



March 6, 2025

Chair Bernie Willis  
77 South High Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: Letter of Support for Senate Bill 24

Chair Willis:

On behalf of the Ohio History Connection, we would like to offer our support for Senate Bill 24; legislation that would make the 1905 Wright Flyer III the official state airplane.

For background, the Ohio History Connection, formerly the Ohio Historical Society, is a statewide history organization with the mission to spark discovery of Ohio's stories, to embrace the present, share the past, and transform the future. As a nonprofit organization chartered in 1885, the Ohio History Connection carries out history services for Ohio and its citizens focused on preserving and sharing the state's history. This includes housing the State Historic Preservation Office, the official state archives, educational and community outreach and managing more than 50 sites and museums across Ohio.

While researching the 1905 Wright Flyer III, I learned from our local site partners that this airplane is indeed an historic aircraft and worthy of adoption as the state's official aircraft. One of our local partners provided great history and perspective on this airplane. I want to share the following from them as part of our testimony.

Although the 1903 Flyer I made the first powered flight, earning a permanent place in the history books, it could not change its direction and was not controllable. It was also not possible for a pilot to conduct sustained flight, nor could it carry passengers.

The 1905 Wright Flyer III had been strengthened and improved in several ways. And, after a serious crash, this newest flyer was further modified (larger rudder, vertical stabilizer moved farther rearward, yaw and roll controls separated, et al). Due to these and other changes, the Flyer III not only became more stable, its range was dramatically increased.

As a result, the Flyer III became the world's first practical fixed-wing aircraft. On October 5, 1905, at Huffman Prairie outside of Dayton, it was used by the Wright brothers to set flight duration and distance records (24 miles in 39.5 minutes) that stood until 1908. In addition, the aircraft was modified to carry a passenger. In 1908 the Wright brothers achieved a certain

amount of material vindication when both the U.S. and French governments sought contracts for an aircraft based on this design.

In 1990, the 1905 Wright Flyer III was designated a National Historic Landmark, and it is currently on display at Carillon Park in Dayton.

It is for these reasons, that we submit our support for Senate Bill 24 and would like to thank Senators Terry Johnson and Steve Huffman for bringing this bill forward.

If you have any questions regarding our support, please feel free to e-mail me at [kboehner@ohiohistory.org](mailto:kboehner@ohiohistory.org) or by phone at 614-297-2355.

Sincerely,

Kevin Boehner  
Director of Government Relations  
Ohio History Connection