

A legislative update from
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From the desk of Rep. Sykes

Dear Neighbor,

The year is already half over, but we are not slowing down in the legislature. The Ohio House Democrats are bringing the Statehouse to your house and neighborhoods across Ohio! Our Working Families First Tour will connect you with your Democratic lawmaker to find out what we're doing to put more money in your pocket and protect your fundamental freedoms— like making health care decisions. You'll have the opportunity to ask questions and offer input on other issues facing our community.

I believe that wherever you come from and whatever your background, everyone should have the opportunity to raise happy, healthy families. That's why I want to share how my work on a comprehensive Families First Agenda will improve our quality of life in the Buckeye State. By including actions to protect and expand women's access to reproductive healthcare, reduce everyday costs for families, and invest in our children— I am putting families at the center of my priorities.

These town hall events are free and open to the public. I will be hosting a town hall event on **August 29th from 5:30pm to 6:30pm, at Akron Summit County Public Library, 60 South High St. Akron.** I encourage you to come and bring your own view on our community's needs.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

Emilia Strong Sykes

National Black Business Month



August is National Black Business Month, a time to bring attention to the needs of Black-owned businesses across the country.

Did you know Ohio is ranked the 7th best state for Black entrepreneurship?

We have more than 4, 200 Black-owned businesses that employed nearly 70,000 people and pay about \$1.5 billion in annual payroll! I encourage you to support your local Black-owned businesses, not just this month, but at any chance you get!

Food Farmacy



This past month Rep. Sykes attended the kick off for the pilot program of her Food Farmacy at Akron Children's Hospital. She has opened a Food Farmacy at Cleveland Clinic Akron General Hospital and within the SUMMA Health System. The opening of the Food Farmacies is due to an Ohio Department of Medicaid Grant, which Rep. Sykes secured through an amendment to the State Fiscal Budgets in Fiscal Years 2020-2021 & 2021-2022.

Democrats introduce an executive action plan to reduce gun violence

Ohio House Democrats have tirelessly been working to reduce gun violence here in our own state. That's why I am especially pleased that the Biden Administration has introduced an executive action plan to reduce gun violence across the country. This action plan includes several measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, reduce community violence, and assist local law enforcement.

This comprehensive strategy is bolstered by the recent passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the most significant gun violence reduction legislation to pass Congress in 30 years.

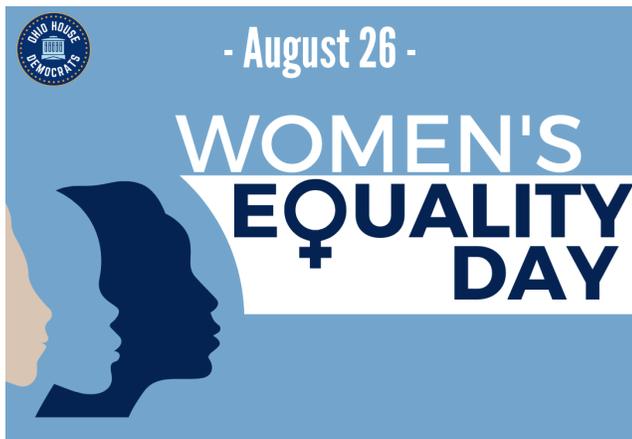
In the Ohio House, we are fighting for basic, commonsense gun safety bills including:

- HB 38 (West, Miller, A.) [Repeal "Stand Your Ground"](#);
- HB 259 (Robinson, Miller, A.) [Universal background checks](#);
- HB 274 (Upchurch, Jarrells) [Restore local control to regulate firearms-related conduct](#);
- HB 257 (Russo, Smith, M.) [Enact Extreme Risk Protection Order Act \("Red Flag" law\)](#);

- HB 262 (Miranda, Kelly) [Prohibit negligent firearm storage](#);
- HB 360 (Miranda, Smith) [Designate Gun Violence Awareness Month](#);
- HB 661 (Crossman, Hicks-Hudson) [Require gun trigger locks with firearm sales](#)

Meanwhile, Ohio Republicans continue to push legislation such as permit-less concealed carry, repealing duty to notify law enforcement, and kill at will. These extreme bills put our law enforcement and communities in danger.

Everyone deserves to feel safe in their homes and in their communities. Gun violence is a public health issue, and it deserves our attention and action. We owe it to Ohio's children and families who deserve to go to school, the grocery store, and anywhere in public without fearing for their lives.



Today, we celebrate the adoption of the **19th Amendment**, which prohibits the states and the federal government from **denying the right to vote** to U.S citizens on the **basis of sex**.

August 26: Women's Equality Day

On August 26, we celebrate Women's Equality Day! This day commemorates the 1920 adoption of the 19th Amendment, which prohibits the states and federal government from denying the right to vote to U.S. citizens on the basis of sex. This gave women across America the right to vote.

While we celebrate that the 19th Amendment was a critical step towards gaining equal voting rights, we must also acknowledge that equality on paper is not the same as equality in practice. Black women would continue to struggle and fight to receive the same equalities at the voting polls as white women for another 40 years until the 1965 Voting Rights Act was passed.

Today, there are still issues such as economic adversity and gerrymandering that prevent minority communities from voting and being properly represented in their states. At the Ohio House, my Democratic colleagues and I will continue to fight against these barriers until we ensure everyone has the same opportunities to make their voice heard.