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Ohio's 73rd House District: Western Portion of Greene County

House Bill 370 – Sponsor Testimony
State and Local Government Committee
November 1, 2017

Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes, and Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 370. This legislation will add a small depiction of the Wright Brothers' first piloted airplane to the Great Seal of the State of Ohio. This piece of legislation has a long history. Over the past two decades passing a bill to add the Wright Flyer to the Ohio coat of arms has been attempted a handful of times to no avail. However, I'm confident this time will be different: Ohio's aerospace and aviation industries are more in-sync than ever, and the bill has the support of over 50 of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle.

As founder and current member of the Ohio Aerospace and Aviation Technology Committee (OAATC), I've set out to unite all corners of this great state in all aspects pertaining to aerospace and aviation. Ohio is home to the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, the largest single-site employer in our state. Ohio is also home to NASA Glenn Research Center, more than 500 aerospace businesses statewide hundreds more

companies supply these specialized aerospace manufacturers], and 20 institutions of higher education and affiliated research institutes dealing in research and technology development.

When you combine these resources with the presence of industry leaders such as Boeing, Airbus and GE Aviation, it becomes clear that if Ohio properly leveraged these assets, we could position ourselves for immense economic success. [Ohio already #1 supplier to Boeing] . Ohio already produces \$7.4 billion in Gross State Product (GSP) in the aerospace and aviation sector and more than \$9 billion is invested annually in aerospace and aviation research and development in Ohio. The aerospace and aviation industry is a \$700 billion industry worldwide, and Ohio is uniquely situated to grab a bigger piece of that pie. [According to a study by AUVSI, Unmanned Systems (UAS) will create 100,000 jobs and have an economic impact of \$82 billion nationwide by 2025. Based on Ohio's employment trends in this sector, UAS technology could supply 7,000 jobs to Ohioans over the next decade.]

The OAATC is charged with developing an ongoing, statewide strategic plan for promoting the aerospace and aviation industries in Ohio, and increasing collaboration between these industries and the various federal and state research entities in Ohio. To this end, the committee has created five key focus areas, and one of these focus areas is dedicated to outreach and branding Ohio as an aerospace and aviation industry leader in the country and the world. [Outreach and Branding, Workforce Development,

Technology Development, Industry Support, Federal Installation Support] The Outreach and Branding work group has recommended this legislation as part of a long-term strategy to promote Ohio's rich aviation heritage and our continuing national and international leadership in the aerospace and aviation sectors.

There is arguably no invention in history that has advanced our society more than the airplane, and furthermore, there is no icon of innovation that is more associated with a state, than the Wright Flyer is with Ohio. There are many states that can declare their strength in agriculture or the natural beauty of their terrain, however only Ohio can legitimately claim to be the birthplace of heavier than air, powered flight. Adding the Wright Flyer to the State Seal is the best way to brand Ohio as the aviation and aerospace powerhouse it has been, and always will be.

There are three main concerns I have heard regarding this bill. First, I have been told the cost of material replacement would outweigh any benefits it would serve. So House Bill 370 includes a provision that requires that offices of state government and political subdivisions exhaust existing supplies of paper stock and other items bearing the existing coat of arms or great seal before acquiring supplies with the new design, and according to an LSC fiscal analysis, "neither the state nor political subdivisions will incur any new cost for complying with the requirements under the bill."

Second, I have heard concerns that the introduction of a man-made object would take away from the scene of natural wonder, however if you look closely at the current

seal, you will find a bundle 17 arrows. Those arrows, which are obviously man-made objects, have been a part of the state seal since 1803, and when looking into all of Ohio's past state seals, we also found that two of the previous state seals had boats floating in the Scioto River. Literally every state seal since Ohio achieved statehood has had man-made objects in the design.

The final concern that I have heard is that we should not change the seal out of reverence to the Great Seal and all of those that have served Ohio before us. I agree that we should pay respect to Ohio's great history, and I believe adding this small depiction of the Wright Flyer, while allowing the other elements of the seal to remain unchanged is both respectful of the existing seal and enhances the historical significance of the entire piece. I believe that the invention of flight by two brothers from Dayton was the greatest moment in the history of Ohio. The Wright brothers showed that with perseverance and ingenuity human kind can achieve things previously thought to be impossible. Their invention was the catalyst that allowed future great moments in Ohio aerospace and aviation. In 1962, John Glenn became the first American to orbit the Earth, and only seven years later, Neil Armstrong is the first man to walk on the moon. Neil Armstrong, on that historic walk, carried with him a piece of the cloth and wood from the original 1903 Wright Flyer. I can not think of a better way to commemorate those achievements than to add an image of the invention that started it all to the coat of arms of the state of Ohio. This pattern of innovation continues today with the hotbed

of aerospace and aviation research and development happening right here in Ohio, and I believe this subtle change is the first step in many steps to cement this legacy for future generations.

Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes, and Committee Members, I appreciate the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 370. I would like to reiterate, this bill is not just about Dayton, it unifies the entire state. This bill is not just about the past, it promotes an environment of technological ingenuity so that we can continue to make the impossible possible. Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

[Bill Burnett, 1998]