

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 4, 2017

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Chairman  
House Armed Service Committee  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
H-405, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee  
2216 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter Visclosky  
Ranking Member  
House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee  
H-405, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Gentlemen and Madame Chairwoman:

As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Defense Appropriations endgame and FY18 National Defense Authorization and Defense Appropriations bills, we strongly urge your continued support for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program. As our nation's only 5th generation stealth fighter being built today, investing in increasing production capacity to meet F-35 full rate production is critical to ensuring the U.S. maintains air superiority. Further, this action would allow the Department and our allies to continue bringing costs down by leveraging economies of scale.

Continued commitment to the F-35 is essential to meet the growing global threat. As our adversaries continue to develop their own stealth fighters and proliferate advanced surface-to-air missile systems, the need to boost F-35 production has never been clearer. Current Department of Defense (DoD) force structure plans leave the Services with a capability gap that additional 4th generation legacy aircraft cannot adequately address, particularly in an advanced integrated threat environment. Procuring more F-35s faster is the best way to fill this capability gap. The F-35 program delivers more than just air combat superiority, it also helps bolster our nation's economy. The program supports more than 1,400 first tier suppliers and more than 170,000 direct and indirect jobs across the United States.

As such, we would urge the committees to invest in three critical areas: capacity (production non-recurring (PNR) tooling); production rate (aircraft); and readiness (spares). We would urge the committees to invest in PNR tooling to ensure that the program can achieve full rate DoD production of 80 F-35As, 36 F-35Bs and 30 F-35Cs in 2021. This would require an investment of \$328 million for A's (80), \$196.8 million for B's (36), and \$98.4 million for C's (30) (Total: \$623.2 million).

Additionally, to help address the critical need to maintain air superiority and support a ramp up to full rate production, we urge the committees to support a DoD production rate of 60 F-35As, 24 F-35Bs, and 12 F-35Cs in FY18. This production rate would continue to restore previously

planned F-35 procurement. It is anticipated that the FY18 budget will include, based on the FY17 request -- 44 F-35As, 20 F-35Bs, and 6 F-35Cs.

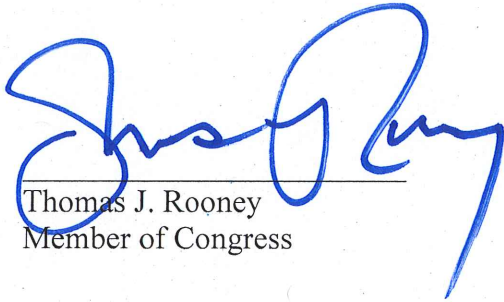
Furthermore, to address readiness and aircraft availability, we would ask that the committee direct the services to invest in a robust spares plan to adequately fund the spare parts and reparability needed to sufficiently support the number of aircraft expected in the near future.

We would further support any identified unfunded requirements. With more than 200 aircraft flying today, it is time to support a build plan towards full rate DoD production of 80-110 F-35As, 25-36 F-35Bs, and 24-30 F-35Cs.

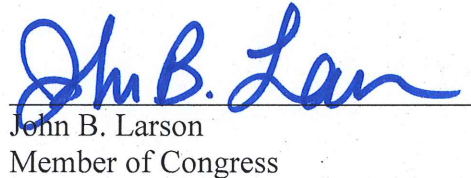
F-35 unit costs have come down more than 60 percent since the procurement of the first production aircraft a decade ago. In fact, the cost of an F-35A today is just over \$94 million and falling. The F-35 industry team has committed to reducing the costs to \$79 million for an F-35A in 2020 with investments in the profile and capacity. To achieve these costs savings and maintain future air superiority, we must significantly increase production and provide the necessary infrastructure investments.

Thank you for your continued support of the F-35 program and leadership of our nation in these critical times.

