

Honorable Chairman Wagoner, Vice Chairman Letson, and members of the Committee, thank you for the privilege to share why Thomas Alva Edison, native Ohioan and favorite son, should represent our great state in Washington, D.C.

Born February 11, 1847 and growing up in the bustling town of Milan Ohio, led young Tom to an insatiable appetite for knowledge. At the time, Milan was the second largest wheat shipping port in the world. The dockworkers referred to Tom as the “nervous little question box”. One of his early experiments was sitting on duck eggs. He learned to write by copying Milan store signs with chalk on a shingle. He nearly smothered playing in a wheat bin and was publicly spanked for setting fire to a barn. He even tried to make a boy fly. Tom’s schooling was done by his mother, who was a teacher. Let there be no doubt, his “roots of genius”, were grown deep in “Buckeye” soil. Those “roots of genius” from his early years would eventually sprout more service to humanity than any other individual in the world.

A few of his outstanding nearly 1100 inventions include, the stock ticker, mimeograph, the phonograph, the incandescent lamp, the Edison Effect, (foundation of radio, television and computers) motion pictures and the modern research laboratory.

Einstein said, “He was the world’s greatest man of all time. Edison created things for us without which we are no longer able to imagine our existence.”

Being named *Life Magazine* and *Time Magazine’s* “Man of the Millennium” speaks for itself.

Edison’s legacy from birth to current times are many:

- Three Edison children are buried in the Milan Cemetery.
- Edison bought back his birthplace home in 1906
- He kept in touch with Milan school children.

- His father died in Norwalk, Ohio, four miles from Milan. His funeral was held there.
- Edison married Mina Miller, Ohio native and their wedding was in Akron.
- He made many visits to Ohio because of his close friend, Harvey Firestone from Akron, and President Harding from Ohio was a camping trip buddy.
- He demonstrated his first phonograph to “next door” neighbor, President Hayes of Fremont.
- Edison’s General Electric Company is credited with being the first industrial park in the nation, Nela Park in Cleveland.
- His portrait hangs in Ohio’s Capital Building.
- The Ohio Department of Development sponsors the Edison Technology Incubators and Edison Technology Centers around the state, as well as the Thomas Edison Award.
- State of Ohio Thomas Edison Grants, \$9.6 million dollars.

A great grandson wrote, “I would like you to know how special a place his birthplace in Milan was for him, and all of his descendants. “

Edison has been and still is an inspiration to youth, especially the youth of his Ohio hometown.

An eighth grade student writes: Not only was he an amazing inventor, but he was, and still is, an excellent figure in history that embodies and represents the heart and soul of the state of Ohio.”

Edison has been thrice honored on U.S. postal stamps, and at least once on Ohio’s license plates.

Our late Ohio Congressman Paul Gillmor led Congress to authorize Edison Commemorative Silver Dollar.

I would be remiss if I did not cover at least one Edison connection throughout the world. Milan has very close ties with a sister city in Japan. Edison used bamboo from Japan for his early filaments

Edison's most recent recognition will be coming next week when I and other Edison relatives accept the renowned "Grammy Award". Recently, a *Toledo Blade* writer states: Beyond this Grammy, Edison should ultimately be recognized by his home state with enshrinement in the U.S. Capitol's hallowed Statuary Hall. What greater tribute can Ohio give its famous son, whose inventive contributions to the world are unsurpassed.

If ever the hard-hit Buckeye State needed to embrace an inspirational character who overcame adversity and deafness in youth to become a brilliant innovator with irrepressible entrepreneurial spirit, it is now.

In a few months, this committee will replace the statue of a 19<sup>th</sup> century pro-slavery politician. Why not a replace with a 19<sup>th</sup> century superstar who's been called The Man Who Invented the 20<sup>th</sup> Century – not to mention a Grammy winner with enduring relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

I will close using a summation when Edison was presented the Congressional Medal

"He has led no armies into battle – he has conquered no countries – he has enslaved no peoples – yet, he wields a power the magnitude of which no warrior ever dreamed. He commands a devotion more sweeping in scope, more worldwide than any other man – a devotion rooted deep in human gratitude, and untinged by bias of race, color, religion or politics."

Ohio's Man of the Millennium, Thomas Alva Edison, deserves to be honored in Statuary Hall as an inspiration to future generations hoping to emulate his extraordinary drive to reinvent the world.

Chairman Wagoner and Committee, thank you very much for serving Ohio, and thank you for allowing this testimony in support of Thomas Alva Edison.