



Small Businesses Call on White House to Boost Next Generation Fighter Jet Funding in New Budget

PHOENIX, Ariz. (Monday, December 6, 2021) – Spirit Electronics joined manufacturers from coast to coast in urging the Biden administration to increase production of the F-35 Lightning II to 100 jets per year in the FY 2023 Department of Defense budget and Future Years Defense Plan. The letter follows a similar request from a bipartisan group of 89 members of the House of Representatives, led by Rep. Marc Veasey (D-TX) and Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH), co-chairs of the Joint Strike Fighter Caucus.

Spirit published the letter to its website, along with information about the F-35 Lightning II program, at <https://www.spiritelectronics.com/services/aerospace-defense/f-35-program/>. Today, the F-35 supports more than 254,000 jobs and injects over \$49 billion in annual economic impact. For small businesses like Spirit Electronics, more than half of the workforce is impacted by the F-35 program.

Suppliers told the President the F-35 gave the manufacturing sector, particularly small businesses, a “crucial lifeline” throughout the pandemic by supporting jobs, which boosted local economies across the country. An accelerated payments program to small and disadvantaged businesses from the Department of Defense and F-35 manufacturer Lockheed Martin helped many of these companies stay open.

Spirit Electronics also noted the importance of the F-35 in developing the highly skilled workforce required to build America’s most important 5th generation fighter jet to help keep our nation and allies safe. The manufacturers are investing in training and education and leveraging these programs to attract prospective employees through apprenticeships with local schools and colleges.

“Supply chains across all industries have taken a serious hit. That’s why we, and the rest of the small businesses working on this program, are very thankful to be a part of the continued success of the F-35,” said Marti McCurdy, CEO. “We’re helping to deliver one of the most critical assets to our military and international allies all while making a significant economic impact to our local communities across the country. We need the support of our elected leaders in the White House and Congress to keep providing for our military and economy.”

Spirit Electronics is part of a team of more than 1,800 U.S. companies building the F-35, representing all sections of the United States. More than 1,000 members of the supply chain are small and disadvantaged businesses providing structural parts and sophisticated electronic



and communication components for the world's most advanced fighter. Supply chain members are aggressively driving down production and support costs to the point of making the F-35 more affordable than legacy, and less-capable, 4th generation fighters.

With more than 730 F-35s delivered to the U.S. Air Force, Navy and Marines, along with the armed forces of 13 allied nations including Great Britain, Italy, Israel, and South Korea, small business owners are rallying to urge the White House to keep defense spending a priority through ongoing budget discussions and debate over the National Defense Authorization Act, which expires later this month.

About Spirit Electronics:

Spirit Electronics is a value-added distributor offering a wide range of electronic components, testing services, circuit board assembly and logistics services. Spirit's supply chain solutions are changing the definition of distribution by vertically integrating value-add services to deliver product to aerospace and defense customers fully qualified and ready to use. Spirit is a veteran-owned, woman-owned small business (VOWOSB) with HUBZone certification with a newly expanded facility located in Phoenix, AZ. For more information, visit <https://www.spiritelectronics.com>.