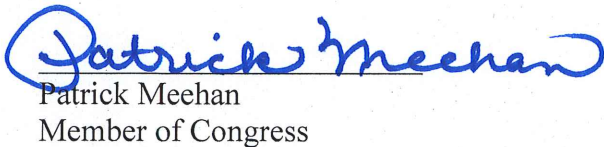
Sincerely,



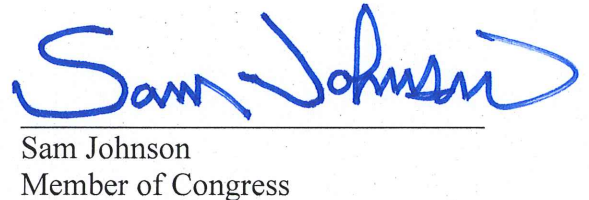
Thomas J. Rooney  
Member of Congress



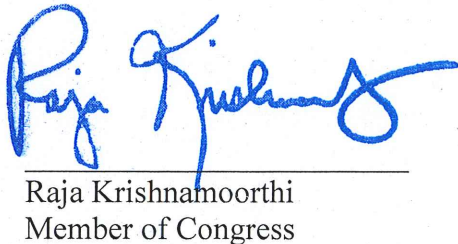
John B. Larson  
Member of Congress



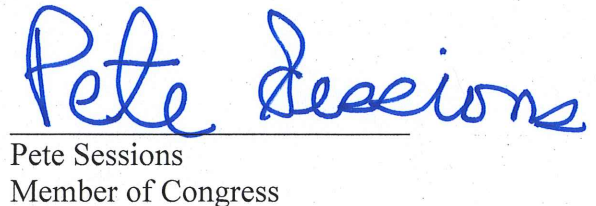
Patrick Meehan  
Member of Congress



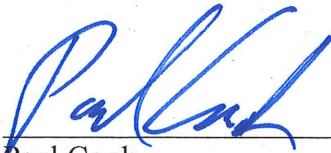
Sam Johnson  
Member of Congress



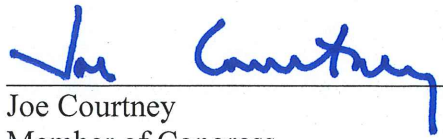
Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



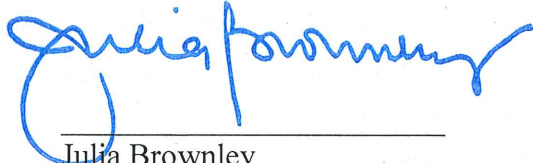
Pete Sessions  
Member of Congress



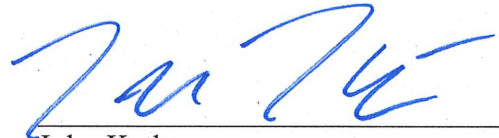
Paul Cook  
Member of Congress



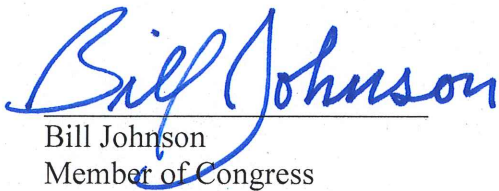
Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



John Katko  
Member of Congress



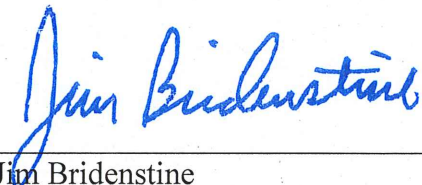
Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress



Ann M. Kuster  
Member of Congress



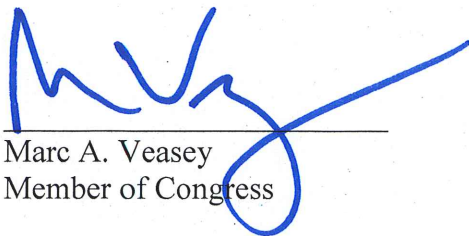
Jim Bridenstine  
Member of Congress



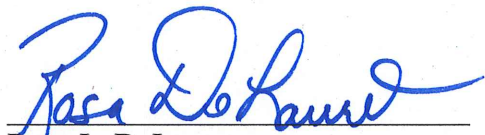
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



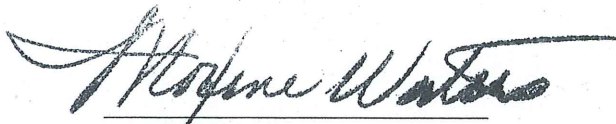
Ed Perlmutter  
Member of Congress



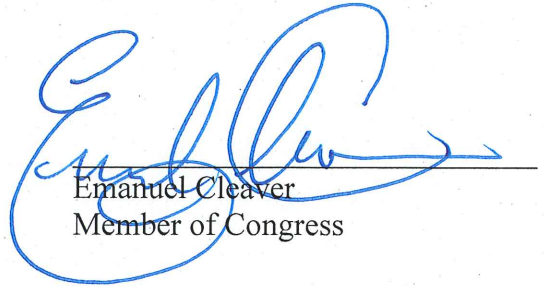
Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress



