

STATE OF KANSAS

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GOVERNOR LAURA KELLY

April 19, 2021

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
House Armed Service Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chairwoman
House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
H-405, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Ranking Member
House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
H-405, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 defense authorization and appropriations bills, I strongly urge your continued support for the F-35 Lightning II program.

The F-35 is the backbone of the future fighter force for the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and our closest allies. It is critical that the Department of Defense (DoD) continue to increase production of our nation's only 5th generation stealth fighter to ensure we maintain air dominance for the decades to come. The F-35 strengthens national security and international partnerships while providing high quality engineering and manufacturing jobs throughout the country.

More than 1,800 supplier companies in 48 states and Puerto Rico work on the F-35 program, resulting in more than 254,000 direct and indirect jobs and making a \$49 billion economic impact annually. The F-35 is a critical component of America's, and my state's, engineering and manufacturing economy. In Kansas alone, more than 42 companies help build the F-35 providing more than 5,290 direct and indirect jobs and a total annual economic impact of \$617 million. Kansas is proud of our role in America's aviation history, so it's only appropriate that so many of our citizens contribute to the production of the most advanced fighter jet ever produced.

The United States and our allies are flying more than 625 F-35s today, operating from 27 locations around the world. It is critical that the DoD and our allies stay the course by adequately investing in the F-35 fleet to continue driving down sustainment costs across the enterprise as the program ramps-up to full-rate production. Thanks to strong support and commitment to the program, the cost per aircraft has been significantly reduced. As a result, the F-35 is now below the cost of any new 4th generation tactical fighter.

Support Letter for the F-35 Lightning II Program

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I respectfully request that the Congress provide needed funding for sustainment and modernization of the F-35 fleet and continue to increase production to keep the program on track. Thank you for your support of the F-35 program and for your leadership on defense and national security issues for our nation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Kelly", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Laura Kelly
Governor of Kansas