



May 16, 2016

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John McCain
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

cc: Members of the House Committee on Armed Services
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cc: United States House of Representatives
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Chairman Thornberry, Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Smith, and Ranking Member Reed:

Despite costing American taxpayers over \$2 billion more than needed (and willfully rejecting the requests made by not only the House Armed Services Committee but also by high-ranking officials in the Department of Defense and in the Intelligence community), the Senate Armed Services Committee--led by Senator John

McCain--is seeking to cripple America's ability to reliably launch some of the country's most important defense satellites used to secure our nation's border and track terrorists and drug cartels. Senator McCain's actions undermine our national security and are the antithesis of good fiscal governance.

America depends on a network of highly sophisticated military satellites to serve as the "eyes in the sky" keeping the Pentagon and our intelligence agencies informed about threats from ISIS, drug smugglers trying to penetrate our borders, and other matters of vital national security.

In order to launch those military and spy satellites into space, the Pentagon needs a reliable launch rocket capable of carrying the heaviest payloads and reaching the 'high orbits' where many of those satellites must be deployed. Currently, only one rocket in the space fleet is capable of carrying those heavy payloads and reaching the highest orbits, and unfortunately, though the rocket is built in America, it uses an engine core made in Russia. It's called the Atlas rocket, and its new American-made engine won't be ready for three more years.

Senator McCain is trying to ban any more engines for the rocket, meaning it cannot be used during those three years while the American engine is being completed. But our generals and the leaders of America's intelligence agencies say the nation cannot take a three-year break from launching new satellites. Terrorists intent on harming Americans won't be taking a break. Neither will international drug traffickers.

Air Force Undersecretary for Acquisitions Frank Kendall recently wrote Congress that attempting to use the Delta rocket and Falcon 9 as stopgap methods for that three-year period could cost taxpayers an additional \$1 billion to \$5 billion, or more.

Senator McCain's effort is not the right solution. It endangers U.S. security and increases costs to taxpayers. It should be rejected.

Sincerely,

Jenny Beth Martin
Tea Party Patriots

Seton Motley
Less Government

Judson Phillips
Tea Party Nation

Dee Hodges
Maryland Taxpayer Association

Mario Lopez
Hispanic Leadership Fund

Charles Sauer
The Market Institute

Elaine Donnelly
Center for Military Readiness