

**Testimony of
Dr. Vince Russo
Ohio Aerospace, Aviation, and Technology Committee Member**

**Before the House Finance
Subcommittee on Primary and Secondary Education**

**Hearing on
Project Lead The Way Programs
March 22, 2017**

Good Morning members of the committee, my name is Vince Russo, and I am currently the CEO and President of Aerospace Technologies Associates out of Dayton. I retired as the Executive Director of the Aeronautical Systems Center at WPAFB after a 41 year career with the Air Force--- and I'm a proud graduate of The Ohio State University. At the request of Rep. Rick Perales, I actively serve on the Ohio Aerospace, Aviation, and Technology Committee---a committee created by the Ohio legislature to study the aerospace, aviation, and technology industry needs. It is my pleasure and honor to introduce this very important topic to the committee today: an effort to help many more K-12 students gain the necessary life-changing skills to seek high-wage, high-demand careers in professions such as aerospace engineering.

As a member of the OAATC committee, I was asked to lead the Workforce Group in efforts to find solutions that can help bring educators together with business and industry leaders to address Ohio's workforce needs. Through our research, we found the very best solution to achieve this goal: Project Lead The Way.

Project Lead The Way (PLTW) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization completely focused and dedicated to helping students develop advanced skills in the fields of computer science, engineering, biomedical science, and aerospace. In Ohio, Project Lead The Way serves students in

almost five hundred schools and over two hundred districts across the state. A number of individuals from Project Lead The Way work here in Ohio---and are present here today to be a resource to the committee.

As you will soon hear, Project Lead The Way brings students, teachers, and business representatives together to help expand access and engage students in science, technology, engineering, and math---otherwise known as STEM.

We are currently requesting \$5M in funding to help Ohio's K-12 students and schools by expanding PLTW curriculum and professional development across our great State. Given our State's significant role in aviation, aerospace, and technology, an investment by the legislature would prioritize PLTW aerospace engineering---and help expand related high-quality STEM opportunities into as many K-12 schools as possible in Ohio.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to highlight an excellent opportunity for our State.

I next would like to introduce Mr. Dave Powell with American Electric Power.