



Statehouse Update

from
State Representative
Bride Rose Sweeney

July 31, 2024

Dear Neighbor,

I hope this message finds you and your family well. As we embrace the summer season, I want to take a moment to share some updates on the work I have been doing on your behalf.

At a time when our politics are more divisive than ever and news headlines are fueled by partisan bickering and political attacks, it often feels like no one in government is actually able to get anything done. Certainly, the current state of affairs is far from ideal, but I have found that if you're willing to work hard and push past the partisan nonsense, you can accomplish real victories amidst the chaos.

Last month, House Bill 79, one of my **bipartisan bills to help lower Ohioans' utility bills** by creating voluntary energy efficiency programs, passed the House with a bipartisan majority. As the lead sponsor on the bill, I worked hard to bring together stakeholders from all sides: from the utility companies to environmental groups, to consumer protections groups like the Citizens Utility Board of Ohio. As a result, we were able to craft a bill that not only earned their support, but also represents the most significant environmentally friendly legislation to pass the Ohio House in over a decade. You can read more about my legislation in the Cleveland.com Editorial Board's recent endorsement here:

<https://www.cleveland.com/opinion/2024/07/bipartisan-hb-79-offers-promising-start-in-restoring-ohio-utilities-energy-efficiency-programs-editorial.html>

As the Ranking Member of the House Finance Committee, I was also proud to have led our caucus' negotiations to secure **a historic \$6.2 billion State Capital Budget**, including over \$100 million for community projects in Cuyahoga County and millions more for state facilities, public school buildings, and colleges & universities in Northeast Ohio. I am proud to be one of the few members who was able to secure funds for every single community I represent, in addition to several major regional priorities, including:

- \$200M for Cleveland's Lakefront Redevelopment Project
- \$2.4M for Cleveland's West Side Market
- \$2M for the Irishtown Bend Park
- \$2M for Cahoon Park in Bay Village
- \$288k for the BAYarts Cultural Arts Center Expansion
- \$250k for upgrades to the Berea City Hall and Police Station
- \$250k for the Olmsted Township Nature Trail and Bark Park

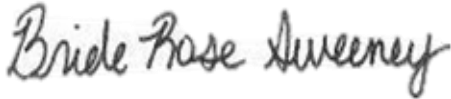
- \$200k for the Olmsted Falls Visibility Project
- \$100,000 for the North Olmsted Old Town Hall Renovation
- \$100,000 for North Olmsted Community Park
- \$50k for the Westlake Clague Park Cabin Renovation

Looking ahead, my top priority will be to continue working to find **real solutions to address Ohio's rising property taxes and provide property tax relief**. I am working with my colleagues on legislation that will offer more affordable solutions for homeowners and provide much-needed relief to working families across our state. We are in the middle of a crisis and the legislature must act to prevent more Ohioans from being taxed out of their homes. While this will not be an easy battle to win, **I will always fight as hard as I can to find real solutions for Ohioans, because that's what Ohioans need and deserve.**

Below you can find more information on my work on property tax relief, local resources that may be helpful as the 2024 reappraisal process continues, and important voter registration information.

It's the greatest honor of my life to represent you, please know that I take that responsibility seriously. At the end of the day, I work for you. If I can ever be of assistance to you, or if you have any questions or concerns on issues related to state government, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office by emailing rep16@ohiohouse.gov or calling (614) 466-3350.

Sincerely,



Bride Rose Sweeney
State Representative
Ohio House District 16

Fighting to Lower Your Property Taxes



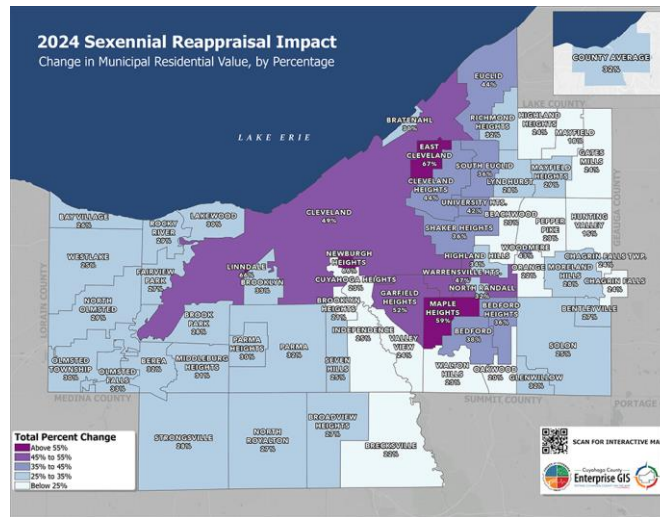
Homeowners across Ohio have seen their property values rise at an unprecedented rate over the past several years. While rising home values might mean a better return on investment for property owners, the corresponding increase in property taxes is hurting Ohio's working families and taxing more and more Ohioans out of their homes. **This is unacceptable and the legislature should be acting with the urgency this issue deserves.**

The reality is Ohio's property taxes are too high. **As your State Representative, I am fighting to lower your property taxes.** Unfortunately, my colleagues in the Majority party have chosen to sit on their hands and do nothing while our seniors and working families struggle to make ends meet. Instead, they have been making the problem worse by cutting taxes for the top 1% and creating more and more loopholes for big corporations and special interests. When they do that, it makes everyone else's taxes go up.

I have introduced and supported legislation that would choose a different path. As an appointed member of the Joint Committee on Property Tax Review and Reform, I have spent hours working with my colleagues to closely study Ohio's unnecessarily complicated tax structure and offer recommendations & propose legislative solutions. We could help keep seniors in their homes by freezing property taxes once people turn 65. We could create an income tax credit for homeowners, often referred to as "circuit breakers," to offset property taxes increases. We could expand the homestead exemption qualifications so that more Ohioans can benefit from the tax relief program. I have cosponsored each one of those proposals and any of them would provide much-needed relief to Ohioans, but all of them have stalled because the people in charge won't act.

