

November 19, 2012

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

Today, I am writing regarding the looming threat of sequestration and the impact it would have on the New England region, particularly on programs such as the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, the backbone of America's ability – and the ability of many of our crucial allies – to maintain air superiority in the face of known and yet to be revealed threats on the horizon. By continuing to invest in an advanced, fifth-generation stealth jet fighter that replaces four different aging variants across three branches of the military, the program has the added benefit of bolstering high-paying jobs in the advanced manufacturing sector, one of the greatest areas for potential job growth, both in our region and across the country.

The Council appreciates that national defense is not a jobs program. Nevertheless, with the national unemployment rate still hovering near 8 percent, the positive economic impact of the F-35 program simply cannot be overstated. The F-35 directly and indirectly supports more than 133,000 high-paying, family-supporting jobs across this country, pumping more than \$17 billion into the national economy and supporting 1,350 suppliers in 45 states and Puerto Rico. New England is home to 269 suppliers to the F-35 program, pouring nearly \$1.5 billion into our region's economy and providing jobs to well over 18,000 people.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE F-35 PROGRAM IN NEW ENGLAND

State	Supplier Locations	Direct & Indirect Jobs	Economic Impact
Connecticut	85	8,333	\$634,700,000.00
Maine	4	468	\$37,800,000.00
Massachusetts	99	1,468	\$90,000,000.00
New Hampshire	72	6,358	\$532,900,000.00
Rhode Island	6	39	\$1,700,000.00
Vermont	3	2,001	\$159,300,000.00
New England Total	269	18,667	\$1,456,400,000.00

Source: Lockheed Martin

As you can see, in Connecticut, the F-35 program directly and indirectly supports 8,333 jobs, generating more than \$634.7 million in economic activity. There are 85 F-35 suppliers in Connecticut, including many small and disadvantaged businesses. While the exact impacts of sequestration on the F-35 program aren't known, there is no question that it will have a profound impact on the advanced manufacturing workforce that helps build these planes and drives our region's economy.

As you know, The New England Council, the nation's oldest regional business organization, is an alliance of businesses, academic and health institutions and public and private organizations throughout New England formed to promote a strong economy and a high quality of life in the region. The Council is dedicated to identifying and supporting federal public policies and articulating the voice of our membership regionally and nationally on important issues facing New England. Simply put, sequestration would undermine all that the Council and our members advocate for every day. It would reverse all the hard-fought economic gains that have been achieved by this Congress, not only in New England but across the country. From American leadership to American alliances and American jobs, the nation needs programs such as the F-35 to continue to move forward, but under sequestration, those wheels of progress could come to a grinding halt.

The Council appreciates that the resolution of the sequestration issue starts with Congress, and we respectfully ask you to help all parties involved reach a compromise that doesn't threaten national security or jobs here at home. The Council thanks you for your time and attention to this matter, and we are always willing and able to have a further discussion to the extent that is helpful. Please do not hesitate to let us know if we can ever be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Emily J. Heisig
Senior Vice President, Communications & Federal Affairs