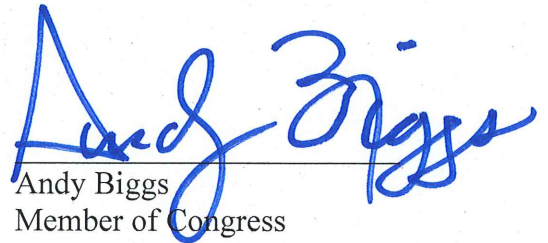
Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress



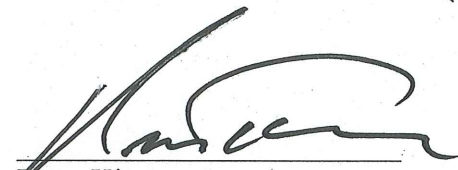
Emanuel Cleaver  
Member of Congress



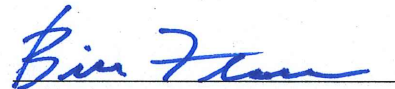
Don Bacon  
Member of Congress



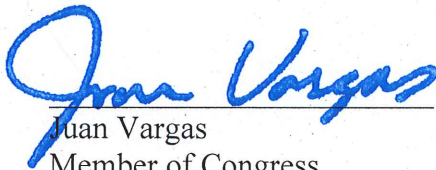
Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



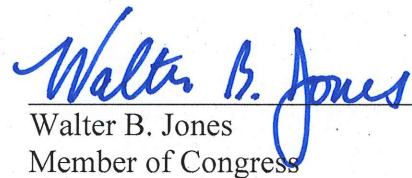
Peter King  
Member of Congress



Bill Flores  
Member of Congress



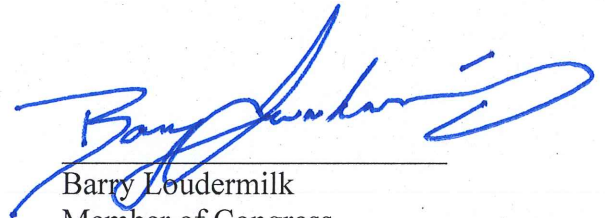
Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



Walter B. Jones  
Member of Congress



David Scott  
Member of Congress



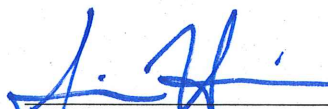
Barry Loudermilk  
Member of Congress



Tom Graves  
Member of Congress




Earl L. "Buddy" Carter  
Member of Congress




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James A. Himes  
Member of Congress




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Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress




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Trent Franks  
Member of Congress



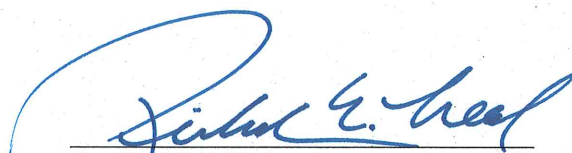
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Steve Chabot  
Member of Congress



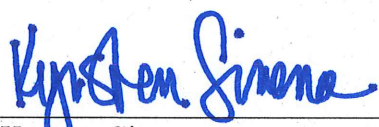
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Frank A. LoBiondo  
Member of Congress




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Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress



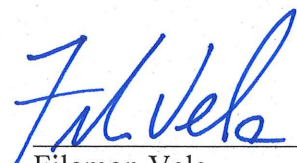
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Kyrsten Sinema  
Member of Congress




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Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



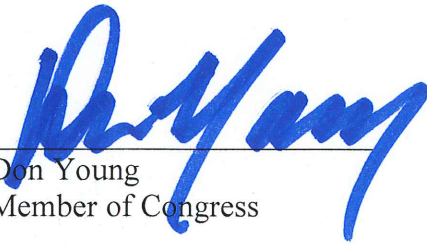
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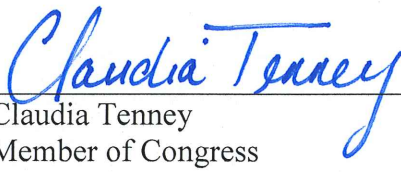
Filemon Vela  
Member of Congress





