



Proponent Testimony for HCR 7
By Jodie A. Perry

Chairman Hoagland, Vice-Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Veterans and Public Safety Committee, thank you for your consideration of House Concurrent Resolution No. 7. My name is Jodie Perry and I serve as the President & CEO of the Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development in Richland County, Ohio. It is great to be here and share with you the significance of the 179th Airlift Wing of the United States Air National Guard to Mansfield, Richland County, and the State of Ohio.

In my role at the Chamber, I have seen firsthand the unique contributions that the 179th Airlift Wing makes to our community as well as the deep impact that the base has on the economy of our area. The base is located at Mansfield Lahm Airport, named for Brigadier General Frank Purdy Lahm, a native of Mansfield. Our largest regional industrial park is contiguous to the airport and supports nearly 100 companies and approximately 6,000 jobs for our community, with the 179th Airlift Wing being responsible for approximately 1,000 jobs currently.

In our role as the local economic development agency, we work to attract and retain local businesses. Mansfield Lahm Airport is a key local asset for that work with a 9,000-foot runway and manned air traffic control tower. Having the 179th Airlift Wing located here has helped bring resources into the area that we would not otherwise be able to have in a community of our size. Currently, there are several public/private initiatives underway at Mansfield Lahm Airport to improve existing resources for other users including a new Fixed Base Operator, flight school, and a thriving airplane maintenance company. I can say that these would not likely be happening without the 179th Airlift Wing being the backbone of Lahm Airport.

The men and women of the 179th Airlift Wing have served our country honorably both here and abroad countless times. As a member of our Mansfield Military Affairs Commission, I have heard that one of the biggest strengths of the 179th is their ability to recruit. Consistently, they rank among the highest in the country on this indicator. I believe this speaks to the strong support they receive from our community as well as how everyone looks at their honorable service.

When you live and or work in our area, you grow used to hearing the C-130 airplanes flying overhead throughout the day. It is a constant reminder to all of us of the deep tie of the base to Mansfield and Richland County. It is no stretch to say that our community would not be the same without the 179th Airlift Wing. Therefore, I respectfully urge your support of House Concurrent Resolution 7 urging the U.S. Congress and Department of Defense to restore the mission of the 179th Airlift Wing while awaiting a decision from the Air Force regarding the Information Warfare Wing mission.

Chairman Hoagland and members of the Veterans and Public Safety Committee, thank you for your time and consideration.