

The Future of Flight



The Next 100 Years

Endorsed By:

American Society of
Mechanical Engineers

Aerospace Industries
Association

American Association of
Engineering Societies

American Astronautical
Society

American Helicopter
Society

American Institute of
Aeronautics and
Astronautics

American Society of Civil
Engineers

General Aviation
Manufacturers
Association

Institute of Electrical and
Electronics Engineers-
USA

NASA Aeronautics
Support Team

NASA Alumni League

Society of Automotive
Engineers

May 2, 2003

The Honorable Sam Brownback
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ernest Hollings
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Brownback and Senator Hollings:

As leaders in the nation's aerospace, aviation and aeronautics community, our organizations, representing major manufacturers and more than 1 million scientists, engineers, researchers and professionals, strongly endorse S.788, the "Second Century of Flight Act."

In recent years, our organizations have expressed concern that the United States is in grave danger of losing its leadership in aerospace to international competitors. In a recent report, the European Union challenged U.S. aerospace leadership, outlining their goal of becoming the world's leader in aviation and aeronautics by the end of 2020. Our international competitors are well on their way to overtaking us in global air transportation markets. For the first time ever, foreign competition won 50% of new aircraft orders during 2002. Decreased federal investment in aviation and aeronautics R&D is destined to weaken the economic competitiveness of the U.S. aviation industry.

In November 2002 the Presidential Commission on the Future of the United States Aerospace Industry released their final report stating, "The United States must maintain its preeminence in aerospace research and innovation to be a global aerospace leader in the 21st century," and that "Government policies and investments in long-term research have not kept pace with the changing world."

The Commission recommended that "the federal government significantly increase its investment in basic aerospace research, which enhances U.S. national security, enables breakthrough capabilities, and fosters an efficient, secure and safe aerospace transportation system" and that "the Administration and Congress work together to fund a new R&D initiative to develop a new 21st Century air transportation system for the nation." Provisions in S.788 will go a long way towards meeting the Commission's recommendations.

Last year, the Commission released a study called the “U.S. Aerospace and Aviation Industry: A State-by-State Analysis.” The study showed

that the U.S. civil and commercial aerospace and aviation industry employed more than two million workers in 2001, with an annual average wage of \$47,700. The industry has a major economic and employment impact in all 50 states and is a substantial force in civil, military, and space manufacturing and operations in nearly half of the nation’s states.

Another report released in 2002 called “The National Economic Impact of Civil Aviation,” stated that the total economic impact of civil aviation exceeded more than \$900 billion and 11 million jobs to the U.S. economy in the year 2000, roughly 9% of the total U.S. gross domestic product. Civil aviation products and services generate a significant surplus for U.S. trade accounts and amount to significant numbers of America’s highly skilled, technologically qualified workforce. Aerospace technologies, products and services underpin the advanced capabilities of our men and women in uniform and those charged with homeland security.

Over the last decade, funding for NASA's aeronautics research and development (R&D) program has fallen by approximately 50 percent. The “Second Century of Flight Act” will provide the necessary funding resources for NASA to compete with the European Union by implementing a program plan for their “Aeronautics Blueprint-Toward a Bold New Era of Aviation.” We strongly support your efforts to counter the dramatic decline in U.S. aeronautics research and development spending and urge Members of Congress to strive for a strong national commitment to aerospace, aeronautics and aviation research by supporting this legislation.

As we approach the centennial of the Wright Brother’s first flight, it is more important than ever that America renew its national commitment to leadership in aviation. We commend you for your leadership in introducing this important legislation, and we look forward to working with you and other Members of Congress, in re-establishing the investment in aerospace research and development as a national priority.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathryn Holmes at holmesk@asme.org or 202/785-3756, Ext. 390.