

July 27, 2011

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Whitehouse:

The International Trademark Association (INTA) applauds your leadership in addressing the mounting threat of counterfeit military parts. INTA supports your legislation (S. 1228), the Combating Military Counterfeits Act, and we were pleased to see the Senate Judiciary Committee approve the measure last week.

INTA is a not-for-profit membership association dedicated to the support and advancement of trademarks and related intellectual property as elements of fair and effective commerce. INTA represents over 5,700 trademark owners, law firms and academics. INTA has for many years worked to combat the crime of counterfeiting and has argued for the imposition of tougher sanctions against those who commit these crimes.

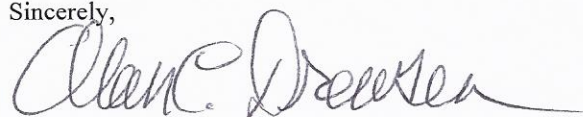
Counterfeits infiltrating the military are particularly insidious. Military-grade parts must be able to withstand greater shock, vibration, electromagnetic and temperature stress levels than their commercial counterparts. Yet, incredibly, components supplied by counterfeiters are often stripped from old boards, cosmetically altered with new markings and sold as new, military-grade parts. Not only do they not conform to military specifications, but these components are typically dated technology and pose serious reliability and safety concerns in any context, but especially in the more rigorous military application.

The problem is not confined to electronic parts. The military has found fake rivets, bolts, screws, seat belt clasps and fake Kevlar in body armor. There is seemingly no limit on what the counterfeit purveyors will attempt to supply to the U.S. military.

That is why S. 1228 is important legislation. It strengthens the enforcement tools against counterfeiters who endanger our soldiers and threaten the integrity of mission-critical systems, significantly increasing penalties for first-time offenders, with even more stringent punishment for repeat offenders. This legislation sends a sharp message to would-be thieves: we will not tolerate such dangerous assaults on our military. And, it sends a needed warning to distributors who too often turn a blind eye to the source of the products they sell to the military.

INTA thanks you for introducing S. 1228 and stands ready to work with you to secure its passage.

Sincerely,



Alan C. Drewsen
Executive Director