



IAM
U N I O N

International Association of Machinists
& Aerospace Workers

DEFENSE SPENDING: NATIONAL SECURITY AND JOB CREATION

Robust U.S. defense spending is not only necessary to ensure the sovereignty and safety of our nation, but also creates hundreds of thousands of jobs and is the very backbone of the United States manufacturing sector.

Record levels of defense spending in recent years have certainly helped improve our military readiness and capability while at the same time creating high quality, union jobs in the defense industry. However, additional defense spending is needed to protect against emerging threats, ensure our national security and retain our nation's position as the leader in promoting global security. It is the IAM's firm position that lawmakers must work past arbitrary budget caps, avoid the threat of budget sequestration, invest in the defense workforce, and spend appropriately on national defense to ensure that our military men and women have the tools needed to do their job safely and effectively.

As the largest defense and aerospace union in North America, we strongly support the following defense programs:

F-35 Joint Strike Fighter

The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is our nation's only 5th Generation stealth aircraft currently in production and is the key to future U.S. air superiority. In order to restore planned production rates, maintain cost savings, and ensure future air dominance the F-35 program requires robust and consistent funding from Congress. As global threats continue to rise, it is critical that the United States continue to invest in F-35 modernization, sustainment and ramp up to full production rate. **The Machinists Union urges Congress to support robust funding for the F-35 Lightning II and F-135 engine programs and oppose any amendments to cut aircraft quantities or other program funding.**

C-130 Strategic Airlift

The U.S. must maintain its strategic airlift capability through continued production of the C-130J Hercules. The C-130J is the most modern military tactical transport in service today. In recent years, there have been no C-130s requested in the DoD budget request. **The Machinists Union strongly supports Congress to add funding for 8 Air National Guard (ANG)/ Air Force Reserve (AFR) C-130J aircraft, add 3-5 Navy Reserve (USNR) KC-130J, and add 2 KC-130Js for USMC operational aircraft losses, and add 2 LC-130J ski-equipped aircraft for the ANG.**

F-15EX Eagle

The F-15EX program provides an immediate opportunity for the Air Force to address capacity and readiness issues in its current fighter fleet. In recent years, some in government have advocated for reducing procurement of these highly capable jets. For the sake of military efficiency and effectiveness, we strongly believe this tact would be highly imprudent. **The Machinists Union strongly supports robust funding for the procurement of at least 24 F-15EX in FY 2026.**

Aerial Refueling

The Administration's FY 2025 Budget request rightly included \$3.01 Billion for 15 KC-46 Pegasus refueling tankers that will be critical to finally replacing the aging Eisenhower era KC-135 tankers currently in use. For continued cost reduction and sustainment of this vital Air Force program **the Machinists Union urges continued support of the KC-46 tanker program in FY 2026.**

Support U.S. Ship Building

The U.S. Navy recently released a 30-year shipbuilding plan that contained three scenarios for the Navy fleet level goals ranging from 321 to 404 manned ships. Even the most modest of these three scenarios will not be achieved without significant funding increases and consistent support for future ship procurement. Although progress has been made, more needs to be done to ramp up Navy shipbuilding and repair efforts. In Fiscal Year 2026 and beyond, the IAM supports funding for procurement of 2 Virginia-class submarine per year and continued ramp up of the Columbia-class submarine program. The Machinists Union also strongly supports full funding for the DDG-51 destroyer program, funding for continued construction aircraft carriers CVN 80 and 81, and continued investment in the John Lewis class Fleet Oiler. Additionally, the IAM strongly supports strengthening the shipbuilding industrial base by investing in public and private shipyards, parts supply chains, domestic repair capacity, and workforce development.

Fully Fund NASA and U.S. Space Program

NASA has long been one of our nation's largest generators of new technologies, products, and manufacturing jobs. We strongly support the Air Force's investment in the National Security Space Launch Program. Additionally, we strongly support the Launch Services Program, the Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle, further investment in space operations and scientific discovery, and our peerless members at NASA launch sites, United Launch Alliance, and across the space industry.