

**Senate Resolution 68 Written Proponent Testimony**  
**Senate General Government Committee**  
**April 1, 2025**

Steve Tugend  
Chair, Central Ohio Defense Group

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the Senate General Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to address Senate Resolution 68. My name is Steve Tugend. I chair the Central Ohio Defense Group and am an attorney at Kegler Brown Hill + Ritter. In my capacity as the Chair of the Defense Group, I offer this testimony as a proponent of Senate Resolution 68 sponsored by Senator Roegner.

The Central Ohio Defense Group is an organization comprised of government, nonprofit and corporate members that is concerned about preserving and growing defense-related jobs in the Central Ohio Region, including jobs in the area of aerospace. The members of the group include Columbus 2020, the City of Columbus, the Columbus Partnership, One Columbus, the Columbus Regional Airport Authority, the City of Canal Winchester, Battelle, the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, the City of Whitehall, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, The Ohio State University, Franklin County, the Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority, and Kegler, Brown, Hill + Ritter.

**Ohio's Legacy in Aerospace and Defense**

Ohio's legacy in aviation and space exploration is unmatched. As the birthplace of aviation and the home of more astronauts than any other state, Ohio has been a cradle of innovation from the Wright Brothers to the Apollo program. This heritage is not a relic of the past but a foundation for our present and future leadership. Today, Ohio hosts world-class institutions like the NASA Glenn Research Center in Northeast Ohio, the Neil A. Armstrong Test Facility, and the Air Force Research Laboratory at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. These assets anchor a robust ecosystem of government, industry, and academia that is uniquely equipped to support NASA's mission.

These assets make Ohio uniquely positioned to support and enhance NASA's mission in ways no other state can.

**Strategic and Economic Benefits**

Senate Resolution 68 aligns perfectly with the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) directive of February 26, 2025, to explore relocating federal agency offices to less-costly regions. The lease on NASA's current headquarters in Washington, D.C., expires in 2028, presenting a timely opportunity to fulfill President Trump's vision of decentralizing federal agencies while reducing taxpayer costs.

Ohio offers a compelling case under the OMB's guiding principles of cost-effectiveness, mission execution, and economic synergy.

- First, on **cost-effectiveness**, Ohio stands out as a state where NASA can maximize value for taxpayers. Our state ranks No. 2 in Cost of Doing Business and No. 4 in Cost of Living according to CNBC's 2024 rankings. With a total economic impact of \$54.8 billion from our Military and Federal sector in 2023, affordable real estate, and a business-friendly regulatory environment, Ohio offers significant savings compared to coastal states. Relocating NASA headquarters here would lower operational expenses while maintaining access to a skilled workforce and affordable labor pool—key factors in ensuring a timely and efficient transition.
- Second, on **mission execution**, co-locating NASA's headquarters with the Glenn Research Center in Northeast Ohio would enhance the agency's ability to oversee its diverse portfolio. Glenn already supports work across every NASA mission directorate, from aeronautics to space exploration. Proximity to this cross-section of expertise would foster a deeper understanding and balance not achievable in locations focused on just one or two mission areas. Ohio's highly skilled workforce—ranked No. 6 nationally with 672,690 professionals in top aerospace occupations—further ensures NASA's operational success.
- Finally, on **economic and proximate synergy**, Ohio's aerospace ecosystem is a powerhouse. With 418,000 direct, indirect, and induced jobs tied to our Military and Federal sector, and a network of over 600 aerospace suppliers, Ohio is a top-10 state for aerospace and defense leadership. Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, home to the Air Force Research Lab and a growing U.S. Space Force presence, complements Glenn and Armstrong facilities, creating a hub of innovation. Add to this our 72 higher education institutions producing aerospace talent—many within an hour's drive of Northeast Ohio—and you have a region primed to support NASA and its industry partners.

### **A Critical Opportunity for NASA's Future**

By moving NASA headquarters to Ohio, the federal government would honor our state's historic contributions to aviation while reinforcing its global leadership in space exploration. Senate Resolution 68 signals Ohio's readiness to welcome NASA and provide a stable, innovative, and cost-effective home for its future. It would save taxpayer dollars, enhance NASA's mission, and drive economic growth by bringing the agency closer to its supply chain and workforce. The Central Ohio Defense Group stands ready to partner with the Administration, the Ohio Congressional Delegation, and this committee to make this vision a reality.

### **Conclusion**

On behalf of the Central Ohio Defense Group, I urge the committee to support SR 68 and encourage President Trump, Vice President Vance, and NASA Administrator Designate Nominee Isaacman to relocate NASA headquarters to the heart of American aerospace—Ohio, and secure NASA's success for generations to come.

Chair Roegner and members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.