

# SECNAV Highlights Bipartisanship with Ship Sponsors for USS Congress on Capitol Hill



(l to r) Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro; Senator Tammy Baldwin, D- Wisconsin; Representative Betty McCollum, D-Minnesota; and Representative Jen Kiggans, R-Virginia. Not pictured: Senator Joni Ernst, R-Iowa.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro highlighted the need for bipartisanship by announcing the sponsors of the future Constellation-class multi-mission guided-missile frigate USS Congress (FFG 63) will be four members of Congress: Sens. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisconsin) and Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) and Reps. Betty McCollum (D-Minnesota) and Jen Kiggans (R-Virginia).

Del Toro made the announcement during a reception amongst members of Congress and local civic leaders at the Dirksen Senate Office Building, in Washington DC, on Nov. 19.

“It is in the spirit of bipartisanship that I am honored to announce the sponsors of the future USS Congress (FFG 63) represent both institutions of Congress and both major political parties,” said Del Toro. “There is no one better than Senator Baldwin, Senator Ernst, Representative McCollum, and Representative Kiggans to connect Congress with the highly capable frigate that will bear its name.”

Sponsors are selected by the Secretary of the Navy and hold a unique role by maintaining a lifelong relationship with the ship and crew. Senator Ernst was previously invited to serve

as sponsor by 77th Secretary of the Navy, Kenneth Braithwaite. The additional co-sponsors added by Secretary Del Toro enable the ship to be represented by sponsors from both congressional institutions.

“We honor the institution that has been at the heart of our Democracy,” said Senator Ernst. “I am humbled by the responsibility of standing as her sponsor, not just for the men and women who will serve on board, but for the country we are sworn to protect.”

Senator Tammy Baldwin, from Wisconsin, joined Secretary Del Toro for the announcement.

“I am truly honored to serve as one of the sponsors of the future USS Congress alongside a bipartisan group of my colleagues,” said Senator Baldwin. “I take great pride in representing Wisconsin’s shipbuilding industry in Washington because our workers have helped sustain America’s security for generations, boasting a successful history of building ships for our nation’s defense. The USS Congress will play a critical role in continuing that tradition. Wherever the USS Congress takes our flag, she will be a symbol of America’s strengths – strength of our brave service men and women who will assume command of the ship, but also the hard-working Wisconsinites that will make the USS Congress a reality.”

Providing remarks after Senator Baldwin, Representative McCollum shared her thoughts on the distinction of being named a sponsor alongside her fellow members of Congress.

“It is my honor to be asked alongside with three colleagues to serve as ship sponsor for the new USS Congress,” said Representative McCollum. “The USS Congress name is a long and proud lineage including one of the six original frigates of the US Navy.”

Representative Jen Kiggans, a Navy veteran, also participated in the announcement and highlighted the honor and meaning

behind the naming of the ship.

“It is truly a privilege to be selected as a sponsor of the USS Congress,” said Representative Kiggans. “This ship, named in honor of one of the original six frigates of the U.S. Navy, will ensure our sailors can continue to fulfill their commitments to our citizens, our nation, and freedom around the globe.”

The U.S. Navy’s second Constellation-class frigate FFG 63, was named USS Congress by the 77th Secretary of the Navy Kenneth Braithwaite. The name honors the first six heavy frigates of the U.S. Navy.

The ship naming honors the rich history and legacy of the Navy. Congress was among the six original frigates authorized by Congress in the Naval Act of 1794, which established the U.S. Navy as an agile, lethal and ready force and cemented the enduring partnership between the sea service and our nation’s elected legislative officials.

The Constellation-class guided-missile frigate represents the Navy’s next generation small surface combatant. This ship class will be an agile, multi-mission warship, capable of operations in both blue-water and littoral environments, providing increased combat-credible forward presence that provides a military advantage at sea.

The Constellation-class will have multi-mission capability to conduct air warfare, anti-submarine warfare, surface warfare, electronic warfare, and information operations.