



March 20, 2024

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 bipartisan letter in support of the F-35 Lightning II program (see attached). The letter, led by Representatives Marc Veasey (D-TX), Michael Turner (R-OH), John Larson (D-CT), and John Rutherford (R-FL), asks the Chairs and Ranking Members of the House Armed Services Committee and House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee to continue their support with sustained, necessary investment in this critical defense program.

The F-35 is the most advanced fighter aircraft in the world, and continued investment in this program is essential to our national security and ensuring the United States maintains its air dominance. In addition, the F-35 provides for tens of thousands of high-skilled, Machinists Union jobs and supports more than 218,000 direct and indirect jobs nationwide.

To ensure future of U.S. air dominance and continued job creation, it is critical that Congress provide the necessary program funding to support the President's FY25 budget request and any service unfunded requirements to incrementally fund a ramp towards full rate production as well as continued investment in modernization and sustainment in the upcoming defense authorization and appropriations bills for FY25.

For all of these reasons, I urge you to sign on to the attached bipartisan letter. Please [click here](#) to sign on via Quill or contact Luke Dube in Representative Veasey's office at luke.dube@mail.house.gov, Zach Taylor in Representative Turner's office at zachary.taylor@mail.house.gov, George Wang in Representative Larson's office at george.wang@mail.house.gov, or Hannah Morrow in Representative Rutherford's office at hannah.morrow@mail.house.gov.

For more information, please contact IAM National Legislative and Political Director Hasan Solomon at (202) 420-5902 or hsolomon@iamaw.org.

Sincerely,

Brian Bryant
IAM International President

F-35:

Unrivaled National Asset – Powering Economic Growth and Protecting America

2024 Air Vehicle Industrial Base



- * Over 1,650 First Tier Suppliers in 50 States
- * Over 218,000 Jobs (Over 58,000 Direct + Over 160,000 Indirect)
- ** \$72 Billion Annual Economic Impact across the F-35 Enterprise

* Air vehicle only; excludes engine. Data is based on February 2024 snapshot from Lockheed Martin as well as inputs from Northrop Grumman and BAE Systems
 ** Based on independent estimate methodology developed by AeroDynamic Advisory across the F-35 enterprise

Dear Colleague:

As we develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 defense authorization and appropriations bills, we urge you to join us and support increased production and continued investment in the F-35 program. Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine as well as China's continued attempts to challenge Taiwan's sovereignty, has confirmed a return to near-peer competition, and it is critical that we continue to invest in the F-35 production – our nation's only 5th generation stealth fighter – in order to reduce overall program costs and ensure the United States maintains its competitive edge.

We are specifically requesting support for the President's budget request and any service unfunded requirements to incrementally fund a production ramp toward full rate production. We are also requesting additional funding for modernization, spare parts and spare engines for increased readiness, and propulsion growth.

Rapidly advancing threats require accelerating procurement of the F-35, the only 5th Generation stealth fighter in production. 5th Generation fighters combine capabilities and characteristics that cannot be replicated by other platforms, providing lethality, situational awareness, the denial of enemy situational awareness, and connectivity fused on a survivable aircraft that thrives in the forward line of combat.

Not only is continued commitment to the F-35 essential to meet the growing global threat, the program also contributes to our national economy by supporting more than 1,650 suppliers and

more than 298,000 direct and indirect jobs across the country. This adds up to more than a \$72 billion annual economic impact across 47 states, DC and Puerto Rico.

Thank you for your continued support of the F-35 program and if you would like to sign onto the below letter, please click [here](#) to sign on with Quill. If you have any questions, please contact Luke Dube in Congressman Veasey's office, Zach Taylor in Congressman Turner's office, George Wang in Congressman Larson's office, or Hannah Morrow in Congressman Rutherford's office.

