



April 22, 2020

## Statehouse Update

*From the Office of State Representative Bride Rose Sweeney*



### A Note from Rep. Sweeney

Dear Neighbor,

I hope this message finds you well during a difficult time for many. The Coronavirus has imposed unprecedented challenges on our society, but I remain confident that Ohioans will continue to rise to the occasion. This is my first e-newsletter. Because of these difficult times, I wanted to use every possible avenue to reach my constituents. I plan to send these more regularly and hope you find the information valuable.

This crisis has reminded us of the need for good government. It has also changed the way that I reach my constituents at a time when they need me the most. While there is still so much more to be done, I wanted to take a moment to provide a brief update and highlight some of the work that my office has been doing to serve my constituents.

I have been interceding with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services on behalf of my constituents who are struggling to apply for unemployment. For those residents of the 14th District who still can't get through, **please let my office know**. My office is more than willing to help with state agencies, and we will do the best we can to flag your case for ODJFS. It's been reported that only 1 in 3 of the State's thousands of pending unemployment claims have been paid out so far.

I have been working hard to be a reliable source of timely and accurate information. If you are interested in daily summaries of the Governor's press conferences, please contact my office or use this [link](#). My social media also focuses on breaking news and important updates. In addition, I will host a **virtual town hall** via [Zoom](#) **tomorrow, Thursday, April 23rd at noon**. Check out the flyer for the event below. I would love to hear from you.

Below you will find a summary of some of the latest updates regarding the response to the COVID-19 crisis. Don't hesitate to reach out if my office might be of assistance to you.

All the best,

**Bride Rose Sweeney**

## Lunch with your Legislators

Please join Ohio State Senator Nickie J. Antonio and Representatives Michael Skindell, Bride Rose Sweeney, and Jeffrey Crossman for a virtual town hall regarding COVID-19 updates.

**Thursday, April 23**  
**12:00-1:00 p.m.**

### Updates on COVID-19

#### Re-opening Ohio

- The current, mandatory stay at home order, requiring citizens to stay at home unless they are engaging in certain essential activities, remains in effect.
- Gov. DeWine has announced plans to gradually re-open Ohio beginning May 1.
- The plan to re-open the state is a three-pronged approach that includes:
  - Public health measures and compliance
  - Protecting the most vulnerable
  - Businesses operating with safeguards
- Businesses must take safeguards including social distancing, face masks, barriers where they're appropriate, surfaces sanitized and cleaned frequently, limited occupancy, and employees who can work from home should work from home.
- As businesses re-open, if safeguards are not being taken, customers and employees will be encouraged to contact the local health department.

#### Testing

- Ohio currently lacks adequate COVID-19 testing. Only the sickest, most at-risk people are being tested.
- Gov. DeWine has created a Testing Strike Team led by former Govs. Celeste and Taft to work with public health, education and businesses to maximize Ohio's capability to test.
- Testing is critical to re-opening the economy.

#### Federal COVID-19 Relief Funds

- More than \$248 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds have been approved by the state controlling board.
- Funds will aid the state's ongoing pandemic response efforts, including funds to bolster testing capacity, purchase needed personal protective equipment for frontline workers, expand hospital capacity, and provide resources for those most impacted by the coronavirus.

#### Economic Updates

- The [Office of Small Business Relief](#) has been created to help businesses navigate recovery funds, regulatory reform issues and other services.
- The extended stay-at-home order now requires retailers to determine and post maximum occupancy in stores.
- Gov. DeWine has asked the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) to send up to \$1.6 billion in dividends to Ohio employers to ease economic impact of COVID-19. Approximately \$1.4 billion will go to private employers, while approximately \$200 million will go to local government taxing districts (counties, cities, schools, etc.)
- JobsOhio announced a partnership with several Ohio banks to help small businesses maintain operations and payroll during pandemic; \$50M committed.

#### Schools Closed for Remainder of 2019-20 Academic Year

- After consulting Ohio's school districts and teachers unions, K-12 schools will remain closed for the rest of this academic year.
- Education will continue remotely.
- There is currently no decision on whether schools will be opened for fall term.

#### COVID-19 Health Disparities

- Black Ohioans account for only 13-14% of the state's population, but 21% of confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- This is the result of a higher prevalence of certain risk factors due to a number of variables, including healthcare access and economic mobility.
- Gov. DeWine announced the creation of a [Minority Health Strike Force](#) to address the racial health disparities seen during COVID-19.
- Members of the strike force include public health experts, policymakers and elected officials such as Minority Leader Sykes.
- Contrary to some misconceptions, the virus is also affecting younger people.

#### COVID-19 in Prisons

- COVID-19 has entered prisons, with many of those incarcerated and corrections workers testing positive for the virus.
- The Correctional Institution Inspection Committee (CIIC) has granted early release to 141 at-risk inmates.
- CIIC is looking into early release for additional low level, non-violent offenders.

### COVID-19 Resources

#### Unemployment Compensation

- Due to a record number of unemployment claims over the last few weeks, processing these claims has been slower than normal. Benefits will be backdated to reflect when the individual was first eligible for unemployment.
- To apply for unemployment, visit [unemployment.ohio.gov](#) or call 1-877-644-6562.
  - Use mass layoff code 2000180**- this will expedite your claim.
  - If you have already filed and did not use the code- do not reapply.
- 1099 workers will be eligible for unemployment benefits under the federal CARES Act.** Ohio is currently building the platform people will use to apply for these benefits, as it currently doesn't exist. We are anticipating that the platform will be open for applications on May 1st, with benefits arriving some time in mid-May. (More information will be forthcoming).
- Those waiting for unemployment benefits may also qualify for additional benefits, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). To learn more, visit [benefits.ohio.gov](#).

#### Cuyahoga County

- Local governments are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Cuyahoga has responded to the crisis by launching its [Small Business Resource Center](#), converting its [website](#) to an information hub, and holding regular briefings at the County [Board of Public Health](#)

#### COVID-19 Information and Prevention

- Have questions about COVID-19?
  - Call: 833-427-5634
  - Visit: [coronavirus.ohio.gov](#)
- Preventative Measures
  - Wash your hands for 20 seconds or more with soapy water several times a day, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Avoid contact with people who are sick.
  - Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects, and surfaces each day.
- Wear a Mask
  - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are strongly encouraging people to wear cloth face masks when in public.
  - Cloth face masks prevent the slow spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.
  - Learn how to make a cloth face mask [here](#)

Please take precautions to keep yourself healthy, and do not hesitate to reach out to my office if you have any questions or concerns. I can always be reached at [Rep14@ohiohouse.gov](mailto:Rep14@ohiohouse.gov) and (614) 466-3350.

#### Office Contact Information

Phone: (614) 466-3350  
Fax: (614) 719-3910  
Email: [Rep14@ohiohouse.gov](mailto:Rep14@ohiohouse.gov)  
Mail: 77 S. High St.-10th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Website: <http://www.ohiohouse.gov/bride-rose-sweeney>



You are receiving this because you expressed interest in State Representative Bride Rose Sweeney.

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

Forwarded this message? [Subscribe](#)

