



AMERICANS
for **TAX REFORM**

The Honorable William M. Thornberry
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services
2208 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2016

Dear Congressman Thornberry,

I am writing **in opposition to lifting the ban on RD-180 rocket engines in this year's National Defense Authorization Act.**

Privately-funded systems are on pace to cement America's place as a world leader in launch delivery. **Thanks to these exciting developments in privately-funded space systems, the U.S. has more than one launch vehicle capable of military hardware launches—enough to secure American interests through the early 2020's.** There is no need to facilitate any Russian technology operating as a bridge to government subsidized systems of the future. Instead, looking forward, the U.S. should focus on privately funded, private-sector solutions to both space exploration missions and military applications.

Some Members of Congress propose to relax or lift the RD-180 ban based on concerns about national security. But the fact is that America has launch systems more than capable of delivering our hardware into space well into the next decade.

In addition, it seems clear that in this case the allowances proposed for the Russian rocket engines would facilitate government-funded competition to privately-funded systems both today and in the future, both domestically and abroad.

Of note to taxpayers, purchasing these Russian engines would deliver resources directly to the Russian military, spending money in direct opposition to U.S. taxpayer dollars being spent elsewhere in the budget.

Privately-funded American companies are on the bleeding edge of space technology development. We should be finding ways of making the tax and regulatory system work for these entrepreneurs to ensure privately-funded, free-market American dominance of space launches instead of subsidizing legacy or future systems, much less an antagonistic regime already a source of a drain on U.S. taxpayers.

ATR encourages you, and the rest of the House Armed Services Committee to uphold the ban on the RD-180, and instead explore privately funded options for our future strategy. If you have more questions, please contact Jorge Marin at jmarin@atr.org.

Regards,

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