issued a statement after the vote today:

"We are grateful for Senator Schumer's efforts," Larioni said. "Senator Schumer's steadfast support has helped secure MEADS funding that can be used through the end of the design and development program. The 2013 funding bill passed by Congress creates the opportunity for us to continue our work in Syracuse on the innovative radars that are an

integral part of MEADS.”

Lockheed Martin is the lead contractor working with MEADS International, the partnership among NATO allies Germany, Italy and the United States that are paying for the missile defense project.

MEADS critics say the project has been wasteful, with cost overruns and development costs that exceeded \$18 billion because of technical and management problems.

Citizens Against Government Waste, a Washington, D.C., watchdog group, has repeatedly called for the program and all of its federal funding to be canceled.

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