

HEARING

JULY 15, 2015



**SMALL
BUSINESS
COMMITTEE**

**Opening Statement of
Chairman Steve Chabot
Committee on Small Business
Hearing: “Taking Flight: Small Business Utilization of Unmanned Aircraft”**

Good morning. This hearing will come to order.

It was at a bicycle shop in Dayton, Ohio, where two entrepreneurs dreamed up a machine that would fly men through the air. It took a bold spirit to think that big. And even bolder spirit to test it. But Orville and Wilbur Wright persevered and changed the course of history.

A little more than a half century later we would fly to the moon. And a half-century after that we are discussing an era when men and women don't even need to be in the aircraft to pilot it.

Dayton, Ohio led then, and it is leading again. And one of witnesses here today is testament to that.

We are here today to examine the commercial usage of unmanned aircrafts by small businesses – to look at the benefits of this technology and discuss some of the concerns surrounding safe operations. Most importantly, we will have a conversation about how America can once again lead the world in a new era of flight.

The potential uses of unmanned aircraft systems or UAS is limitless. They can be used by local broadcasters to gather footage and report the news. They can be used by farmers to better manage their crops. They can be used by engineering firms to inspect bridges. And they can be used by first responders to help save lives. At the University of Cincinnati, students are working with the fire department to develop aircrafts that give real-time information to firefighters and emergency crew about where a fire is burning and where it is moving.

Currently, the Federal Aviation Administration is working to integrate unmanned aircraft systems, or UAS, into the national airspace system. On a case-by-case basis, the FAA is authorizing low-risk commercial UAS operations. The FAA also has proposed a rule to allow small unmanned aircraft, those weighing 55 pounds or less, to operate in our skies. The proposed rule includes a number of operating restrictions aimed at ensuring safe operations.

I'm interested in learning from the small businesses and innovators on the front lines about how the FAA's current process is working for them and how the proposed rule, once finalized, may affect their operations. I'm also looking forward to hearing how their small businesses are utilizing this new technology and planning for the day when UAS are fully integrated into American airspace.

There are moments when we can unleash a positive force of innovation and job creation if we do not smother it with regulations. Most of the time, the government misses these moments, and we're left to wonder what could have been. There is always a balance to be struck. While we must promote public safety and proper usage of unmanned aircraft, we must ensure that the regulations are carefully crafted so that they don't prevent this new industry from innovating and helping grow our economy.

I am very eager to hear what our witnesses have to say about their own experiences, and I look forward to seeing how this new industry grows and as it does, creates new opportunities for small businesses to capitalize on new technologies.

I now recognize the Ranking Member for her opening statement.