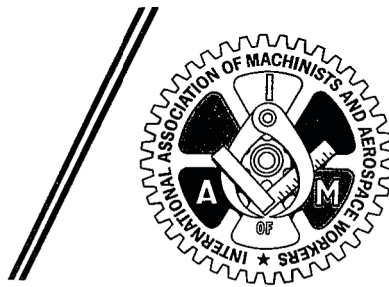


**International
Association of
Machinists and
Aerospace Workers**



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Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772-2687

Area Code 301
967-4500



OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

July 9, 2009

Subject: F-22 Raptor

Dear Senator,

I am writing to strongly urge your support for continued production of the world's most advanced fighter aircraft, the F-22 Raptor. Ending production of the F-22 because of budgetary considerations will have detrimental impacts on our national security and defense industrial base.

The current fleet of F-15s is twenty-five years old and must be replaced. If not, the U.S. Air Force will face a critical shortage of air superiority fighter aircraft in the near future. According to the Air Force, the F-22 is uniquely suited to fill this gap because it will be able to fly higher and faster and is more survivable in aerial combat situations. These capabilities will be a critical complement to the multipurpose role of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, which has a primarily air to ground role and which will not achieve full production until 2014. The decisive capabilities of the F-22 will enable the Air Force to maintain a vital edge over the evolving technological threats of any potential adversary well into the foreseeable future.

The chief of the Air Force's Air Combat Command, General John D. W. Corley, recently acknowledged this in a letter to Senator Saxby Chambliss when he indicated that the Administration's request to end production of the F-22 at 187 planes would put "our national military strategy at high risk in the near to mid-term." General Corley further stated that "a moderate risk force can be obtained with an F-22 fleet of approximately 250 aircraft."

Further support for additional F-22 production comes from the Director of the Air National Guard (ANG), Lt. General Harry M. Wyatt III, who recently wrote "that the current and future asymmetric threats to our nation, particularly from seaborne cruise missiles, requires a fighter platform with the requisite speed and detection to address them." Lt. General Wyatt added "The F-22's unique capability in this arena enables it to handle a full spectrum of threats that the ANG's current legacy systems are not capable of addressing."

Continued production of the F-22 will directly support 25,000 high wage, high skill manufacturing jobs in forty-four states making the F22 a critical national jobs program. An additional 70,000 indirect jobs are also impacted by the program. Ending the F-22 will result in immediate layoffs in the supplier base and begin the costly dismantling of a vital part of our defense industrial base—at a time when our Nation is facing the most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression and unemployment continues to rise month after month.

In this time of crisis we must not short change our national security because of short term budgetary considerations. We must continue to make investments in our industrial base and workforce. Maintaining production of the F-22 will allow America to accomplish these critical goals.

If you have any questions, please contact Legislative and Political Action Director Matthew McKinnon at (301) 967-4575.

Sincerely,

R. Thomas Buffenbarger
International President