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Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress


  
Don Young  
Member of Congress


  
Claudia Tenney  
Member of Congress

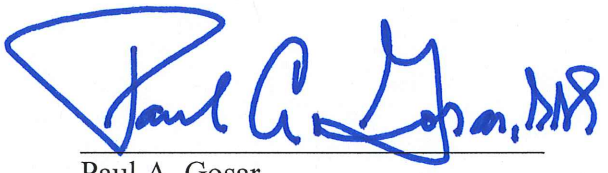
  
Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress


  
Mike Gallagher  
Member of Congress

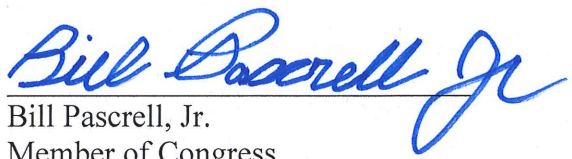
  
Bradley Byrne  
Member of Congress

  
Jody B. Hice  
Member of Congress

  
Austin Scott  
Member of Congress

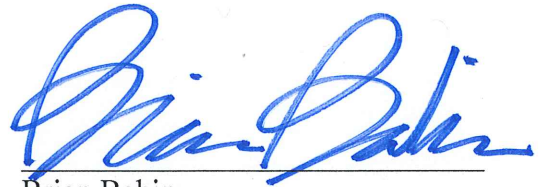
  
Paul A. Gosar  
Member of Congress

  
Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

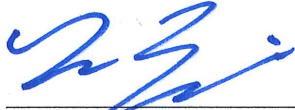
  
Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress



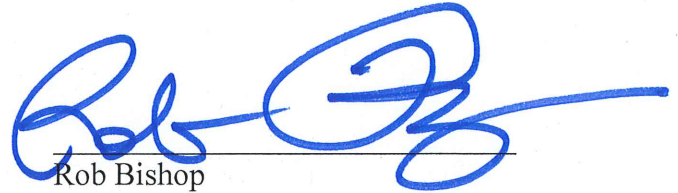
Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



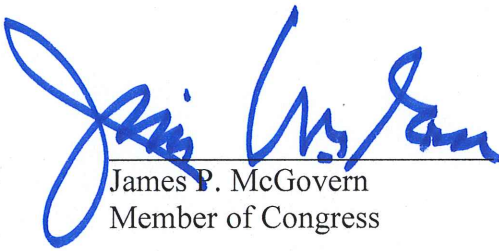
Brian Babin  
Member of Congress



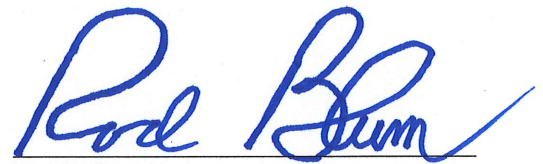
Lee M. Zeldin  
Member of Congress



Rob Bishop  
Member of Congress



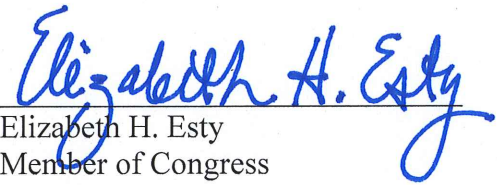
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Rod Blum  
Member of Congress



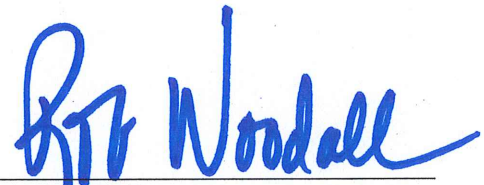
Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress



Elizabeth H. Esty  
Member of Congress



Kevin Brady  
Member of Congress



Rob Woodall  
Member of Congress



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Drew A. Ferguson, IV  
Member of Congress



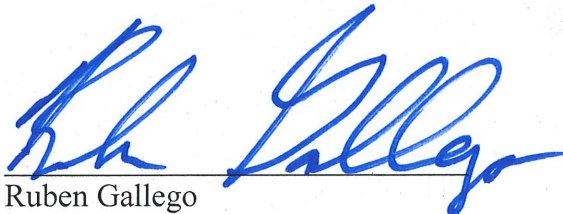
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Chris Collins  
Member of Congress



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Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress



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Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress



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André Carson  
Member of Congress