



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 a proposed lift on the ban on RD-180 rocket engines in this year's National Defense Authorization Act.**

Currently, America is becoming the world leader on space launches as its private space industry matures. Thanks to these developments it has more than one launch vehicle capable of military hardware launches—enough to secure American interests through the early 2020's.

Some Members of Congress propose to relax or lift the RD-180 ban based on concerns about national security. Besides the fact that America has launch systems more than capable of delivering our hardware into space well into the next decade, lifting the ban is a terrible mistake in terms of boosting one of our main international rivals and undermining the billions that we spend defending against Russia.

Purchasing these engines would only serve to boost Vladimir Putin's military-industrial complex and put our allies around the globe in further danger.

America has spent over \$6 billion in aid for Ukraine to prevent a Russian partitioning of the country, as well as to ensure the transition of Ukraine from a socialist state into a modern European one.

This is in addition to the \$1 billion that the nation spends on sanctions on Russia for their aggression in the Ukrainian civil war.

Americans for Tax Reform has even done its part, helping to train activists in Ukraine who have worked to build up a civil society in support of free markets.

It is also important to remember the \$11.5 million per day that our country spends trying to stabilize Syria while the Russians kill our allies on the ground and prop up the regime of Bashar Assad.

Simply put, meeting Russia in the world stage has cost the American taxpayers a considerable amount. Money from RD-180 sales goes directly into the hands of Putin's cronies and his own ambitions to reconstruct the near-abroad of the defunct Soviet Union.

American private 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 American dominance of space launches instead of subsidizing a rogue regime we are currently spending taxpayer funds to fight.

I encourage you, and the rest of the House Armed Services Committee to uphold the popular and necessary ban on Russian-made rocket engines for military launches. If you have more questions, please contact Jorge Marin at jmarin@atr.org.

Regards,

Grover G. Norquist
President,
Americans for Tax Reform

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