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN](#)

LETTER TEXT

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 defense authorization and appropriations bills, we strongly urge your continued support for the F-35 Lightning II and the F135 engine program. The F-35 is the only 5th generation stealth fighter currently produced by the United States and our allies, and it is imperative that we continue to invest in the program to increase capacity and maintain a margin of capability required to dominate near-peer competitors in any potential conflict.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as China's continued attempts to challenge the sovereignty of the United States and our allies, have confirmed a return to near-peer competition and conflict. This reality only further emphasizes the need to bolster cutting-edge platforms, such as F-35, to deter and, if necessary, defeat further aggression in the Indo-Pacific, Europe, and elsewhere.

The F-35 enterprise provides unmatched stealth, connectivity, and interoperability with our allies and enables alliance-based deterrence and diplomacy. It redefines how we train, fight, and win with our allies enabling critical joint capabilities and building coalitions while strengthening global security. Further, it powers job growth, workforce development, and economic opportunity across the United States.

The F-35 is the cornerstone of the Air Force's tactical fighter fleet because of its ability to penetrate contested air space and act as a central node empowering Joint All Domain Operations (JADO). F-35s will also be the primary manned fighter flying with the Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA), uncrewed combat drones; no other aircraft has the capabilities – that are already integrated into the F-35 – needed to act as a key node and enabler in the joint fight. The F-35 can conduct operations in highly contested environments. In addition to its stealth characteristics, the F-35 possesses an unmatched sensor and communications suite that serves as a central node for U.S. and allied forces operating in the same area. The F-35 can penetrate deep into a contested area, gather valuable intelligence and targeting data, and pass that information back to legacy fighters and other air, ground, and maritime platforms.

Not only is the F-35 critical for the national security of the U.S. as well as our allies and partners, but it is also vital to the U.S. manufacturing base. Across our country, more than 1,650 suppliers contribute to the F-35 air vehicle enterprise, with one in every two of those companies being a small and/or disadvantaged business. The F-35 enterprise supports more than 214,000 high-tech, high-paying American jobs annually with thousands of those workers who are skilled union members.

Additionally, to ensure the F-35 continues to be the preeminent 5th Generation fighter and the United States maintains a competitive edge against all adversaries, an Engine Core Upgrade (ECU)

is necessary to modernize the F135. Since its entry to service, the F-35 air vehicle has been upgraded three times but there have been no commensurate propulsion upgrades to the F135 engine. While the F135 meets current mission requirements, absent engine modernization, engine durability and sustainment costs will be negatively affected. Full funding of the Engine Core Upgrade program supports timely cut in of that system to restore engine life and reduce lifecycle costs. In parallel, Power and Thermal Management modernization is critical to support the significantly higher cooling demands on the aircraft.

As global threats continue to rise, it is critical that the United States and our allies stay the course and continue to invest in F-35 and F135 production (rate), modernization (relevance), and sustainment (readiness). As such we would urge the committees to support:

Relevance (Modernization): Support full funding for planned modernization and retrofit activities for FY25 for the integration of advanced capabilities to continually outpace the threat. Support additional software lab infrastructure to help accelerate advanced weapons integration. Fully fund F135 ECU and support funding for Power and Thermal Management modernization efforts addressing significantly higher cooling demands on the aircraft. These combined activities prepare the world's most capable fighter for today's threat and beyond.

Readiness (Sustainment): Support funding for adequate air vehicle spares to increase readiness and aircraft availability. To date, the necessary spares essential to meet warfighter-defined F-35 Full Mission Capable rates have been underfunded. Support funding for additional spare engines to increase readiness and aircraft availability. The Air Force has set a goal of zero Aircraft on Ground (AOG) for engine-related causes and identified the need to procure five additional engines for that purpose. The Navy has established a goal of one spare engine per planned carrier strike group, which would require seven additional spare engines in FY25. Similarly, the Marine Corps desires four additional spare engines to meet its revised requirements. This additional funding will allow the Services to swap in spare engines while repairs are performed on the original engines.

Rate (Production): Support the President's FY25 Budget Request and any Services' unfunded requirements to support a ramp toward full rate production (80As, 24Bs, and 30Cs for the U.S. Services). A minimum of 80 aircraft is needed in FY25 to meet warfighter requirements and to prevent disruptions throughout the supply chain.

Thank you for your continued support of the F-35 program and for your leadership on defense and national security issues.