

State Representative Sean Patrick Brennan

Ohio House District 14

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March 2025

Proudly serving Parma, Parma Heights, and Cleveland's Old Brooklyn, Brooklyn Centre, Clark-Fulton, & South Hills Neighborhoods!

Dear District 14 Resident:

I want everyone I represent to know that I think about you constantly and work hard everyday to seek policies to make your life better so that you can be proud to call yourself an Ohioan. Not a day goes by that I do not clock many hours in your service. In fact, a fourth grader at Pleasant Valley Elementary School recently asked me if I was “married to my job.” Although I am not, as I have been happily married to Deena, the love of my life for over thirty years, I do dedicate a lot of my life to my constituents whom I care about very much. Below is a rundown of some of my recent committee work on your behalf at the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus.

In the House Energy Committee I am honored to be a voice for Ohio’s consumers who are paying tens of millions of dollars in hidden charges every year on their utility bills. If you were to watch me, and you can on the Ohio Channel, I think you would be very happy with my questioning style, which is professional, yet pointed and pro-consumer. In fact, I am fighting to end a hidden charge on your electric bill that has cost Ohioans nearly \$500 million! I am also sponsoring a bill that would require utilities to reveal all of the hidden charges on your bill, so that you know exactly what you are paying for.

On the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review, I am also seeking pro-consumer policies. When a law is passed, the state agency or department empowered with enforcing the new law has to write rules for enforcement of that law. Our committee ensures that the rules meet the spirit of the law passed by the Ohio General Assembly. One that I am currently reviewing is a rule that may lead to fewer Medicaid benefits to some very needy and sickly Ohioans. I will continue to review this rule and meet with stakeholders to ensure that it does not negatively impact any Ohioan who depends on these important benefits. Incidentally, did you know that about one in three Ohioans receives Medicaid benefits?

As always, if my office may ever be of service, we welcome your call or email. I also invite you to visit my website to learn more about how I am serving you and to sign up for this monthly newsletter, which I write myself. You can also read all of my past newsletters going back to January, 2023. Please help by sharing it with others. Best wishes for the luck ‘o the Irish during the month of March!

Sincerely,

Sean Patrick Brennan

State Representative, District 14

77 South High Street

Columbus, Ohio 43215

ohiohouse.gov/members/sean-p-brennan

Congratulations to Parma Heights Police Chief Tanya Czack who dedicated her life to ensuring the safety of the community she served. Although we will miss her, I find solace knowing that she leaves behind a department that is well positioned to maintain one of the safest cities in Ohio.



State Representative Sean Patrick Brennan's Fight for Property Tax Relief Continues

Like many of you, my wife and I recently received our Cuyahoga County property tax bill and were disappointed by the dramatic increase. Please know that since joining the Ohio General Assembly, I have been very vocal about providing property tax relief. In fact, I co-sponsored multiple bills that would have achieved this goal. However, the most significant ones did not gain enough support from my colleagues in the Ohio House and Senate and died at the end of 2024. Unfortunately, most of my fellow legislators supported a state income tax cut, which primarily helped very high income individuals.



Now that we are beginning a new session, I am continuing my talks with my colleagues and reminding them that time is of the essence. Further, *I recently joined Rep. Adam Mathews (R-Loveland) on a bill that will create a new and enhanced homestead exemption of double the basic amount for eligible Ohioans who have lived in their homes for at least twenty years and meet the requirements for the current homestead exemption.* This legislation would quickly bring relief to Ohioans at risk of losing their lifetime homes to property taxes.

I know from our talks that many of you meet this threshold and live in your intended final home. Although property taxes affect all homeowners, they present an especially difficult burden for those who never intend to sell their home, as they will never realize any additional home value upon sale, yet must pay the rising tax cost.

