



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on January 17, 2011

Tax Group Urges Halt to Wasteful Military Jet Engine Project

A citizens' taxpayer watchdog group is urging President Obama and the Department of Defense to halt funding on the manufacture of an aircraft engine that would replace the Pratt and Whitney version presently being used in the DOD's massive Joint Strike Fighter aircraft project. The new engine would be manufactured by General Electric and Rolls Royce.



As reported by [Onenewsnow.com](#), while some U.S. senators are insisting that the General Electric/Rolls Royce engine replace the original one designed for the project, "even to the point of pushing it through as an earmark," Tom Schatz of [Citizens Against Government Waste](#) notes that the Pentagon has determined that the alternate is "something that will not be useful or effective, and will create more expense."

Schatz added that the GE alternate "has been criticized as wasteful and unnecessary by taxpayers, the Bush and Obama Administrations, and numerous top military officials," an opinion shared by Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

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He recalled that back on May 20, 2010, Gates indicated he would recommend that President Obama veto any legislation that includes funding for the alternate engine, and that the White House agreed with the move. And in a speech this January 6, Gates said that using limited defense funds on the alternate engine would constitute excess overhead.

G.E. Aviation, the company making the new engine, is based in Ohio, and according to the [Cincinnati Enquirer](#), U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) joined Senators Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and John Kerry (D-Mass.) in sending a strongly worded letter to Gates urging him to release the funds for the project, which had been delayed as of mid-January. "We respect your leadership, and assume that the delay in releasing fiscal year 2011 funds is simply an issue of timing or an oversight by the program office rather than a deliberate attempt to shift appropriated funds away from the alternate engine," the trio wrote.

The senators warned Gates that opposing "the expressed will of the Congress would be a stunning act of bad faith. Such an act would constitute an unambiguous attack on the separation of powers that has been the hallmark of American democracy."

In a press release Schatz said that the alternate engine "has been a \$3 billion boondoggle and taxpayers should not sink one more dime of limited resources into this failed project. This program has become the epitome of senseless government waste, diverting resources away from other important military



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projects and expenditures that keep the nation and our troops safe and secure.”

Schatz likened the wasteful program to having a “GM car that has a bad engine and you are going to put a Ford engine in it. It just doesn’t make any sense. If the Pratt and Whitney engine doesn’t work, you replace it with another Pratt and Whitney engine.”

The *Enquirer* noted that Gates would discuss the project when he meets with leaders of the House and Senate defense appropriations and authorization committees to present his blueprint for cutting some \$100 billion from the defense budget.



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