

THE DEFENSE INDUSTRY BEGS FOR MERCY AGAINST PROGRAM CUTS



The defense industry is sending out the message that weapons systems aren't just instruments of national security, they're vital jobs programs. A new ad features a soaring bald eagle and states: "Of course America's economy can take off again. It already has a strong pair of wings." The ad is sponsored by the Aerospace Industries Association and is meant to take a stance against potential program cuts and layoffs. The industry has plenty to worry about with President Obama looking to slow down the Iraq war and roll back federal deficits. On Tuesday, Defense Secretary Robert Gates warned that the Pentagon won't be able to "do everything, buy everything," during severe times. The White House Web Site claims that the Obama administration is planning a review of major defense programs. "There's so much uncertainty in the defense industry with what will happen with the new administration," said Pete Steffes, the vice president for government policy at the National Defense Industrial Association. Fred Downey, a vice president of the Aerospace Industry Association, said "Our industry is ready and able to lead the way out of the economic crisis." The defense sector ran up a \$148 million lobbying tab last year. Officials, employees, and political action committees from defense companies, in addition, gave \$24 million in campaign contributions during the '07-'08 campaign cycle. Members of Congress wrote Obama last month requesting that he start adding 12 Navy ships a year, which would double the recent rate. The letters claimed that "thousands of jobs would be created in the United States with a renewed commitment to shipbuilding." Keep up with all budget cuts, from local level to national level, at [Employment Crossing](#).