

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 19, 2026

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
H-405, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

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

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

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As the House and Senate consider the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) defense authorization and appropriations bills, we write to urge your continued support for the F-35 Lightning II and F135 engine programs. The F-35 is a cornerstone of U.S. and allied airpower, delivering unmatched capability in contested environments and playing a critical role in deterring aggression and ensuring operational success across the globe.

The F-35's advanced sensing, survivability, and joint and coalition interoperability enable essential national security missions for the United States and its allies. Recent deployments and operational use have demonstrated the aircraft's strategic value and operational effectiveness when it matters most. At home, the F-35 and F135 engine are vital to our economic strength, supporting more than 290,000 high-skilled jobs across over 1,900 suppliers in nearly every state, with roughly half of those suppliers being small businesses.

To ensure the F-35 and F135 remain the dominant combat aircraft for decades to come, we respectfully recommend the following priorities in FY27:

- **Multiyear Procurement Authority:** The F-35 program formally entered Full-Rate Production in 2023 and delivered 191 aircraft last year, demonstrating production maturity, stability, and sustained demand. We urge you to consider multiyear procurement authority to achieve meaningful cost savings through production optimization, economic order quantity purchasing, and predictable demand signals for the defense industrial base. Extending multiyear authority to both production and sustainment contracts—whether executed together or in parallel—would generate even greater economies of scale, align incentives across the enterprise, and enable suppliers to make long-term investments in workforce, capacity, and affordability.
- **Sustainment:** In Fiscal Year 2026 an additional \$1.44 billion was provided to accelerate expansion of the F-35 and F135 sustainment enterprise, including critical investments in spare parts and depot capacity. These resources are essential to reducing maintenance backlogs and improving mission capability rates across the fleet. Additional sustainment investments for Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps spare parts in FY27 will further accelerate progress and build upon this momentum. Increasing readiness is the single fastest way to increase the number of combat-credible aircraft available to the

United States and its allies in a crisis, and sustained investment will ensure the fleet can meet growing operational demands in an increasingly contested security environment.

- **Production:** We urge support for a minimum of 85 F-35 aircraft and related F135 engines, to maintain fleet readiness and ensure robust capacity to deter our adversaries and ensure the F-35 remains a vital component of U.S. and allied airpower.
- **Modernization:** We recommend additional funding to keep critical F-35 modernization efforts on track, including radar software development and mission systems upgrades. These investments are necessary to mitigate schedule and integration risk, ensure timely fielding of advanced capabilities, and preserve the F-35's technological advantage against rapidly evolving threats.
- **Engine Core Upgrade (ECU):** The F135 is the world's most advanced fighter engine with a proven record of safety, readiness, and reliability. The ECU builds upon that same architecture with a fleet-wide upgrade which is easily retrofittable in all F-35 variants. With over 1,300 F135 engines delivered and more than one million F135 flight hours of operation, the ECU benefits from a robust production and sustainment infrastructure. Industry investments have contributed to a significant direct increase in F135 capacity which benefits both the base and ECU program. While the ECU program is currently meeting its milestones, there may be some challenges to the fielding timeline due to recent FY26 budget uncertainty. We recommend additional funding for the ECU program in the FY27 NDAA and Appropriations process.

These priorities build upon the strong bipartisan foundation Congress has established for the F-35 Lightning II and F135 engine programs and are critical to ensuring it remains the backbone of U.S. and allied airpower. We appreciate your continued leadership and thoughtful consideration of these investments, which will strengthen our national defense, sustain the American industrial base, and provide our servicemembers with the decisive advantage they deserve.

