

**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

October 25, 2021

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, the largest defense and aerospace union in the United States, I am writing to urge you to sign on to an important letter in support of the future of the F-35 Lightning II program and F135 modernization (see attached). The letter, led by Representative John Larson (D-CT), urges the Biden Administration to fully invest in a robust F-35 Lightning II program and F135 modernization in the Administration's Fiscal Year 2023 Department of Defense (DoD) budget request and the Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP).

The F-35 is the most advanced and capable fighter aircraft the world has ever known, and the F135 is the most powerful and advanced operational fighter engine ever produced. The F135 is also the only engine that powers all three variants of the F-35. Continued investment and ramp up of this program is essential to our national security and ensuring the United States maintains its air dominance. In addition, the F-35 program provides for tens of thousands of high-skilled, Machinists Union jobs and supports more than 254,000 direct and indirect jobs nationwide. With a strong commitment to the program and to our allied partners, the cost per aircraft will continue to be reduced substantially while at the same time bolstering our domestic economy, industrial base and national security.

To ensure future U.S. air dominance, continue job creation and sustain program cost savings; it is critical that we provide robust and consistent funding for the F-35 Lightning II program and F135 modernization in Fiscal Year 2023 and beyond.

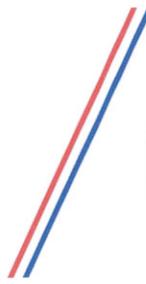
For all of these reasons, I respectfully ask you to sign on to the attached bipartisan letter. To sign on, please contact George Wang in Congressman Larson's office at George.Wang@mail.house.gov.

For more information, please contact IAM Political & Legislative Director Hasan Solomon at (301) 967-4575 or hsolomon@iamaw.org.

Thank you,

Robert Martinez, Jr.
International President

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OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

The Honorable Joe Biden
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to urge your Administration to fully invest in the F-35 Lightning II program and F135 modernization in the Fiscal Year 2023 Department of Defense (DoD) budget request and Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP).

The F-35 is the most capable and affordable aircraft proposed in the budget. It is a technological marvel that represents the best of American manufacturing and is the best equipment we can provide for both our warriors and for the taxpayers. More than 1,800 American suppliers contribute to the F-35 and half of those companies are a small or disadvantaged business. The F-35 supports more than 254,000 high-tech and high-paying American jobs and thousands of those workers are skilled union members.

Russia and China continue to advance surface-to-air missile systems and develop their own stealth fighters at an astonishing pace. DoD officials have testified for years that we must buy more F-35s to have enough by the mid-2020s to stay ahead of our adversaries. The F-35 is our nation's only 5th generation stealth fighter and is the only fighter in production that can be made in the numbers required to revitalize our aging fighter force.

Furthermore, the program is built on the U.S. military and our 14 allies buying these aircraft in quantities that leverage economies of scale to drive down costs. Today, the F-35 is not only the most advanced fighter in the world, but is lower in cost to procure, has comparable cost to operate and support, and provides unmatched capability to any 4th generation fighter. Now is the time to invest in our security and uphold our commitments to our allies to buy a minimum of 100 F-35s per year.

In addition to procuring more F-35s, we must fund F135 modernization. The F135 is the engine that powers all three variants of the F-35 and is the most powerful and advanced operational fighter engine in the world. For the last 10 years, the F135 has kept the F-35 flying without modernization due to its exceptional thermal management capacity. However, proposed weapons and system upgrades for the F-35 will require modernized propulsion. Our pacing threat, China, has doubled down on improving engines for their 5th generation fighter. Without continued investment in the future of propulsion we risk relinquishing our dominance in the air.

F135 modernization is a low-risk, variant common solution that will preserve an adaptive and maintenance-friendly design, while providing our service members with a critical technological advantage at great value to the taxpayer. We must carefully consider the implications of introducing an Adaptive Engine Transition Program (AETP) engine. The AETP engine cannot be integrated into all F-35s and would require remaking global supply and maintenance networks.

You are keenly aware that both Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush believed money spent on an alternate engine program diverts critical dollars away from more pressing DoD priorities. President Obama went as far as to threaten to veto any budget with an alternate engine in it. DoD Defense under both administrations has opposed the alternate engine program. It said in a statement, "In our view, it is a waste of taxpayer money that can be used to fund higher Departmental priorities and should be ended now." When a bipartisan effort in Congress stopped the inclusion of alternative engine funding in the defense appropriations package, it saved the taxpayers upwards of \$3 billion dollars.

Mr. President, you have been through these battles. We have great respect for Chairman Smith, the Services, and other Members. If they want to assess multiple propulsion upgrade paths in order to properly respond to the threats at hand, then we agree. However, we want to ensure that any study comparing F135 modernization to AETP introduction should be comprehensive and include all variables, including remaking global supply and maintenance networks and examining the cost of implementing the engine into all F-35 variants.

Mr. President, we thank you for your attention to this matter. We know that you understand the importance and significance of the F-35, especially with the rising threat of China. It is an unrivaled national asset that strengthens national security, enhances global partnerships, powers economic growth across our communities, and is respected by both our warriors and taxpayers because of its efficiency. We must buy a minimum of 100 F-35s per year, invest in advanced capabilities and engine modernization to stay ahead of the threats, and fund the sustainment profile necessary to support these aircraft for decades to come. We urge you to direct DoD to continue to make critical investments in the F-35 program in the FY23 budget request and Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP).

[CLOSING]

[SIGNATURES]

CC:

The Honorable Lloyd Austin, Secretary of Defense

The Honorable Shalanda Young, Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget