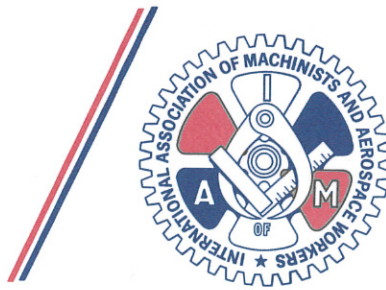


**International
Association of
Machinists and
Aerospace Workers**



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OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

April 2, 2014

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck"
McKeon, Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith, Ranking
Member
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen,
Chairman
House Defense Appropriations
Subcommittee
H-405, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky, Ranking
Member
House Defense Appropriations
Subcommittee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

I am writing to strongly urge your support for adding four Air Force F-35As and four Navy F-35Cs in the FY 2015 defense bills to restore the original production rate for this critically important program. Built by IAM members, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is our nation's only 5th Generation stealth aircraft currently in production and is the key to future air superiority for all three U.S. Services and our most important allies across the globe.

The President's FY 2015 budget request includes funding for only thirty-four F-35s, which is eight less than previously planned because of sequestration. Four aircraft each were cut from the Air Force and Navy requests. As a result, for the sixth consecutive year the production of these vital aircraft has essentially remained flat at approximately thirty aircraft per year. While significant progress has been made in reducing unit costs, the production line must ramp up to continue this positive trend.

During this time of sluggish economic growth, the beneficial economic effects of the F-35 program cannot be overstated. The F-35 program supports more than 129,000 high skill American jobs at approximately 1,200 suppliers across the nation; this results in an annual economic impact to the U.S. of over \$17.5 billion. Importantly, these numbers are expected to increase as production increases in the coming years.

The threats from our adversaries are rapidly growing and our nation needs the unmatched stealth capabilities of the F-35 to guarantee air superiority in the future. Therefore, it is imperative to restore the previously planned production rate for the F-35 in the FY 2015 defense bills.

Thank you for your consideration and please contact Legislative Director Hasan Solomon at (301) 967-4575 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. Thomas Buffenbarger".

R. Thomas Buffenbarger
International President