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BILL FINCH
Mayor

February 25, 2015

Joint Committee on Government
Administration and Elections
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 3600
300 Capital Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

**Re: Senate Bill 739: An Act Designating Gustave Whitehead's Number 21
As The State Pioneering Aircraft.**

Dear Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila and members of the committee,

Thank you Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, and members of the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony today.

I am here to support Senate Bill 739, which is an act to designate Gustave Whitehead's Number 21 as the Connecticut's pioneering aircraft.

On a summer day in 1901, Gustave Whitehead – a poor German immigrant and Bridgeport resident – made history by becoming the first in flight, according to the Bridgeport Herald.

His plane, Number 21, should be the state's pioneering aircraft.

Gustave Whitehead the first to fly an airplane in Connecticut, and the first to fly an airplane in the United States.

He flew two years before the Wright Brothers.

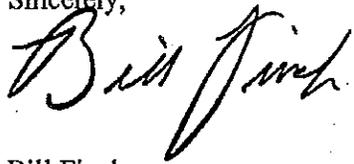
It wasn't until the winter of 1903 that the Wright Brothers flew their plane in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, according to National Park Service.

Whitehead flying before the Wright Brothers is well established. The renowned "Jane's All the World Almanac," which is widely known as the bible of all things airplane related, recently backed the assertion that Whitehead was the first to fly in America.

Two years ago, the state legislators and Governor Malloy did right by Gustave Whitehead in codifying a resolution that recognizes Connecticut as the location of the first manned flight in America.

Let us continue this spirit of honoring a man who deserves our thanks many times over. I urge you to join me in supporting this bill. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Finch". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Bill Finch
Mayor