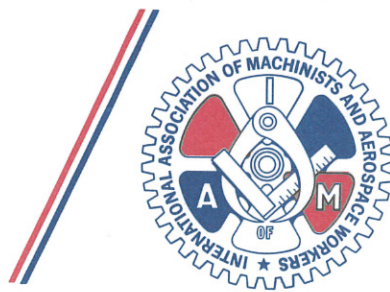


**International
Association of
Machinists and
Aerospace Workers**



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OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

November 12, 2014

The Honorable Richard Durbin, Chairman
Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Vice Chairman
Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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 Sirs,

I am writing to strongly urge your support in any conference on FY 2015 defense spending for F-35 spending levels as detailed in the House Defense Appropriations mark up. This would include the addition of two Air Force F-35As and two Navy F-35Cs, no cut in FY15 aircraft procurement funding for "anticipated negotiations savings," and no rescission of FY14 aircraft procurement funding.

The President's FY 2015 budget request included 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 and to provide predictability to the supplier base.

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 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 maintain a higher production rate for the F-35 in any FY 2015 defense bill.

Thank you for your consideration in this critical matter. 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