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

House State and Local Government Committee

House Bill 42 – Wright Flyer

Sponsor Testimony

27 February 2018

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair Ginter, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 42. 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, during the 132nd General Assembly this bill picked up steam and was voted out of State and Local Government committee unanimously and passed favorably **90-3** on the House floor. Unfortunately, we simply ran out of time getting it through the Senate during the last GA. I am confident, however, that we will be able to get this bill across the finish line in the 133rd: Ohio's aerospace and aviation industries are more in-sync than ever, and the bill has the support of 30 of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle in the House.

As founder and the current Chair 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 is the largest supplier state to Airbus and 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. Moreover, according to a study by Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (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.

You may ask why this is important and why we should make this change. Changing our seal to reflect Ohio's rich history and economic power in aerospace and aviation will brand Ohio as the leader in this critical industry, as well as innovation and technology. Our seal is our "business card" to the country and world, and the depiction of the Wright Flyer will ensure our rightful place as the birthplace and leader in the skies.

There have been two main concerns brought to my attention about this bill. The first is the preservation of our State's seal. Let me make it clear: our state seal is no stranger to change. Since our initial inception as a territory in 1788, it has seen nearly a dozen varieties. Our current state seal shows a pastoral scene of agriculture as it was practiced at the beginning of the 19th century, backed by the natural landscape of the Scioto River and Mount Logan. In fact, if you look up at the rotunda, you will see a 1900s depiction of our seal with a steamboat in it. Many states can boast of their strength in agriculture or the natural beauty of their terrain. However, only Ohio can legitimately claim to be the birthplace of powered, heavier than air, controlled flight; not North Carolina or Connecticut, but Ohio. Adding the Wright Flyer to the State Seal is an illustrious way to brand Ohio as the aviation and aerospace powerhouse it has been, and always should be.

The second concern addressed is the cost of material replacement would outweigh any benefits it would serve. To clarify, HB 42 includes a provision that requires offices of state government and political subdivisions exhaust existing supplies of paper stock and other items bearing the existing coat of arms or the Great Seal before acquiring supplies with the new design. According to an LSC fiscal analysis, neither the state nor political subdivisions will incur any cost for complying with the requirements under the bill. Again, this bill was voted out of this committee and passed favorably on the House floor last General Assembly.

I would like to leave you with this. In late 2016, I had the distinct honor of visiting the Honorable John and Annie Glenn before the Senator's passing. It was in that meeting where Senator Glenn gave his complete endorsement of this bill, stating: "... an Ohio state seal that does not include something to indicate [the invention of flight] would certainly be incomplete."

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair Ginter, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 42. I stand ready to answer any of your questions.