

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 27, 2017

General Mark Milley, USA  
Chief of Staff of the Army  
200 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0200

General Milley:

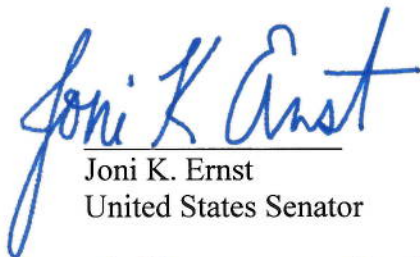
We write to you today to question why polymer ammunition magazines for United States Army rifles are not authorized for use in combat or in training. The Army and Marine Corps simultaneously issued orders stating that polymer magazines were not authorized for use in 2012. This month, five years later, the Marine Corps approved the use of an upgraded version of these polymer magazines. It is our hope that the Army considers them as well, or is able to disclose what issues they've found with polymer magazines so that we can make the other service branches aware.

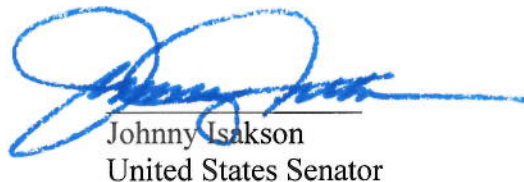
As you may know, the Marine Corps issued guidance against the use of polymer magazines in 2012 due to their inability to function with new automatic rifles. To our understanding, the Marine Corps did this following issues with their operation in the new M-27 Infantry Automatic Rifle. However, the Army never fielded the M-27 rifle, and it is not clear what specifications the previous polymer magazines failed to meet in order to be authorized for Army weapon systems. Regardless, the Marine Corps has now identified polymer magazines that are approved for their M-27 rifles, and the same M-4 carbines and M-16s the Army carries.

Reports state that the polymer magazines approved for use by the Marine Corps had zero magazine related stoppages through all of the tests carried out by the Marine Corps when combined with any ammunition tested. Additionally, reports state they also reduce damage to the chamber face and feed ramps when using M855A1 ammunition. As our national debt approaches \$20 billion, ensuring the longevity of these rifles is important.

We request a response as to why the Army has not approved any polymer magazines for use in combat, or in training, and an update on if the Army is considering approving them now. After years of technology advancement for our soldiers, and your fellow service branches testing and approving this technology, it is our hope that the Army is also working to ensure its warfighters have the best equipment possible.

Sincerely,

  
Joni K. Ernst  
United States Senator

  
Johnny Isakson  
United States Senator

  
Tom Cotton  
United States Senator

  
Jim M. Inhofe  
United States Senator

  
David Perdue  
United States Senator