




A legislative update from

STATE REP. MONIQUE SMITH

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Dear Neighbor,

On Wednesday, March 23rd, I had the honor of joining members of both chambers of the 134th Ohio General Assembly to hear the Governor give his State of the State Address. While our perspectives may not always align, I was incredibly proud to be among the leaders representing every corner of Ohio.

My Democratic colleagues and I are focused on investing in working Ohioans and the future of our state. To help working families in Ohio, we passed the American Rescue Plan to re-launch Ohio's economy following the height of the pandemic. In addition, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law allocates more than \$13billion to rebuild roads and bridges, modernize our electric grind, ensure clean drinking water, expand broadband access, and create thousands of new jobs in Ohio.

I am also proud to bring \$1,232,155 in reappropriations money for several recreational and infrastructure projects back to House District 16 through the passage of HB 597. These local projects include the Bay Village Emergency Shelter, the Bay Village Walker Road Retention Basin, the Westlake Clague Park Playground Renovation, and BAYarts.

I would like to thank you, District 16, for sending me to the Statehouse to represent you. Everyday, I am proud to work towards building an Ohio that is stronger and better than before. As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, comments, or concerns at rep16@ohiohouse.gov or (614) 466-0961.

Sincerely,

Representative Monique Smith



Believe in Ohio STEM Innovation and Entrepreneurship Scholarship Opportunity

Each Ohio State Representative and Senate district will award at least one college scholarship worth \$1,000 to future innovators. To view the requirements and apply for this scholarship, visit the following link before April 18, 2022: <https://believeinohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Believe-in-Ohio-Statewide-STEM-Scholarship.pdf>.

New Legislation Spotlight: House Bill 602

This month, Representative Smith introduced **House bill 602** alongside Representative Sharon Ray. This bipartisan bill would require public hospitals to designate at least five percent of their inpatient capacity for persons who seek voluntary admission for mental health purposes. Hospitals may waive this requirement during circumstances such as public health emergencies or mass casualty events.

“We need to ensure hospitals are prepared and able to offer those seeking admission the help they deserve,” Representative Smith said.

The bill also calls for a person admitted into that designated capacity to receive the following, as determined appropriate by the hospital's chief clinical officer:

- (1) Up to 24 hours of stabilization;
- (2) Up to 72 hours for observation, diagnosis, care, or treatment.

The bill now waits for an assignment to a House committee.

Updates on HB 327, the Republican big government censorship bill

Last month, House Republicans on the State and Local Government Committee accepted yet another substitute version of House Bill 327, a bill that seeks to censor discussion topics in public schools and other public settings.

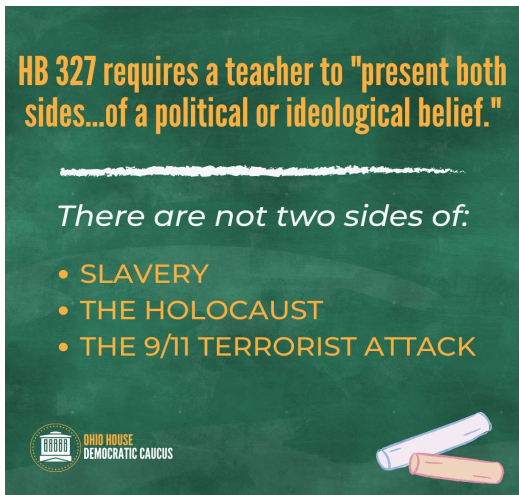
Each version of HB 327 has included a long list of ideas to censor.

The most recent version of the bill includes several alarming new provisions to go with the concerns prior versions raised. These ambiguous measures raise many questions, including:

- When the bill says we can't discuss inherent racism, "whether consciously or unconsciously," does that bar law enforcement agencies from conducting implicit bias trainings?
- When it says failing to "present both sides... of a political or ideological belief" is conduct unbecoming of a teacher, does that mean we can't teach history anymore? How do you teach both sides of slavery? Of the Holocaust? Of 9/11?
- When it says our history "dispels the idea that the United States... is systemically racist," how do we make progress in curtailing racism and its real and ongoing effects? When universities are intentional about making diversity, equity, and

inclusion a priority to enrich the experience of everyone on their campus, do they have to stop?

After stalling for a few months, HB 327 is now expected to move quickly through committee. Make your voice on HB 327 heard by contacting Rep. Scott Wiggam, chair of the State and Local Government committee, by email at rep01@ohiohouse.gov or phone at (614) 466-1474.



Out and About

This month, Representative Smith met with several organizations and leaders including:

- Ohio Fire Chief's Association
- Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation
- North Olmsted School Board
- Fairview Park, Bay Village, North Olmsted, Westlake Senior Centers
- CHN Housing Partners
- Ohio Dental Association
- Fairview Park School Board
- Bay Village City Council
- Northeast Ohio Area wide Coordinating Agency
- ASPIRE Miami
- Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority



Democrats celebrate Women's History Month



March is Women's History Month, a time to celebrate the histories of women in Ohio, America, and all across the world. Ohio Democrats are dedicated to advancing opportunities,

improving access to healthcare, and ensuring that women's voices are heard—for women of every background and identity.

One issue that Ohio House Dems are fighting for is equal pay. Statistics show that it will take another 37 years for women to be paid the same as men in Ohio. By closing the pay gap, more women will go back to work, the poverty rate will reduce by half, and billions of dollars in income will be added to the economy.

My colleague Kent Smith and I are working to close the pay equity gap through our Fair Paycheck Workplace legislation, **House Bill 396**. This would create the fair paycheck work certificate that certifies employers compensated female employees within 5% of compensation given to male employees. These employers can receive a certificate from the Department of Commerce if they meet the criteria.

