



Ohio House State & Local Government Committee
The Honorable Marlene Anielski, Chairwoman
Proponent Testimony on House Bill 279
Todd Kleismit, Ohio History Connection
Director of Community & Government Relations
October 11, 2017

Chairwoman Anielski and members of the State and Local Government Committee:

My name is Todd Kleismit and I am here on behalf of the Ohio History Connection in support of House Bill 279, co-sponsored by Speaker Rosenberger and Representative Hill. As you know, the legislation proposes to include the John & Annie Glenn Museum in New Concord to the Ohio History Connection network of historic sites and museums. Everyone here is surely aware of the legacy of John Glenn and his wife Annie, so I will focus my remarks on the museum and its relationship to the Ohio History Connection over the years and what we foresee in the future.

The Craftsman-style bungalow house that is now the John & Annie Glenn Museum was built in 1923 on the National Road across the street from its current location (it was moved in 1947 and then again in 2001) at 72 West Main Street in New Concord. All of us associated with the John & Annie Glenn Museum consider it among the best, most compelling stories that Ohio has to offer. The people in Muskingum County and our staff at the Ohio History Connection have for many years worked in support of each other and in support of another Ohio History Connection site nearby, the National Road/Zane Grey Museum in Norwich, about a 15-minute drive from the John & Annie Glenn Museum.

When the Ohio History Connection was in need of a local site partner for the National Road/Zane Grey Museum in 2009, we were very fortunate to rely upon the dedicated people of the John and Annie Glenn Museum Foundation, especially Don McKendry, at that time. Since then, our two organizations have worked very closely together as the Foundation became the managing partner in charge of the day-to-day operations of the National Road/Zane Grey Museum. The collaboration since then between the National Road/Zane Grey Museum and the John & Annie Glenn Museum – separated only by a 15-minute drive – has been superb and led the Museum Foundation to embrace this mission and to change its name recently to the Museum Association of East Muskingum.

In the past year we have suffered the loss of our beloved John Glenn as well as Don McKendry who did so much to preserve the legacy of Senator Glenn's boyhood home. A

couple of years ago, Mr. McKendry came to the Ohio History Connection and asked about a more formal partnership between our organizations. He could see that the long-term sustainability of the John & Annie Glenn Museum would be more assured as part of the Ohio History Connection network of historic sites and museums. This legislation is the result of our work together to preserve the past, to share resources and expertise and ultimately, ensure that future generations learn these stories from small-town Ohio.

Today, the John & Annie Glenn Museum is open to the public from May – October (and for groups and special appointments year-round), interpreting Sen. Glenn's boyhood years as well as 1962, the year he became the first American to orbit the earth as the pilot of Friendship 7. The local community has been very supportive of this new collaboration and we appreciate the support of Rep. Hill, Sen. Balderson and Speaker Rosenberger.

Now with a renewed interest in John Glenn, we have the potential to take his boyhood story out of New Concord and share it more statewide and nationally. The U.S. Department of Interior recently encouraged the State Historic Preservation Office to re-submit the John & Annie Glenn Museum for the National Register of Historic Places. We are only two years away from the 50th anniversary of the moon landing, which is a huge opportunity for Ohio and the Armstrong Air & Space Museum in Wapakoneta – another Ohio History Connection site. Two years after that will be the centennial of John Glenn's birth in Cambridge (the family moved to New Concord when young John was 2 years old).

Looking ahead, we are confident that the passionate staff and volunteers at the John & Annie Glenn Museum will have more resources at their disposal now that they are formally part of the Ohio History Connection. This means more curatorial support, more marketing support, more grant-writing expertise and a higher profile statewide. The one-acre lot where the Museum sits has been state-owned property for about 15 years now so this is a logical progression of this state/nonprofit collaboration. As a reminder, the Ohio History Connection is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that partners with the state to carry out Ohio's public history initiatives and make Ohio history accessible to the public as described in ORC 149.30. By supporting HB 279, you are helping us carry out our mission to spark discovery of Ohio's stories and helping ensure Ohioans and the rest of the world knows exactly where Sen. John Glenn came from and how history was forever changed by his actions and by the example of his public service – all rooted right here in Ohio.

I anticipate that you'll hear from people from New Concord in subsequent hearings. In the meantime, I thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective. I would be happy to answer any questions you have of me.

OHIO HISTORY CONNECTION

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