



Senate Fiscal Agency  
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**BILL ANALYSIS**

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Senate Bill 326 (as reported without amendment)  
Sponsor: Senator Rebekah Warren  
Committee: Transportation

Date Completed: 7-13-15

**RATIONALE**

Through the years, the State of Michigan has adopted various objects, animals, and plants as official State symbols. In addition to the State flag, State seal, and State coat-of-arms, the symbols include an official State stone (Petoskey), reptile (Painted Turtle), soil (Kalkaska soil series), fossil (mastodon), and others. It now has been suggested that the State adopt an official airplane: the B-24 Liberator. As discussed below, this aircraft was manufactured during World War II at a massive plant at Michigan's Willow Run airport, where some 42,000 people were employed, and was the most-produced bomber of the war. To commemorate the achievement of those workers and the contribution of the B-24 to winning World War II, it has been suggested that the B-24 Liberator should be the official airplane of the State.

**CONTENT**

The bill would create a new act to designate the B-24 Liberator as the official airplane of the State.

**BACKGROUND**

The B-24 Liberator and the B-17 Flying Fortress were the two principal bombers used by the United States Army Air Force in World War II. The B-24 featured a twin tail and rudder assembly as well as a flat-sided fuselage, earning it the nickname "Flying Boxcar" with many of its crews. The plane possessed a wide array of defensive guns mounted in top, nose, tail, and belly turrets, and was capable of carrying 8,000 pounds of bombs. While many flight crews preferred the B-17 because of its ability to withstand more damage, the B-24 had a longer flight range and the ability to carry more munitions, making it the ideal bomber for the Pacific Theater. With a total of 18,188 B-24s built, it was the most-produced bomber of World War II.

The demand was so great that Consolidated (the company that designed the plane) had to license production to North American, Douglas, and Ford. Ford built a massive plant at Willow Run, in Ypsilanti, Michigan, to build the planes. At 3.5 million square feet, it was the largest factory under a single roof at the time. It also was the workplace of Rose Will Monroe, one of the real-life women on whom "Rosie the Riveter" was based. The factory eventually employed 42,000 people, and by 1944, it was producing one plane every hour. By the end of the war, more than 8,600 B-24s had been built at Willow Run. The production exemplified by Willow Run was the reason southeastern Michigan was dubbed the "Arsenal of Democracy".

**ARGUMENTS**

*(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)*

**Supporting Argument**

The B-24 Liberator is a symbol of Michigan's manufacturing skill. The assembly-line techniques that Ford applied to manufacturing the aircraft allowed the Willow Run plant to build one every 55 minutes at its peak. As 2015 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II, this would be a good time to honor the heroes at home and abroad. Designating the B-24 as the State airplane

would not cost the State anything, and it would be a symbol of both a momentous time and Michigan's contribution to the war effort.

Legislative Analyst: Ryan M. Bergan

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Joe Carrasco

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.