**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE F‑35 AIRCRAFT TO THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH CAROLINA, AND TO ENCOURAGE CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR FULL FUNDING OF THE F‑35 LIGHTNING II JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER PROGRAM.

Whereas, the F‑35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter program is critical to national defense strategy and offers a much needed, fifth‑generation stealth fighter aircraft to meet the operational needs of the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and international allies; and

Whereas, threats to our national freedom continue to emerge, demanding the crucial advances in survivability and capability that the F‑35 provides. Continuing to lower the costs for F‑35 fighters allows for the procurement of a sufficient number of planes, which maximizes economies of scale, minimizes costs, and allows for the ample and timely delivery of the production aircraft to our Armed Forces; and

Whereas, the F‑35 provides economic stability to the U.S. and other nations by creating jobs, commerce, and security; and

Whereas, in supporting national defense initiatives, South Carolina has a strong and continuing legacy and is home to numerous military bases; and

Whereas, the F‑35 has a tremendous impact on jobs and the economy of South Carolina; and

Whereas, Lockheed Martin, the premier military aircraft manufacturer in the world and manufacturer of the F‑35, makes vital contributions to the economic well‑being of the State of South Carolina, operating a 1.2 million square‑foot facility in Greenville and employing more than four hundred eighty people; and

Whereas, Lockheed Martin’s Greenville Operations facility is the Final Assembly and Checkout (FACO) location for assembling the T‑50A Advanced Training aircraft, which would train fighter pilots to fly the F‑35, if awarded a contract for that aircraft; and

Whereas, Lockheed Martin’s business operations generate opportunities for South Carolina aviation suppliers, including several that supply components for the F‑35; and

Whereas, Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Beaufort is home to an F‑35B squadron, with more squadrons expected in the future, where pilots from the U.S., the United Kingdom, and Italy will train; and

Whereas, McEntire Joint National Guard Base and Shaw Air Force Base are potential future locations for F‑35As, signifying their continued importance to the national security of the United States; and

Whereas, investing in the technological superiority of our military is a fitting honor to the millions of citizens of South Carolina and the United States who have served our nation by protecting our freedom through military service. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the Senate, by this resolution, recognize the importance of the F-35 aircraft to the United States and South Carolina and encourage congressional support for full funding of the F‑35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter Program.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to South Carolina’s Congressional Delegation to express the high regard the South Carolina Senate holds for Lockheed Martin and the F‑35 Program, recognizing their importance to our national security and economic growth, both nationally and in South Carolina.

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