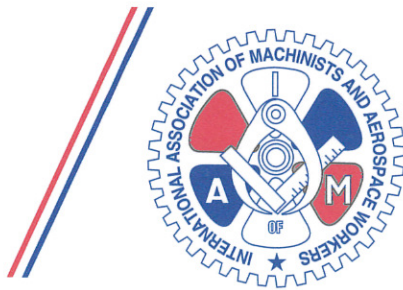


**International
Association of
Machinists and
Aerospace Workers**



9000 Machinists Place
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772-2687

Area Code 301
967-4500



OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

April 25, 2016

Dear Representative,

I am writing to urge you to support the Administration's request in the National Defense Authorization Act for Congress to provide funding for the purchase of eighteen highly reliable RD-180 rocket engines for use in the Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) program. United Launch Alliance (ULA), which uses the RD-180, has successfully completed over hundred launches, including many critical national security launches, with a 100 percent mission success rate—the only U.S. launch provider to do so.

According to Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, Frank Kendall, ending the use of the RD-180 prior to the availability of a comparable domestic rocket engine will cost tax payers over a billion dollars. 2019 is the earliest that a U.S produced rocket engine is expected to be ready for use.

While the IAM strongly prefers an American made engine for all of our launch vehicles, we should be clear that the dependence on the Russians for rocket engines for the Atlas V is the direct result of U.S. under investment in NASA and post-Cold War foreign policy initiatives that favored the purchase of the RD-180. While recent actions by Russia give added impetus for finding a U.S. supplier of engines for the Atlas V, not using the Russian made engines will only weaken our efforts in space and put Americans out of work.

As the largest union at NASA, IAM members have been an integral component of every launch going back to the original Mercury program. Our members are also employed in the EELV supply chain located in over twenty states across the U.S. For decades, our members' skills and dedication have provided the "right stuff" to successfully meet the challenges of our nation's space program. Undermining the EELV program before a certified American engine is available in 2019 will not only add unnecessary costs during a period of budget uncertainty, but will also weaken our national security and do damage to the suppliers and workers that have been the back bone of our space program. For these reasons, I urge you to support the continued purchase of the RD-180 rocket engine until an American built engine is fully operational.

If you have any questions, please contact Legislative Director Hasan Solomon at (301) 967-4575.

Sincerely,

Robert Martinez, Jr.
International President