

September 24, 2025

The Honorable John Cornyn  
517 Hart Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
167 Russell Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cornyn and Cruz,

On behalf of the Fort Worth Chamber, we respectfully request that you champion full authorization for the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter program as Congress prepares the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). We urge you to prioritize strong support for the F-35 and related capabilities essential to maintaining U.S. airpower and global security.

The F-35 is the foundation of U.S. air dominance, delivering unmatched capabilities in contested environments. More than a strike aircraft, the F-35 functions as the “quarterback” of the joint force, gathering and sharing real-time battlefield intelligence, coordinating with other platforms and enabling networked operations across air, land, and sea. This fusion of stealth, sensor integration, and communication capabilities gives the U.S. and allied forces an unparalleled strategic advantage. In a [recent letter](#), thirteen retired four-star generals called for increased procurement of the F-35 and accelerated support to ensure the U.S. remains ready in the face of evolving global threats.

This need was powerfully demonstrated in recent military operations, when precision strikes on over 100 Iranian military and nuclear targets occurred, using F-35's to clear the skies for U.S. bombers. The mission, Operation Rising Lion, was [lauded](#) as a clear example of how the F-35's stealth, awareness, and, interoperability make it indispensable in modern warfare.

Texas plays a vital role in this national security asset. The F-35's primary production facility in Fort Worth anchors a vast manufacturing and supply chain that supports more than **49,000 jobs** and contributes nearly **\$10 billion annually to the state's economy**. This impact extends beyond frontline assembly to include a robust ecosystem of hundreds of small and mid-sized businesses that form the backbone of Texas' industrial and defense base.

**The local benefit for the Fort Worth Chamber** equates to **over \$7.04 billion dollars in economic benefit** and supports **over 30,400 jobs**. The localized supply chain contributing to the production of the most advanced fighter jet in the world includes **60 local businesses in our area**.

Recognizing this impact, the Texas Legislature voted unanimously to designate Fort Worth as the “[Aviation and Defense Capital of Texas](#)” earlier this year, citing the F-35's central role in the state's aerospace leadership. This recognition reflects both the strategic importance of the program and its deep ties to our state's identity.

The F-35 is more than an aircraft, it's a national asset built and sustained by a uniquely American ecosystem of machinists, engineers, suppliers, and veterans. Failing to sustain this program authorization would send shockwaves through this ecosystem, threatening jobs and livelihoods in both urban and rural communities across Texas.

Committed to both economic strength and national security, the Fort Worth business community urges you to continue advocating for full authorization of the F-35 in the FY26 NDAA. This investment will ensure the U.S. maintains its edge in the skies while preserving thousands of Texas jobs that sustain our defense industrial base.

Thank you for your steadfast commitment to America's security and to the prosperity of Texas.

Sincerely,



Steve Montgomery  
President & CEO  
Fort Worth Chamber