



December 11, 2019

The Honorable Scott Wiggam  
Chair, State and Local Government Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Representative Sobeki and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you all for the opportunity to provide a testimony in support of House Bill 358, which would enact section 5.293 of the Ohio Revised Code to designate August 17 as “Eugene ‘Gene’ F. Kranz Day” in the State of Ohio.

Mr. Kranz was born in Toledo, Ohio, on August 17, 1933, and is a graduate of Central Catholic High School. His interest in space flight developed at a young age and was first recognized when he wrote his high school thesis about the potential of flying a single-stage rocket to the moon.

During his 34-year career with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), he contributed many groundbreaking accomplishments that have been crucial to the development of the space program and our growing knowledge in the field of space and aeronautics. He joined NASA in 1960 and was one of the original Project Mercury assistant flight directors. Throughout his career, he was deeply involved in developing the flight control operations for U.S. operated space flights. Most notably, he played a crucial role in the Apollo program and acted as the flight director for the first lunar landing, Apollo 11. He also played a pivotal role in efforts to return the Apollo 13 spacecraft and three astronauts safely to Earth amid an explosion disabling the spacecraft when it was en-route to the Moon in 1970. After a long, successful career, Mr. Kranz retired from NASA in 1994.

Mr. Kranz has earned many achievements in his lifetime and is not only a staple in the Toledo area community, he is a noteworthy and honorable figure to be celebrated statewide and worldwide. Mr. Kranz rightfully earned his place in history as he was one of the handful of individuals responsible for leading some of the biggest accomplishments in space. He has been recognized with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America’s highest civilian award, and has been honored with four Presidential Ranking awards, the highest recognition a U.S. Civil Service employee can receive.

We at the Port Authority, in partnership with the City of Toledo, realized that we have a responsibility to preserve his legacy and honor his accomplishments and achievements, and are undergoing a name change of our local airport from Toledo Express Airport to Eugene F. Kranz Toledo Express Airport. We are proud to honor Mr. Kranz and are fully supportive of H.B. No. 358, Section 5.293 designating August 17 as “Eugene ‘Gene’ F. Kranz Day” in the state of Ohio.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Winston  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority