

Senate Concurrent Resolution 2 - Sponsor Testimony
Senate State and Local Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
February 9, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee for the opportunity to present Senate Concurrent Resolution 2. This Resolution will memorialize the President of the United States and the Administrator of NASA to select the National Museum of the United States Air Force (NMUSAF) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, for public display of a retired Space Shuttle Orbiter.

Following the launch of the 135th Space Shuttle mission in June, NASA will conclude the Space Shuttle Program and retire the three operating Space Shuttles. It is widely believed President Obama will decide where the Shuttles will be retired and displayed to the public. Therefore it is imperative that the Ohio General Assembly voice our support and let the President know we want a Shuttle at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force.

The competition for a shuttle is fierce—20 museums around the country have requested one. Any museum that gets one will see a dramatic increase in prestige and a boost of up to a million annual visitors—with an increase in tourist dollars to go along. A front runner in the competition is our own National Museum of the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, near Dayton. For that reason, we must impress on the President that the people of Ohio want a Space Shuttle, and that the Miami Valley is a perfect place for its final landing.

Ohio is the logical place for the Space Shuttle because of the strong NASA and Air Force presence; the relationships they have with each other and thousands of businesses and jobs in Ohio; and the long, historical link between our state and aviation, which continues today.

More specifically:

- ***Bringing the Space Shuttle to Ohio will create jobs¹.*** The Space Shuttle is conservatively estimated to bring an additional one million visitors a year to the National Museum of the United States Air Force. That will create an additional 700 jobs and add \$40 million to the state's economy.
- ***With 1.3 million visitors a year, the Museum is currently the top free tourist destination in the State of Ohio.*** It is the oldest and largest museum of military aviation in the world featuring more

¹ The economic data was provided by the National Aviation Heritage Area, based on an economic model prepared by Economic Stewardship, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, a consulting firm that creates economic and fiscal impact analyses to quantify the benefits associated with tourism/economic development strategies in cities, counties and regions. These numbers are consistent with the projections of other museums about the benefits of getting the Space Shuttle.

than 400 aerospace vehicles on exhibit, including Mercury, Gemini and Apollo space capsules. It is one of the most widely attended museums in the nation.

- ***The Space Shuttle will benefit both Wright-Patterson and NASA Glenn.*** Placing a Space Shuttle here would be a tribute to both vital Ohio aerospace research centers. The National Museum of the United States Air Force has initiated educational programs with NASA—securing the Space Shuttle will strengthen those links, affecting people throughout the state.
- ***Bringing the Space Shuttle is strongly supported in Ohio.*** Individuals ranging from the aerospace industry to a bipartisan coalition of Ohio’s Congressional delegation have all signed and sent letters of support. Some include Speaker of the House John Boehner, Former Senator and Astronaut John Glenn, as well as the Secretary of the United State’s Air Force Michael Donley. It is also supported by the Ohio Aerospace Institute, former astronauts from Ohio, Ohio aerospace businesses, many aviation sites across the state, newspaper editorial boards, and the local governments surrounding Dayton.
- ***Sending the Space Shuttle to the National Museum of the United States Air Force will keep it in the hands of the federal government.*** Because the Museum is part of the Air Force, transferring the Space Shuttle to the Air Force will ensure that it remains under the stewardship and ownership of the American people.
- ***Ohio’s Midwest location is close to major population centers and is ideal to ensure large numbers of visitors with easy access to the Museum.***

In closing, it is time that the General Assembly voices support for a Space Shuttle to take its home flight and land in the Miami Valley. Therefore, I ask for your support for SCR 2 to memorialize President Obama to retire a Space Shuttle Orbiter in Ohio.

Respectfully,



Chris Widener
State Senator
10th District