



June 13, 2023

The Honorable Mike Rogers  
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee  
2469 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515



The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee  
2264 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515



Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Smith,

On behalf of the millions of members and supporters of the undersigned organizations, we urge you to forgo authorizing funding for a second engine for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) in the fiscal year (FY) 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and to rescind unobligated funding for the program.



The Department of Defense's (DOD) FY 2024 budget request included \$462 million for the Engine Core Upgrade (ECU) to update the existing F135 Pratt & Whitney engine for the JSF and stripped funding for the General Electric-made alternate engine by terminating the Adaptive Engine Transition Program (AETP).



Members of Congress should support the budget request, which would be the right decision for both taxpayers and national security priorities. Among other issues, the alternate engine is not compatible with all three variants of the JSF, and upfront development of the engine would cost more than \$6 billion.



The alternate engine would [require](#) substantial airframe modifications to fit into the F-35A and F-35C and is incompatible with the Marine Corp's F-35B. Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall made this point on March 10, 2023, saying the Air Force was the only service that was "seriously interested" in the second engine, and that it would be "very, very difficult, if not impossible" to incorporate the engine into the F-35B. Secretary Kendall also noted that the price tag of an alternate engine would mean the Air Force would be able to purchase fewer JSFs.

Secretary Kendall stated during an April 18, 2023 Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee [hearing](#) that the alternate engine would require, "...a large upfront cost associated with engineering, manufacturing and development." Funding the engine would necessitate "several billion dollars before you start production. So that was definitely something that was not affordable." The Air Force [estimates](#) upfront alternate engine development costs would be nearly \$6.7 billion, which is 279 percent more than the \$2.4 billion development cost for the ECU [projected](#) by Pratt & Whitney. The engine manufacturer determined that the ECU would save \$40 billion in total JSF program lifecycle costs for several reasons, including avoiding a duplicative production line and global supply chain to service two separate engines.

Moreover, introducing a new engine to a single-engine aircraft could jeopardize pilot safety. In their July 22, 2022 letter regarding the F-35A, 35 members of the House of Representatives expressed concerns with introducing an unproven engine to the F-35, [writing](#), "[t]o our knowledge, the Department [of Defense] has never put a new centerline engine in a single-engine aircraft without twin-engine learning or combat experience. We believe the risks associated with this must be carefully considered to protect the safety of our pilots."

Unlike the AETP, the ECU builds on proven technology in the F135. In the last 20 years, Pratt & Whitney has [delivered](#) more than 1,000 F135 engines that have [safely amassed](#) more than 600,000 flight hours, "or 1 million, if you count the safety record of the F119 engine it was based on." It does not make sense to incorporate an engine that is not yet developed and has never been flight tested when the Pentagon has a cost-effective option that builds on combat-proven technology.

Finally, funding the alternate engine would divert money from much-needed modernization efforts across the DOD, and make the JSF program, which already suffers from a poor readiness rate, even harder to maintain.

In 2011, Congress agreed with the DOD to eliminate funding for GE's alternate engine for the JSF. It was the right decision then and it would be the right decision now. Again, we urge you to forgo requesting funding for the alternate engine in the FY 2024 NDAA and rescind unobligated funding for the program.

Sincerely,

Tom Schatz  
President  
Council for Citizens Against Government Waste

Adam Brandon  
President  
FreedomWorks

Steve Ellis  
President  
Taxpayers for Common Sense

Andrew Langer  
President  
Institute for Liberty

George Landrith  
President  
Frontiers of Freedom

David Williams  
President  
Taxpayers Protection Alliance