



February 27, 2023

Kristina D. Roegner, Chair
Government Oversight Committee

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR: S.B. 42 - Adopt the 1905 Wright Flyer III as the state airplane

Dear Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Government Oversight Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to supply testimony in favor of S.B. 42 to adopt the 1905 Wright Flyer III as the official state airplane. The Wright Flyer III is a symbol of both Ohio's aviation heritage and Ohio's current leadership in aviation and aerospace. As executive director of the National Aviation Heritage Alliance, the management entity for the National Aviation Heritage Area, I commend the Ohio legislators advancing this bill and ask the Government Oversight Committee take favorable action.

There are several reasons the Wright Flyer III is a suitable state symbol. First, the National Aviation Heritage Area was created in 2004 by Congress to preserve and promote our nation's aviation heritage in Southwest Ohio. At that time, one of the feasibility findings was the Wright Flyer III located at Carillon Historical Park. Secondly, the State of Ohio has previously considered the Wright Flyer III a state symbol. In 2002, the US Mint released the State of Ohio quarter as part of their 50 State Quarters Program. The State of Ohio themed its quarter as the Birthplace of Aviation Pioneers, including the Wright Flyer III and an Ohio astronaut. Furthermore, Montgomery County is installing a large-scale stainless-steel Wright Flyer III sculpture by national artist, Larry Godwin, as the gateway element for the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park in Dayton, Ohio. Here again the Wright Flyer III is a symbol of the Wright brothers, early flight, and Ohio's role in aviation and aviation heritage.

Today, I learned that five states have designated various aircraft as official state symbols (Connecticut, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas). I look forward to Ohio taking similar action.

Sincerely,

Mackensie Wittmer

Mackensie Wittmer
Executive Director
National Aviation Heritage Alliance