



Senator Mark Wagoner
2nd Ohio Senate District

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**WAGONER'S BILL RECOMMENDING THOMAS EDISON FOR
NATIONAL STATUARY HALL PASSED BY SENATE**

COLUMBUS— State Senator Mark Wagoner (R- Toledo) announced that the Ohio Senate voted Wednesday to approve Senate Bill 21, a measure that requests a congressional joint committee to formally approve the replacement of the statue of former Ohio Governor William Allen in the National Statuary Hall Collection with one of Thomas Edison.

“Senate Bill 21 is the result of tens of thousands of Ohioans taking great pride and interest in their history and in choosing who will best represent them in our nation’s capital,” Wagoner said. “While Ohio was called home by many worthy individuals, I am confident that Thomas Edison’s Ohio-grown ingenuity, intelligence and entrepreneurial spirit make him an excellent choice to represent Ohio for all those who will walk through the National Statuary Hall in the future.”

In 2006, the Ohio General Assembly created the National Statuary Collection Study Committee, a bipartisan panel of lawmakers tasked with recommending a replacement for Allen’s statue, as lawmakers felt his pro-slavery views made him a poor representative of Ohioans. Senator Wagoner chaired the Study Committee, which first met in 2009 and spent more than a year traveling throughout Ohio learning about the lives and achievements of numerous distinguished Ohioans.

Following a selection of 10 finalists, a statewide public vote was held in 2010 to determine who would represent Ohio in Statuary Hall. More than 48,000 total votes were cast, with the people of Ohio choosing inventor Thomas Edison as the winner.

“I want to thank the members of the Statuary Hall Study Committee as well as the many advocates and organizations whose efforts helped Ohioans learn more about the many figures who helped shape Ohio,” Wagoner said. “Their work helped make this entire process possible, as did the nearly 50,000 people who took the time to learn about these historical figures and cast their vote.”

Senate Bill 21 fulfills the federal requirements needed to make Ohio’s decision final, as the law requires any request to replace a statue to be approved by both the Legislature and the Governor.

Wagoner noted that no taxpayer dollars will be used to complete the project, as a nonprofit organization has been established to help pay the costs associated with commissioning the statue of Edison and transporting the statue of Allen back to Ohio.

Congress created the National Statuary Hall in 1864. Located in the U.S. Capitol, the hall features two statues from each state that commemorate deceased historical figures who have lived in the state and distinguished themselves through their civic or military service. Ohio is currently represented in the Hall by Allen and former President James Garfield. A recent change in the law allows states to replace a statue if they so choose.

Having passed the Senate unanimously, Senate Bill 21 now moves to the Ohio House for further consideration. Similar legislation has been introduced in that chamber by State Representatives Randy Gardner (R- Bowling Green) and Dennis Murray (D- Sandusky).