



A legislative update from
STATE REP. PAULA HICKS-HUDSON
HOUSE DISTRICT 44

(614) 466-1401 | rep44@ohiohouse.gov



@phh4Toledo
FB.com/PHH44Toledo



From the desk of Rep. Paula Hicks-Hudson

Dear Neighbor,

2021 was a year that saw many struggles for the people of Toledo. My office in Columbus worked with many Toledoans to fulfill my promise to work for you. Last year, more than 1500 citizens engaged with my office, through phone calls, emails, and letters. Some expressed their thoughts on bills. Some had concerns on issues impacting the city of Toledo. And some sought help for interactions with other state agencies.

As you are aware, one of the major issues effecting Ohioans were their struggles with the Administration's broken unemployment system. Many needed help to receive their Pandemic Unemployment Assistance funds that many desperately needed to care for their families through the Covid-19 pandemic. My office alone helped more than three hundred people navigate their issues with Job and Family Services.

In addition to the constituents who reached out to my office, I met with many community members and leaders in over 100 meetings, town halls, and other events to discuss the needs of Toledoans and giving updates on what was happening at the Statehouse. I appreciate everyone that took the time to share with me their concerns and ideas for how we can work to make Toledo and Ohio a safer, more prosperous place in which to live.

I was fortunate to pass one bill out of the House and I have several bills that I hope to introduce during this upcoming year.

Lastly, I promise to work to have more tax dollars returned to Toledo. Funding is important for building projects that improved infrastructure and created jobs. In 2021 we brought more than \$16.6 million back to Toledo.

Sincerely,

Rep. Paula Hicks-Hudson



Remembering Senator Edna Brown

On January 1st, Toledo and Ohio lost a legend in public service with the passing of Senator Edna R. Brown. Edna Brown was a leader who more than talked the talk, she walked the walk for more than twenty-five years in elected office. She was a woman who cared deeply about Toledo and the citizens of Ohio.

Senator Brown worked tirelessly for the City of Toledo for more than thirty years before running for City Council. She worked on Council to improve Toledo for eight years. She was then appointed to assume the seat in the Ohio House of Representatives left vacant when former Representative Jack Ford left to become Mayor of Toledo. For nine years, she represented our city in the House, and for eight years more in the Senate, before retiring from elected office. Senator Brown understood working across the aisle for the benefit of her constituents.

She was a champion for Toledo throughout her life and career, working hard to improve neighborhoods, clean up the city, and make sure that Toledo received its share of funding from the State. She was active within our community; well known and respected throughout Toledo and by her colleagues. While I am deeply saddened by the passing of Edna Brown, her legacy lives on in everything that she did to make Toledo a better place to live, to work, and to raise a family. Her example of public service is one that many have looked to over the years and will continue to serve as a guide for future leaders.



Martin Luther King Jr. Day

On January 17th, we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr, a prominent leader, speaker and activist of the civil rights movement. We honor his legacy, and all that he accomplished in the fight for racial justice.

The fight is not over, as systemic racism is still ongoing in our country today. We must all commit to educating ourselves on racial injustices, fighting for equality and equity amongst all, and uplifting Black and brown voices.



Representative Jeff Crossman and I are introducing two bills that are aimed at fighting corruption within state government and restoring Ohioans' trust in the Legislature. Ohio taxpayers do not want their tax dollars to go into the pockets of companies and individuals that refuse to play by the rules.

The first bill is the Ohio False Claims (Qui Tam) Act, a whistleblower protection statute. This bill is based on federal False Claims law, and offers protections and incentives to individuals that report wrongdoing by companies to the State. Under False Claims (Qui Tam) laws, individuals are able to not only report to the state that wrongdoing has occurred, but are able to sue the offending organization on the State's behalf. We want Ohio to join the other 30 states that have already enacted these laws.



Rep. Hicks-Hudson speaks about Debarment of State Vendors at a press conference

The Ohio False Claims Act will:

1. Set out civil penalties for violators.
2. Allows for a person to bring civil action against the violator(s) on behalf of the State and of that individual.
3. Allows for the State to intervene in civil actions brought by individuals on the State's behalf.
4. Sets out guidelines for awarding proceeds from successful civil actions to the individual bringing that action.
5. Sets out remunerations for employees who are subjected to retribution by their employer for participation in the civil action.

The second piece of legislation in our package is the Debarment of State Vendors bill. This requires the State to debar vendors to the State that have engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activity. Companies that have admitted to, or been convicted of wrongdoing should not be allowed to pay a fine and continue to do business with the State. We intend to send a strong message that if you want to do business in Ohio, it will be fair, transparent, and will not take advantage of the citizens of Ohio.

Our bill will require the State to deny contracts to vendors that have:

1. Attempted to influence a public employee to breach ethical conduct standards or to influence a contract award;
2. Colluded to restrain competition by any means;
3. Been convicted under state or federal antitrust laws;
4. Been convicted under state or federal corruption laws, including a criminal offense related to bribery.

These businesses will not be allowed to benefit off of Ohio taxpayers for a minimum period of one year, up to a maximum period of three years.

This bill will also prevent vendors who have been disbarred by other states or the federal government from doing business with the State of Ohio. We want to prevent companies from knowingly committing fraudulent acts in other states from thinking that they can come to Ohio and continue the same practices.

These two bills make Ohio a fair place to do business, more fiscally responsible to Ohioans, and send a strong message that we will not tolerate corruption in our state.



Representatives Hicks-Hudson and Jeff Crossman at press conference announcing Ohio False Claims Act and Debarment of State Vendors bills