



A legislative update from House Minority Leader
EMILIA STRONG SYKES
HOUSE DISTRICT 34

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From the desk of Leader Sykes

Dear Neighbor,

In March, we reached a number of milestones in our fight against COVID-19 as a state and as a country. Here in Ohio, we commemorated the one-year anniversary of the first cases and deaths from this virus. Additionally, we surpassed 1 million total cases as a state.

While these milestones are a sobering reminder of just how difficult the past year has been for all of us, we're starting to see hope for better days ahead.

Thanks to the Biden administration, we've been able to shatter predictions for the number of vaccines administered, and now, every American is eligible to schedule a vaccine far sooner than even the most optimistic expectations.

As of March 29, all Ohioans ages 16 and older are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Getting a vaccine is quick, painless and one of the best tools we have to eradicating this virus.

In order to get our economy back on track, kids back in school, and our social lives vibrant again, we need everyone who can to sign up for an appointment to get vaccinated. Every one of the vaccines currently on the market have been rigorously tested. They're safe, effective and have the capacity to save countless lives.

And while getting the vaccine is our best line of defense to end this crisis, it is also critical that we continue to take precautions we've known to work all along, from washing our hands and maintaining distance to wearing a mask and limiting time indoors with those who have not been vaccinated yet.

We're so close to turning the corner on this pandemic and have the tools in place to eradicate this virus, but it's going to take all of us to get it done. And it begins by scheduling a vaccine appointment.

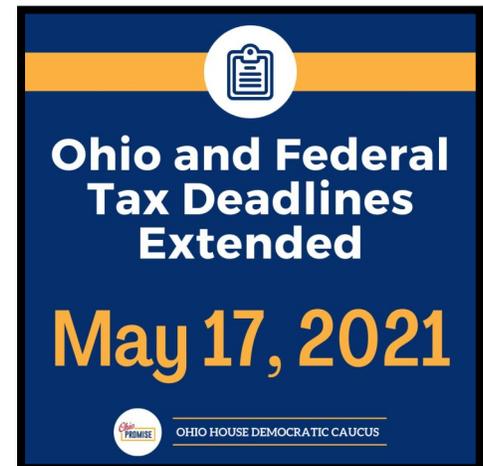
To schedule your vaccine, visit gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov. If you have additional questions about the vaccine, visit coronavirus.ohio.gov.

For resources in Summit County, visit the Summit County Public Health's website at <https://www.scph.org/covid/vaccine> or call 330-926-5795 to schedule an appointment.

If you have thoughts about the budget process, please feel free to contact me at Rep34@ohiohouse.gov or 614-466-3100.

Sincerely,

House Minority Leader
Emilia Strong Sykes



The deadline for Ohio and federal taxes has been extended to **May 17**.

Individual taxpayers can postpone federal income tax payments for the 2020 tax year originally due on April 15, 2021, to May 17, 2021, without penalties and interest, regardless of the amount owed.

This postponement applies to individual taxpayers, including individuals who pay self-employment tax. Penalties, interest and additions to tax will begin to accrue on any remaining unpaid balances as of May 17, 2021. Individual taxpayers will automatically avoid interest and penalties on the taxes paid by May 17.

Local tax deadlines may vary, so be sure to check your local government website for updates.

Sign up for Leader Sykes' email list at <https://ohiohouse.gov/members/emilia-strong-sykes/newsletter-sign-up>

House Dems recognize April 12-17 as Black Maternal Health Week

April 12-17 is **Black Maternal Health Week**, a time to raise awareness and advocate for reproductive and birth justice for Black women in Ohio.

Ohio's maternal mortality rates are two to three times greater for Black women than white women. This disparity negatively impacts the health and well-being of Black women in our state.

That's why House Democrats created the state's first ever Black Maternal Health Caucus, to ensure healthier moms and babies by focusing on improving health outcomes and connecting women to the care they need to live a happier, healthier life.

Since its founding, the Black Maternal Health Caucus has introduced a number of bills to address Black maternal health issues, including:

- Legislation to create the Pay Equity Hotline, re-introduced by **Reps. Erica Crawley (D-Columbus) and Janine Boyd (D-Cleveland Heights)**. The toll-free equal pay hotline would be an easily accessible, anonymous resource for workers to report wage discrimination and gather more information to find out if they could be victims of pay discrimination.
- **HB 42**, also known as the Save Our Mothers Act, re-

introduced by **Rep. Erica Crawley (D-Columbus)** would require hospitals and other birthing facilities to offer employees training on maternal health and pregnancy-related complications in order to improve standards of care and save lives. The bill would also address cultural competency training to improve birth equity, reduce peripartum racial and ethnic disparities, and address implicit bias in the healthcare system.

- **HB 142**, introduced by **Rep. Crawley** which would provide Medicaid reimbursement to birthing people in Ohio who utilize doula services.

Additionally, in the 133rd General Assembly, **Rep. Stephanie Howse's (D-Cleveland) HB 11** to improve pre-natal and maternal health services was signed into law.



VOTER REGISTRATION

The deadline to register or update your voter registration is **April 5, 2021** for the May 4, 2021 Primary Election.

To register online, visit <https://olvr.ohiosos.gov/>.

EMILIA STRONG SYKES
MINORITY LEADER
OHIO HOUSE DISTRICT 34



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