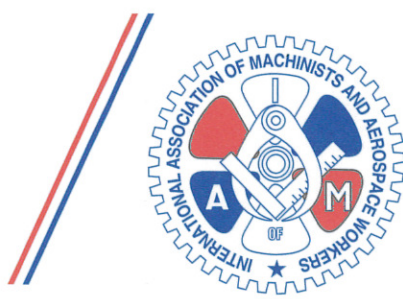


# International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



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Area Code 301  
967-4500



OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

The Honorable Steven Ricchetti  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20500

The Honorable Cedric Richmond  
Eisenhower Executive Office Building  
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington DC, 20501

March 10, 2021

Dear Mr. Ricchetti and Mr. Richmond:

On behalf of more than 600,000 active and retirees members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), the largest aerospace and defense union in North America, I am writing to express my strong support the F-35 Lightning II program.

The F-35 program strengthens national security, enhances global partnerships and powers economic growth. We are proud to represent workers across the country who produce, deliver, maintain and support this critical defense program. From production workers in Ft. Worth, to suppliers in nearly every state, to maintenance depot from coast to coast; the F-35 program creates high-quality, Machinists Union jobs.

The F-35 is the most advanced fighter aircraft the world has ever known. It is the only 5th Generation aircraft in production, and it is absolutely indispensable in the effort to recapitalize U.S. fighter fleets and those of our allied partners.

Thanks to sustained investment and commitment to the F-35 program, cost per aircraft has been reduced dramatically and continue to fall. The program is currently focused on lowering the costs to operate and support the aircraft while also working to ensure investment in modernization to keep it relevant and viable for decades to come.

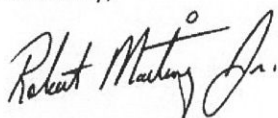
Not only is the F-35 the most capable fighter jet ever produced, but the program is also a huge driver of economic growth with more than 1,800 first tier suppliers in 48 states and Puerto Rico and more than \$49 billion in economic impact annually. The program supports more than 254,000 direct and indirect jobs across the country. These are high-quality, high-skilled jobs that would be nearly impossible to replace if they were to disappear.

Therefore, it concerns us to see in recent press that the DoD may be backing away from the planned acquisition of 2,456 aircraft for the U.S. armed services, which in turn could threaten plans for 750+ aircraft for our allied partners and foreign military sales countries. Injecting instability into the defense industrial base now during a time of economic uncertainty sends the wrong message to US workers and America's allies who are invested in this effort. Not to mention the negative impact on national security as we work to secure our nation from advanced and evolving global threats.

One of the main necessities of this program has always been economies of scale. To back off now by purchasing aircraft in economic production lots or reducing overall program quantities will only serve to drive up costs and hinder additional capability investment in the program.

We request an opportunity to meet with you to further discuss the importance of this critical defense program on our members, our domestic supply chain, and our national security. We remain confident that at full rate production the F-35 will continue to serve as the future backbone of the U.S. Air Force and many allied air forces around the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert Martinez Jr." in a cursive style.

Robert Martinez Jr.

President of the International Association of Machinist