

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 18, 2010

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Defense  
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Defense  
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Vice Chairman Cochran:

We are writing to ask for your assistance in continuing the funding for the F136 Joint Strike Fighter Alternate Engine Program in the next short-term continuing resolution and also to fully fund the F136 engine in any legislation to complete the Senate Fiscal Year 2011 Appropriations process.

The program is currently funded under the existing continuing resolution which expires March 4. While debate continues over the engine and the billions in cost savings it could provide to the Joint Strike Fighter program, engines are running, development continues, and the program nears flight test and completion. Allowing funding under the next continuing resolution to end before the Senate has spoken would be premature and shortsighted.

Our concern stems from the vote in the House of Representatives yesterday to eliminate fiscal year 2011 funding for the F136 Alternate Engine program. We strongly believe this program deserves continued funding to insure that our national security is not compromised in the future. The F136 Alternate Engine program has exceeded expectations and remains on schedule to enter flight testing this year. Test results continue to demonstrate that the F136 Alternate Engine program lowers engine maintenance costs that will improve the affordability of the F-35 throughout the life of its program. Its development is now 80 percent complete.

Without a competing engine, the United States and our allied forces will depend entirely on one engine for more than 90 percent of their single-engine fighter jet fleet. If competition makes economic sense for the purchase of Littoral Combat Ships—where the Navy intends to save \$2.9 billion through a dual procurement strategy—it follows that competition makes sense for a purchase of more than 4,000 engines for the United States and eight international partners spanning a period of nearly two decades.

From its conception, the Pentagon structured the Joint Strike Fighter program with two engines competing annually for procurement based on performance, durability, acquisition costs, and public support. We do not believe it makes any sense to terminate this program now, when the 30-year benefits of competition are beginning to be delivered. To end the program now will waste \$3 billion in spent development costs without any return on the taxpayer investment.

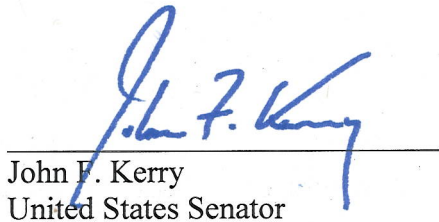
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Recent reports of continued problems with the F135 engine pose adverse cost and schedule implications for the JSF program overall and an unacceptable level of risk over the service life of the aircraft. Warren Boley, Pratt and Whitney's president of military engines, has announced a \$1 billion increase in the engine's cost, of which \$400 million was needed to address durability and design margin deficiencies. If the F135 engine met the contractual specification, which includes required durability and design margins, why is it necessary for the Department of Defense to spend additional funds to improve the current F135 engine? By contrast, the F136 alternate engine program has received the highest awards for cost and technical performance in 18 of the 19 performance periods, and has been cited as a "model" program. The benefits of competition are clear and well-documented. Given the history of the F-35 development program, we believe that eliminating funding for one of the two engines will result in more cost overruns.

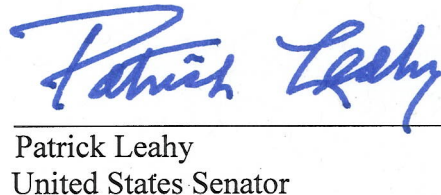
For these reasons, we respectfully request that you to continue funding for the F136 Alternate Engine program in the next CR and to fully fund the program in any final Fiscal Year 2011 Appropriations bill.

Thank you for the consideration of our request.

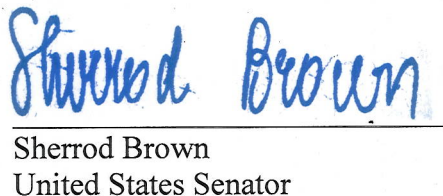
Sincerely,



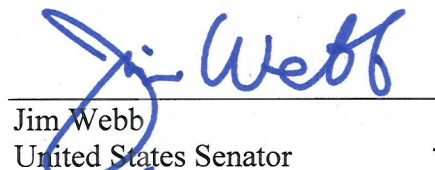
John F. Kerry  
United States Senator



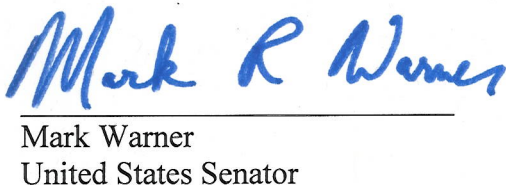
Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator



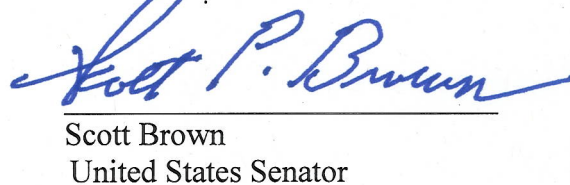
Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Jim Webb  
United States Senator



Mark Warner  
United States Senator



Scott Brown  
United States Senator