At the end of the day, high property taxes are a choice. Instead of creating tax loopholes for big corporations and special interests, we should be focused on creating a fairer, more balanced tax system that doesn't overburden homeowners and everyday Ohioans. **It is possible to lower Ohioans' property taxes without taking resources away from our local schools, parks, and health & human services.** And it's a choice by the current majority to not provide for that. While the road ahead will be long and difficult, I am not going to give up on this fight. This problem is affecting Ohioans across the state and too many working families are being taxed out of their homes for us to continue to do nothing. I look forward to continuing my work on the Property Tax Review and Reform Committee and continuing to work with my colleagues to find common ground and deliver real results for my constituents. In the meantime, I have included some resources below that may be helpful to you as Cuyahoga County's 2024 reappraisal process moves forward.

Cuyahoga County's 2024 Reappraisal Process



As a part of Ohio's property tax system, Cuyahoga County is required to conduct a property reappraisal every six years to determine the valuation of all properties in the County. If you are a homeowner, you should have received a letter with your new property tax valuation. As you may have read or heard on the news, property values saw an average increase of 32% in Cuyahoga County and 49% in the City of Cleveland.

Importantly, an increase in property valuation does not necessarily mean property taxes will increase, many property owners will likely see higher tax bills. However, this does not mean that your tax bill will see a dollar-for-dollar increase based on the new proposed value. You can use the county's Property Tax Bill Estimator Tool online at <https://cuyahogacounty.gov/fiscal-officer/2024-sexennial-reappraisal> to learn more. Tax bills reflecting the newly assessed property valuations will be sent out January 2025.

While the Ohio Constitution and State Legislature create Ohio's tax policy, the county is in charge of the property reappraisal process. If you have any questions regarding your specific property or want to challenge your assessment value, you should inquire directly with the County Fiscal Office at <https://cuyahogacounty.gov/fiscal-officer/2024-sexennial-reappraisal>. Of course, you are always welcome to reach out to my office with your concerns.

Residential property owners who want to contest their valuation may do so this summer by submitting their complaint to the county for their informal review process, which can be accessed online at <https://cuyahogacounty.gov/fiscal-officer/2024-sexennial-reappraisal> or mailed. The deadline to submit is August 30, 2024. Residents will receive a notice of any valuation adjustment November 2024. Residents may also challenge their valuation formally through the Cuyahoga County Board of Revision. More information about the formal review process can be found at <https://cuyahogacounty.gov/bor>.

Cuyahoga County is also hosting a series of community meetings to educate taxpayers about the reappraisal process. There will be several community meetings hosted by the Cuyahoga County Fiscal office throughout the county in the coming weeks:

Wednesday, July 31, 2024
6:00-8:00 PM
Tri-C Western Campus Theater
11000 W. Pleasant Valley Road
Parma, OH 44130

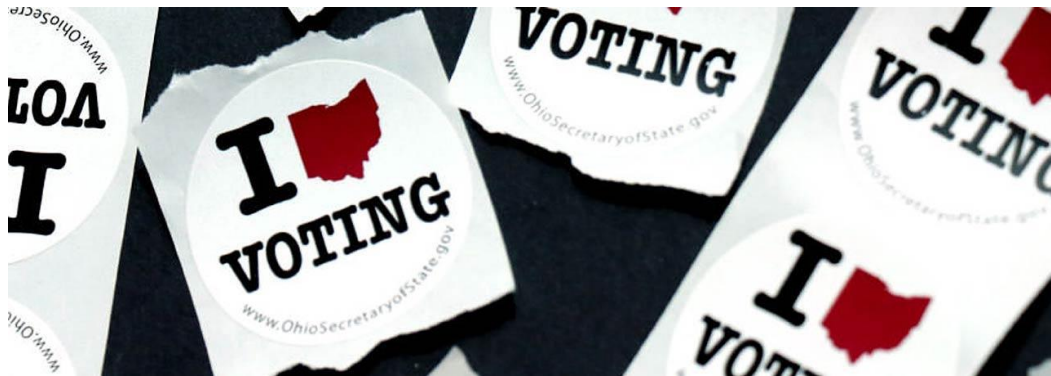
Thursday, August 1, 2024
6:00-8:00 PM
Urban Community School
4909 Lorain Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44102

Ohio Sales Tax Holiday



Ohio's annual Sales Tax Holiday is also quickly approaching. This year, the General Assembly allocated an additional \$700 million to help Ohio's working families cope with rising costs. These additional dollars will allow for extended tax holiday this year for up to 10 days, **starting Tuesday, July 30th**. Ohioans will be able to make tax-free purchases in person or online on eligible items of up to \$500. For more information visit: <https://ohio.gov/residents/resources/sales-tax-holiday>.

Register to Vote



The deadline to register to vote in the upcoming November election this year is **October 7th**. Eligible Ohioans can register online at voteohio.gov or by returning their completed voter registration form to their county Board of Elections in-person or by mail.

As you may have seen on the news, the Ohio Secretary of State recently removed thousands of previously registered voters from Ohio's voter rolls. These purges are often riddled with errors and my office and outside groups have previously found evidence of eligible Ohio voters being incorrectly removed. As a result, even if you think you are already registered, it is more important than ever to check the status of your voter registration and encourage your friends & family to do the same at <https://voterlookup.ohiosos.gov/>.

Our country's future will be determined by those who show up and the stakes have never been higher. We must all come together to make our voices heard and build a better Ohio for all.