

"Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to efforts that would eliminate engine competition for the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

In the interest of full disclosure, let me first say that I am proud of the more than 4,000 Hoosier employees of Rolls Royce, who have teamed with General Electric in developing the F136 engine.

"The fact is for the past fifteen years, Congress has openly funded competing engines for America's next frontline fighter aircraft because competition is the best way to control costs and ensure continuity within the largest defense program in our nation's history.

"The General Accountability Office confirmed as much in its studies which indicated that we can save up to \$20 billion by having competing engines. GAO found that the F-16 engine competition yielded savings of twenty percent in the overall lifecycle costs and by using that model, we expect to save the amount it would take to purchase two hundred JSF aircraft.

"In addition to the opportunity for cost savings, competition will also ensure operational readiness throughout the fleet.

"Building the JSF using two interchangeable engines from two separate manufacturers provides insurance against unforeseen potential systemic engine problems. Since nearly ninety percent of our fighters in 2035 will utilize the F-35 airframe, I believe we must ensure that our forces at the tip of the spear can meet any challenge. With a competing engine, we can do just that.

"By funding the F136, we also minimize the risks posed by testing failures, required redesigns, cost growth and delays in the primary engine program. And because it is a follow-on program, the F136 provides growth.

"In closing, the essential choice before this body is between competition and sole source contracting. Either we can require two companies to engage in head-to-head competition each year for the next thirty years - or give one company a sole source contract worth \$100 billion to power the aircraft that will make up the overwhelming majority of our tactical air forces.

"Mr. Speaker, the answer is clear: competition provides an important cost-control mechanism in defense procurement and mitigates risk.

"In the interest of both the financial and national security interests of the American taxpayer, choose competition. Oppose this amendment."