



Ohio Aviation Association Testimony
Before the
State and Local Government Committee
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By
Greg Heaton, Past President of the Ohio Aviation Association Board of Directors

Good afternoon Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairman Ginter, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the committee. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to you today about the importance of the Wright Flyer's addition to our Great Seal of Ohio.

My name is Greg Heaton and I am Vice President of Crawford, Murphy & Tilly Engineers. I represent today the Ohio Aviation Association (OAA). I serve as Past President and current Board member of the OAA. Founded more than 50 years ago, OAA represents the 104-public owned and public use airports. OH's airports experience nearly 3 million take-offs and landings each year, over 8,200 daily. Airports employ over 123,000 thousand Ohioans and generate an estimated annual economic benefit of \$13.3 billion dollars.

OAA's member airports serve Ohio companies and businesses with a strategic transportation tool saving time and increasing access to marketplaces. OH's commercial service airports transport millions of OH's citizens to cities around the world and provide for the world's citizens to come to Ohio. Our member airports serve as the gateway to OH's cities, counties and towns to visiting employers, investors, distinguished guests on a daily basis. Aviation increases state and world trade activity by enabling faster and easier movement of passengers and goods.

I often wonder if Orville and Wilbur really knew what would become of the airplane? We have all heard of the many detractors who didn't see much potential in aircraft. Maybe few ever really knew how much impact a new idea or invention will really have.

But because it is part of history, none of us here have forgotten the extraordinary accomplishments of the Wright brothers in 1903, and the ensuing accomplishments of many other Ohioans in aviation, aerospace and related areas.

We are all aware that Ohio has been at the forefront of many historical breakthroughs on our quest to conquer the skies and space. Today, in similar size to airports, more than 120,000 Ohioans work in the aerospace and related field performing critical research, manufacturing new technology, and keeping our nation safe. Simply put, Ohio's unique aviation heritage and our continued contributions to flight have changed the world. The Wright Flyer is a symbol of all that aviation and aerospace heritage.

However, the Great Seal of Ohio is not only to commemorate the past. The Seal should not merely acknowledge origins but to also to inspire Ohioans to what more can be accomplished. As each child learns about OH in their daily schoolwork, as they examine the Great Seal of Ohio, they'll be reminded what two young, inquisitive, enthusiastic and dedicated brothers can accomplish. They can and did change the world. In our business, we hear story after story of children who were captured by the magic of flight from an early visit to the airport to watch mom or dad depart for a business trip or they remember their "first flight" to grandparents or to Disney. We need to remind them at every opportunity that much remains to be discovered, much remains to be invented. How will they, an Ohioan, change the world for themselves and their children. It is up to us to live up to the legacy that was left for us, and to leave a legacy that is worthy of our children and of future generations.

Mr. Chairman and committee members, the Ohio Aviation Association and its members strongly urge the adoption of the Wright Flyer image to our state's Great Seal. Let's pay heed to the legacy left to each of us and let's inspire the next generation of Ohioans. Let OH and its citizens continue to change the world for all.

On behalf of OAA and all of Ohio's airports and their many partners and users, I want to thank this committee once again for considering this inspirational action. We stand ready to work with you to advance this enhancement this session. I would be happy to answer any questions.