

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 14, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write in support of your and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' call for the elimination of the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) alternate engine program. First, according to Secretary Gates, the alternate engine is not militarily necessary to our national security. Second, we recognize that the national debt is a grave threat to our economic and national security and, as a result, we simply can't afford it. The federal government must be a better steward of taxpayer dollars, and that includes the Department of Defense (DoD). No federal agency is exempt.

Each year since 2006, DoD has proposed the elimination of the JSF alternate engine program. As you know, your predecessor, President George W. Bush, opposed it. Our military leaders have stated that a single engine is suitable for the F-35, and we agree. The F135 engine has accumulated more than 20,000 ground test hours and 740 air test hours, and it is five to seven years ahead of the F136 alternate engine in development. Further, there are almost 30 U.S. military aircraft that operate with a sole source engine. In fact, the F-16 is the only aircraft in the history of U.S. military aviation with two simultaneous engine manufacturers. Finally, Secretary Gates has concluded that the alternate engine program "does nothing to keep us safe." We agree. It simply is not necessary to our nation's defense.

As of FY2009, over \$2.5 billion was spent on the JSF alternate engine program, and the most recent Cost Assessment Program Evaluation from DoD reports that an additional \$2.9 billion will be needed just to complete development of the alternate engine. It diverts essential funding from critical military projects that keep our troops on the ground and this nation safe from attack. The DoD can build over 50 JSFs for the price of the alternate engine program alone. We must respect the taxpayers and their hard earned dollars. Terminating the alternate engine program is a step in the right direction.

We applaud your opposition to the JSF alternate engine program and urge you to maintain your veto threat of any bill that seeks to reinstate funding for this program. The American taxpayer should not be asked to continue to fund this program because it is militarily unnecessary and a wasteful use of extremely limited and precious taxpayer dollars. We are standing by to support you on this critical budgetary issue.

Sincerely,



Tim Griffin  
Member of Congress



Robert J. Dold  
Member of Congress