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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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**SUPPORT THE COMPETITIVE ENGINE FOR THE
JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER**

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to encourage you to support continued development of an alternate engine for the Joint Strike Fighter. Requiring companies to compete for this work will substantially reduce taxpayer costs, spur technological innovation and enhance contractor performance. The engines for the JSF represent a \$100 billion taxpayer investment over the next 30 years. We should not undertake this effort on a sole source basis.

As Chairman and Ranking Member of the Defense Acquisition Reform Panel within the House Armed Services Committee, over the past year we've studied what needs to be done to make our defense acquisition processes better. One chief lesson stands out: forcing contractors to compete for Defense programs works much better than sole source contracting. That's why we are dismayed that the Administration wants to give one company a sole source engine contract for the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft. There is no doubt that competition will benefit the JSF engine program. According to the Government Accountability Office, the engine the Pentagon does not want competition for is expected to exceed their original engine development target by 50% more, or \$2.5 billion – and their production engines for the Air Force aircraft are now 42% more expensive. We simply have to do better than this, and the 2009 Weapons System Reform act provides the roadmap. A cornerstone of this law is that procurement should favor competition, and that is exactly what is needed for the JSF engine program.

That is the lesson we learned in the F-16 aircraft engine competition of the 1980's, which involved exactly the same two lead contractors involved today in the JSF engine program, Pratt & Whitney and General Electric. According to the General Accountability Office, the US Government saved 21% in life cycle savings due to annual competitions to power the F-16. Equally important, the engines of both engine companies got much better. As we look to the future, we would be foolish to ignore the lessons of the past. Annual engine competitions will make both engines better and save the taxpayer money—up to \$21 billion based upon the F-16 experience. And, when you consider that the JSF will comprise over 90% of America's combat aircraft in the future, having two engines powering the fleet provides an essential hedge to any potential fleet-wide grounding due to an engine problem.

Funding for the F136 engine is already 75% complete. With \$3 billion already invested in the program, and the contractor now offering a Fixed Price contract for all Low Rate Initial Production engines, it's surprising that some still turn their backs on competition. In our judgment, we can walk down one of two paths. For the next thirty years, we can have two

companies engaging in annual competitions to give the American taxpayer the lowest costs and the best performance – or we can give one company a 30-year, \$100 billion monopoly. Which do you think will best keep costs under control and deliver better engine performance? We think the answer is clear. We urge Congress to stay the course and fund the F136. There is too much at stake to take any other course.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Andrews
Chairman, House Acquisition Reform Panel



K. Michael Conaway
Ranking Member, House Acquisition
Reform Panel