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WIDENER RESOLUTION TO BRING SPACE SHUTTLE TO MIAMI VALLEY PASSES OHIO SENATE COMMITTEE

Great-Grand Niece of Wright Brothers Adds Support

COLUMBUS - State Senator Chris Widener (R-Springfield) today announced the Senate State and Local Government and Veterans Affairs Committee has approved a resolution urging President Obama and the Administrator of NASA to transfer one of the retiring space shuttle orbiters to the National Museum of the United State Air Force (NMUSAF) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

NASA recently announced that three space shuttle orbiters are being retired from service this year, and NMUSAF is a front-runner in the competition to receive one for permanent exhibition. Because of the intensity of the competition and the significance of the prize, it is widely perceived that President Obama will make the final decision. For that reason, Senator Widener introduced Senate Concurrent Resolution 2 to impress on the President the desire and need Ohioans have to retire a space shuttle to the Buckeye State.

“Any museum that gets [a Space Shuttle] will see a dramatic increase in prestige and a boost of up to one million annual visitors—with an increase in tourist dollars to go along,” Widener noted in his sponsor testimony before the committee today. “That will create an additional 700 jobs and add \$40 million to the state’s economy.”

Amanda Wright Lane, great-grand niece of the Wright brothers, also joined Senator Widener to offer proponent testimony for SCR 2.

“Uncle Orv and Uncle Will, John Glenn, and Neil Armstrong are all Ohioans. It is no coincidence that such historic figures in aviation and space exploration are from this great state,” Wright Lane said in her testimony. “And they represent a multitude of our pioneering citizens whose creative, innovative, and courageous ideas changed our world forever. I respectfully submit that their efforts earned us the right to land a shuttle in Ohio.”

The NMUSAF already experiences 1.3 million visitors a year, is Ohio’s top free tourist site, has an excellent reputation for its restoration expertise, and hosts the world’s oldest and largest collection of military aviation artifacts, including the Apollo 15 Command Module and the Mercury and Gemini capsules.

The Museum's request has been supported by Ohio's entire Congressional delegation, Speaker of the House John Boehner, Former Senator and Astronaut John Glenn, and Secretary of the United State's Air Force Michael Donley, among others. A similar resolution was also introduced in the 128th General Assembly and passed the Ohio Senate with bipartisan support.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 2 passed the Senate State and Local Government and Veterans Affairs Committee unanimously.

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Senator Chris Widener serves the people of the 10th Senate District, which includes Clark, Greene and Madison Counties. He is chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and a member of the Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development, Government Oversight & Reform, and Rules & Reference committees.

Editor's Note: A copy of Senator Widener's sponsor testimony is attached.