



May 4, 2021

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

Dear Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Representative Sobecki 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 24, which would enact section 5.294 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.

Mr. Kranz joined the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 1960 as one of the original Project Mercury assistant flight directors. Throughout his career at NASA, he was deeply involved in developing the flight control operations for U.S.-operated space flights and contributed many groundbreaking accomplishments that have assisted the development of the space program and our growing knowledge in the field of space and aeronautics. Most notably, he played a crucial role in the Apollo program and acted as the flight director for the first lunar landing, Apollo 11, in 1969. He also served as the flight director for Apollo 13 and played a pivotal role to return the rocket and three astronauts safely to Earth amid an explosion that disabled the spacecraft when it was in route to the Moon in 1970. After a long, successful career with NASA, Mr. Kranz retired in 1994.

Mr. Kranz rightfully earned his place in history as one of the handful of individuals responsible for leading some of the nation’s greatest 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 underwent 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. 24, Section 5.294 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