



Testimony to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in Support of HCR 8

Come. Discover. Fly!

Air Camp

Armstrong Air & Space Museum

Aviation Trail, Inc.
Visitor Center & Museum

Dayton Aviation Heritage
National Historical Park

Hawthorn Hill

Huffman Prairie Flying Field

*Huffman Prairie Flying Field
Interpretive Center*

*John W. Berry, Sr. Wright Brothers
Aviation Center at
Carillon Historical Park*

Paul Laurence Dunbar State Memorial

*Wright-Dunbar Interpretive Center and
the Wright Cycle Shop*

Dayton History

Greene County
Historical Society

Historic Grimes Field
*Champaign Aviation Museum
Grimes Flying Lab Foundation*

Historic WACO Field

Historic Woodland
Cemetery & Arboretum

National Aviation Hall of Fame

National Museum of the
United States Air Force

Vectren Dayton Air Show

The Wright B Flyer

Wright Family Foundation

Wright Image Group

Wright State University
Wright Archives

Chairman Boose, I am Tony Sculimbrene, executive director of the National Aviation Heritage Alliance. In 2004 Congress recognized the Dayton region's leadership in our nation's aviation history by designating it the National Aviation Heritage Area. It is one of two national heritage areas in Ohio and one of 49 areas located throughout the nation and the only one devoted to aviation heritage. The Area includes Montgomery, Greene, Clark, Warren, Champaign, Miami, Shelby and Auglaize counties. As a part of the designation process, the Alliance was identified as the management entity for the Area. The Alliance is a private, not-for-profit corporation, which seeks to make Dayton and the surrounding region the recognized center of aviation heritage tourism and aerospace innovation, sustaining the legacy of the Wright Brothers. This vision is based on the historical, cultural and scientific resources associated with the region and the state of Ohio, as the Birthplace of Aviation.

For the Alliance the issue of who was first to fly is an important one and it strongly supports the passage of HCR 8. The evidence collected in photos, eyewitness reports and over a century of scrutiny by learned scholars has substantiated the fact that the Wright brothers flew first. With this recent pronouncement by the state of Connecticut regarding Whitehead and his alleged first flight, several noted aviation historians reviewed the claim put forward by John Brown, and Jane's All the World's Aircraft (Paul Jackson, editor-in-chief's remarks published in the April 2013 edition) and saw nothing to support Whitehead as the first to fly. Participants in that review included the Royal Aeronautical Society's Historical Group (shown as Attachment 1). In their June 2014 report they state "All available evidence fails to support the claim that Gustave Whitehead made sustained, powered, controlled flights pre-dating the Wright brothers." Why is this group's assessment particularly important? Jane's is a British publication and editor-in-chief, Paul Jackson, identifies himself as a Fellow, Royal Aeronautical Society.

It is important to understand the role the publication, Jane's All The World's Aircraft, plays in this debate. In numerous reports Connecticut legislators mentioned Jane's position that Whitehead was first to fly, as reason for their legislative change. They claim it is an authoritative source on aviation and hence justifies identifying Whitehead as the first fly. Jane's is currently one of



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several trade publications owned by a digital publisher, IHS. Yet when I personally asked Jonathan Gear, Vice President IHS Industrials, and the individual responsible for Jane's, who he thought was the first to fly he would not answer my question. And in a recent editorial published by the Cleveland Plain Dealer (shown as Attachment 2) on 22 January 2015, Jane's editor-in-chief, Paul Jackson, declined to be interviewed through his company by the Plain Dealer editorial board. For such a bold change in history, there seems to be little willingness to defend the change by the people who are responsible for this "authoritative source on aviation".

Some might suggest this is not a serious matter. The Alliance believes it is very serious issue as we have a national heritage area and two national parks (Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park in Ohio and Wright Brothers National Memorial in North Carolina) that clearly and accurately state the Wright brothers were the first to fly. For one of the 50 states in this great union to state something different is a matter of great concern. And let's describe this dilemma in very practical terms-if your daughter or son, or your grandson or granddaughter asked you the question who was the first to fly what is your answer to them? I am sure you, like the members of the Alliance have the right answer and it is Wright brothers, but for those in Connecticut, how do they respond?

Thank you Chairman Boose for the opportunity to testify and I urge all the members of the committee to support and pass HCR 8.