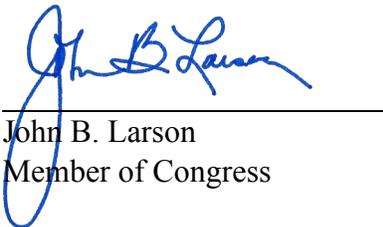
Sincerely,



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress



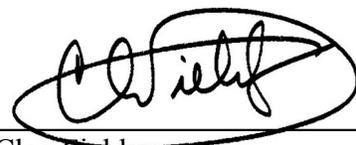
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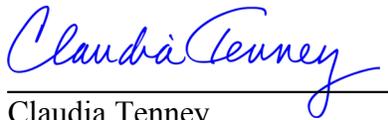
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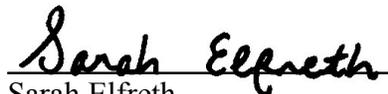
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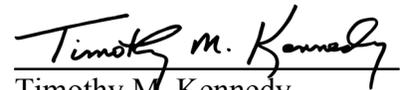
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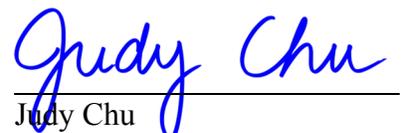
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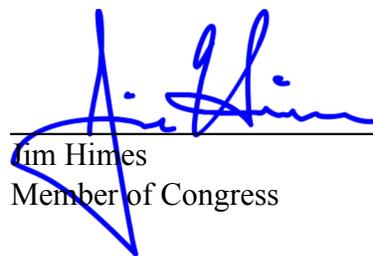
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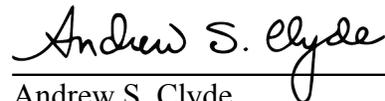
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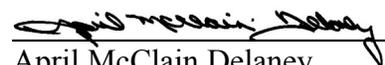
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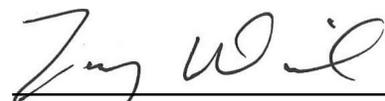
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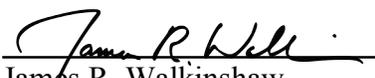
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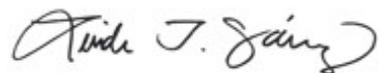
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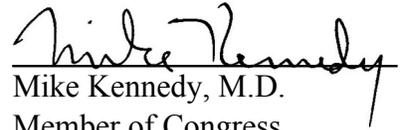
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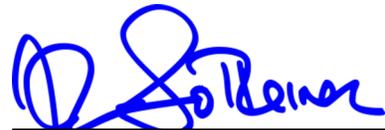
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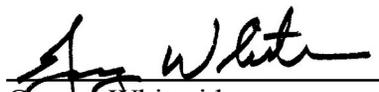
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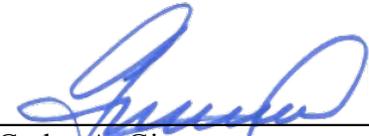
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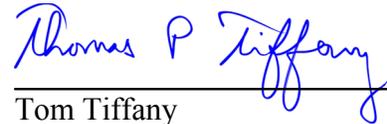
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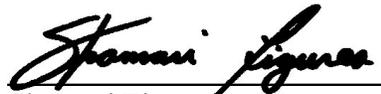
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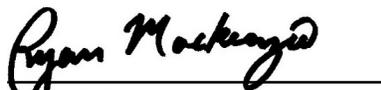
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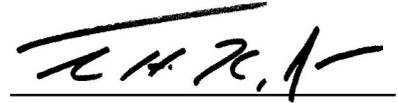
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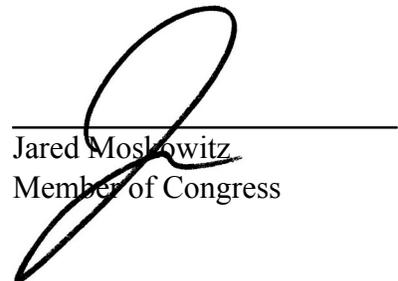
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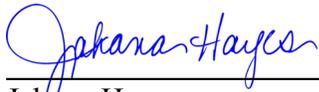
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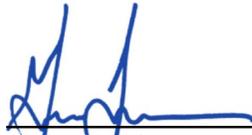
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Jahana Hayes
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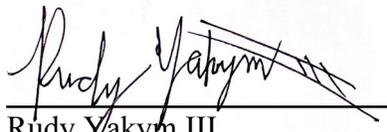
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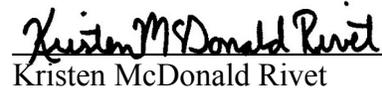
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