

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 4, 2016

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
H-405, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

Gentlemen:

As you head into conference, we write in strong support of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and urge you to continue supporting increased production rates at this critical juncture for the program. The F-35 is essential for U.S. national security and that of our closest allies like Israel.

As you are aware, the F-35 is the nation's only 5th Generation stealth aircraft currently in production. It is the backbone of future air superiority for all three US Services and many of our most important allies. The F-35's advanced capabilities are critical to maintaining air superiority in future surface-to-air and air-to-air threat environments without sustaining significant losses. Events around the globe continue to demonstrate the urgent need for the F-35's capabilities. The program is gaining momentum with the Marine Corps declaring initial operating capability (IOC) last year and the Air Force declaring IOC this summer. We believe it is essential for Congress to provide the funding necessary to continue increasing F-35 production at a rate sufficient to meet future threats and to reach full rate production of at least 120 US aircraft per year as quickly as possible.

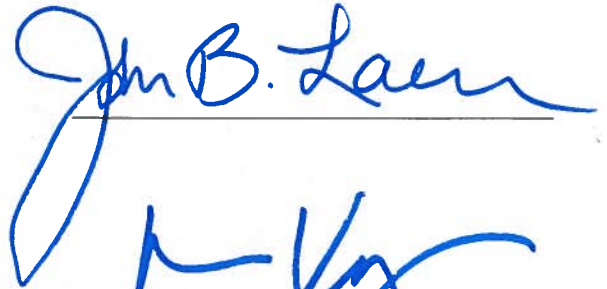
Both the House and Senate Defense Appropriations bills support increasing the production rate for the F-35 program. The House bill added 11 F-35s (five F-35As, four F-35Cs and two F-35Bs) for all three Services to fulfill their unfunded requirements, while the Senate bill added four (two F-35Bs and two F-35Cs). Increasing the production rate is the single most important factor in reducing future aircraft unit costs. Additionally, significantly increasing production is critical to fielding F-35s in the numbers needed to meet the expected threats in the mid-2020s. Furthermore, the Senate bill added \$100 million to significantly increase F-35A advance procurement to help the Air Force increase its ramp rate in Fiscal Year 2018. We strongly encourage the conferees to support the 11 aircraft added by the House and the \$100 million in additional F-35A advance procurement included in the Senate bill.

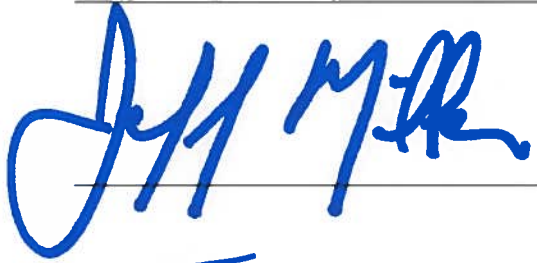
Finally, we are concerned with the significant cuts to Follow-On-Modernization (FOM) included in the Senate bill. These cuts would delay critical FOM capability upgrades needed to ensure the F-35 stays ahead of increasing future threats. We urge the conferees to restore as much of this funding as possible.

Thank you for your continued steadfast support for the F-35 program and leadership on behalf of our nation's armed forces.

Sincerely,









Tom Graves

Sam Johnson





Rob A. Brady

Ann Marie Fuster

Blahp

Y. Kilgoff

Jim Bidenstein



Don Scott

Bang Joonhyung

Min Seon

Do Hwan

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Martha Kaly

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Fay C. Miller

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Cher Bustos

Blake Fentell

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Roger Williams

Joy Allen

Kristen Simona

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Grace F. Nagel

Pat Woodall

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Tom

Jody Hise

Mike Coff

Jim

Rob Wether

Brian Agis

Ma. Jim

Harford Bishop

Henry M. Jones

Joe Courtney

Bill Powell Jr

Pete Sessions TX-32

Joe Burton

Pete Olson

~~Am...~~

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Art. Scott

Walter B. Jones

Paul. Kistig

Hank Johnson

Lynne Watwood

James Roney

Pete Aquil

Pat. Morley

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John Larson
Pete Aguilar
Rick Allen
Brad Ashford
Brian Babin
Joe Barton
Rob Bishop
Sanford Bishop
Robert Brady
Jim Bridenstine
Julia Brownley
Cheri Bustos
Andre Carson
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Mike Coffman
Chris Collins
Doug Collins
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Rosa DeLauro
Mike Doyle
Elizabeth Esty
Blake Farenthold
Paul Gosar

Tom Graves
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Frank Guinta
Richard Hanna
Alcee Hastings
Jody Hice
Brian Higgins
Jim Himes
Duncan Hunter
Hank Johnson
Bill Johnson
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Stephen Knight
Ann Kuster
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Kenny Marchant
Jeff Miller
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