

House Bill 370—Proponent Testimony
House State and Local Government Committee
Timothy R. Gaffney
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Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley and Ranking Member Holmes, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 370, adding a small depiction of the 1903 Wright Flyer to the Great Seal of the State of Ohio.

My name is Timothy R. Gaffney. I'm director of communications for the National Aviation Heritage Alliance and a retired journalist. I'm testifying as a PR guy, and I'm here to pitch to you the best brand image Ohio could ask for. Yep, it's the Wright Flyer.

The 1903 Wright Flyer hangs in the world's most prestigious aviation museum, the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. But there are other Wright Flyers, and replicas, in museums around the world. Just recently I read about a tiny museum in Kathmandu, Nepal, that was made from the cabin of an old jetliner. In the business section is a model of—you guessed it—a Wright Flyer. People all around the world instantly recognize it—and likely as not, it makes them think of North Carolina.

That brand image should be ours. People should see the Wright Flyer and think of Ohio. Ohio is where Wilbur and Orville Wright invented the airplane and where they built America's first airplane factory.

House Bill 370 gives us a great opportunity to start taking back what's ours. A tiny, unobtrusive flyer on the state seal will tell the world that the airplane is Ohio's invention, not North Carolina's. Look, our seal is very nice, but the cultivated fields, the sheaf of wheat, the bundle of arrows—they don't say what makes us unique. They don't say how Ohio continues to propel the world into the future with a robust aerospace industry. Adding the Wright Flyer to the seal would do that. Best yet: it's free!

I urge you to pass this bill. Thank you.