

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** May 7, 2003

**LARSON AND HOUSE DELEGATION MEMBERS CALL ON ARMED SERVICES  
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN TO SUPPORT F/A-22 RAPTOR**

WASHINGTON, D.C.- U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) and other members of Connecticut's House delegation today called on House Armed Services Committee Chairman Duncan Hunter (CA-52) and Ranking Member Rep. Ike Skelton (MO-04) to oppose any reduction in the number of F/A-22 aircraft that would be procured in fiscal year 2004. The text of the letter is below:

May 7, 2003

The Honorable Duncan Hunter  
Chairman  
House Armed Services Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
The Honorable Ike Skelton  
Ranking Member  
House Armed Services Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hunter and Ranking Member Skelton:

We are writing to express our concern regarding the issue of potential reductions in the F/A-22 buy and funding in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2004. We believe that now is the worst possible time to decrease production funds. The F/A-22 program is at a critical stage on the production ramp and learning curve and any reductions will place the program at risk. The fact is that the F/A-22 development has been highly successful and aircraft performance continues to meet or exceed technical and operational requirements.

We believe that cutting production quantities is incongruent with a cap on production funding

that was instituted by the Members of the Armed Services. The only thing that cutting production will do is damage supplier confidence, drive up cost, and ultimately reduce the number of aircraft the Air Force will be able to procure.

We must not underestimate the impact that a reduction would have on the defense industrial base, including placing several suppliers at risk. Sixty-five percent of the cost of the F/A-22 is tied to the supplier base, which cannot afford to see any major reductions taken in the program, particular at a time when the commercial aviation market is in such a downward trend. Production stability is vital to achieving future affordability goals, and without production stability everyone loses - the Air Force, the taxpayer, and the nation.

In Connecticut alone - our home state - the F/A-22 workload equates to approximately 20% of the anticipated new engine production in 2004. For every aircraft not procured, our state will lose 37 highly skilled workers in our production facilities. Furthermore, there is a minimum factory (production) load that is required to keep prices per aircraft and major components down (or at least stable) and still have the supplier based engaged. Right now even the minimum load is at risk

While we understand the difficult fiscal constraints you face, further reductions to the procurement of the F/A-22 will hurt the program's long-term stability and exacerbate the already critical logistics and operational impacts associated with retaining F-15s past their planned retirement age.

Signed/

Nancy Johnson  
Rosa DeLauro  
John Larson  
Rob Simmons

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