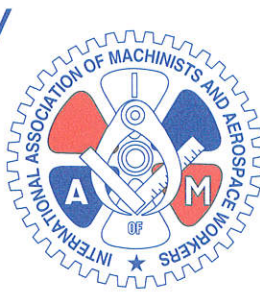


**International
Association of
Machinists and
Aerospace Workers**



9000 Machinists Place
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772-2687

Area Code 301
967-4500



OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

June 7, 2016

Dear Senator,

I am writing to urge your support for the bipartisan Gardner-Nelson amendment to the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which would authorize the use of up to eighteen highly reliable RD-180 rocket engines in the Department of Defense's 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.

The supporters of SpaceX, who are attempting to deny ULA access to the RD-180, have made much of the fact that the rocket engine is manufactured in autocratic Russia. They claim that it is unpatriotic to use a foreign engine, but what kind of employer is the U.S. based SpaceX? Press reports indicate that SpaceX has been subject to numerous class action law suits involving questionable labor practices. These include requiring employees to clock off the time keeping system before performing additional work (in essence work overtime for free), failing to provide required meal and rest breaks, and laying off hundreds of employees without paying severance, or providing the legally required advanced notice of the layoff. In addition, OSHA has cited and fined SpaceX for several serious safety violations. In contrast to the positive labor relations that the nearly one thousand Machinists Union members enjoy with ULA, our attempts to organize SpaceX workers have been met virulent opposition. **SpaceX portrays itself as a modern 21st Century space technology company, but in reality its labor practices are firmly stuck in the 19th Century.**

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 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. A new American made rocket engine is projected to become operational in 2019. In the meantime, not using the Russian made engines will only drive up costs, weaken our efforts in space, and put Americans out of work. **Further, any amendment to inhibit the use of RD-180 rocket engines under the guise of "competition" is actually an attempt to exclude ULA, America's most reliable launch team, from competing for future Department of Defense missions.**

Assuring reliable, cost effective access to space is a critical national security requirement. As the largest union at NASA and throughout the EELV supply chain, Machinists Union members take enormous pride in the quality of the work they perform to ensure that the U.S. will always have dependable access to space. Our members and companies like ULA epitomize the fundamental American values of hard work and decency. Now the Senate needs to step up and ensure that

they have all the tools, including the RD-180, to effectively perform their critical mission. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support the Gardner-Nelson amendment and the continued use of the RD-180 rocket engine in the 2017 NDAA until an American built engine is fully operational.

If you have any questions, please contact Legislative Director Hasan Solomon at (202) 420-5902.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Martinez, Jr." with a small circle above the "i" in "Jr."

Robert Martinez, Jr.
International President