High property taxes are the result of both the choices that the Legislature has made and the ones it has failed to make. Ohioans vote on levies more often than any other state in the country, yet other states boast stronger property tax relief programs. In the last decade alone, Ohio lawmakers have eliminated the 12.5% rollback that used to lower all levies, allowed the homestead exemption to be eroded by inflation, and cut local government funding in half. When the state decides to pay less, it results in our communities either paying more or having to cut services. It is time for the state to pay its fair share of property tax relief instead of continuing to expand local levy reliance.

The state should fund additional, income-based property tax relief that is targeted to seniors and working people and I want you to know that I stand firmly committed to working with my Democratic and Republican colleagues at the Statehouse to provide property tax relief to all homeowners and renters in Ohio.



Cuyahoga County Taxpayer Assistance Program

A new program will pay up to \$10,000 in delinquent property taxes for seniors to help them avoid foreclosure. The program then pairs homeowners with a financial counselor to either prevent them from falling behind again or help them plan for more stable housing. To qualify, residents must be 70 or older and with a household income of less than \$70,000 a year, be actively delinquent on their property, and be in their home for at least three years and commit to remaining there three years after. The limited funds will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. To apply, visit chnhousingpartners.org/taxpayer-assistance or call 216-443-7400.

State Representative Sean Patrick Brennan's WEP/GPO UPDATE

COLUMBUS – In his quest to keep Ohioans affected by the recent elimination of the federal Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) informed, State Representative Sean Patrick Brennan (Parma) provides periodic updates on the implementation of the Federal Social Security Fairness Act.

Passed on January 5, 2025, the Federal Social Security Fairness Act eliminated the, so called, Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO), allowing public employees who paid into state sponsored retirement systems, such as the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) and State Teachers Retirement System (STRS), and their spouses to receive their full social security benefits.

According to the Social Security Administration (SSA), **“Starting February 25, 2025: SSA is beginning to pay retroactive benefits and will increase monthly benefit payments to people whose benefits have been affected by the WEP and GPO.** If a beneficiary is due retroactive benefits as a result of the Act, they will receive a one-time retroactive payment, deposited into the bank account SSA has on file, by the end of March. This retroactive payment will cover the increase in their benefit amount back to January 2024, the month when WEP and GPO no longer apply. Most affected beneficiaries will begin receiving their new monthly benefit amount in April 2025.”

“I have always referred to the WEP and GPO as the *public service penalties*,” said Rep. Brennan, who serves as the Ranking Member on the Ohio House of Representatives Public Insurance and Pensions Committee. “This was long overdue and I am pleased that our dedicated public servants and their spouses will finally get the benefits they worked hard for and deserve. I am happy to hear that the benefits are supposed to start flowing soon, as folks need them more than ever,” Rep. Brennan added.

Rep. Brennan co-sponsored Ohio House Concurrent Resolution 6 calling on Congress to repeal the WEP and GPO to give public servants that paid into Social Security and their spouses their full benefits upon retirement. The Resolution passed in early 2024 and was subsequently sent to Ohio’s Congressional delegation.

The WEP and GPO were unfairly enacted over four decades ago as modified benefits programs for employees who received a pension for their public service, even though they had attained their Social Security credits. Under the WEP, public employees could have their Social Security earning potentially lowered by up to 50% due to also earning a public pension. Under GPO spouses or surviving spouses saw a reduction or elimination of benefits. There are currently more than 1.7 million people in Ohio’s public retirement systems who are affected by WEP and approximately 450,000 beneficiaries.

To find out more about the Federal Social Security Fairness Act visit www.ssa.gov or call the Social Security Administration with questions Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 6:00 pm at 800-772-1213.



THE OHIO LEGISLATURE
136TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

House Concurrent Resolution 6

Summary Documents Status Votes

Committee Activity

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Urge Congress to repeal Windfall Elimination



State Representative Sean Patrick Brennan

Out and About



1- I enjoyed meeting with the Parma City Schools Upward Bound students at the Statehouse recently. 2- As a former teacher, I very much enjoy visiting classrooms, like when I visited Thoreau Park Elementary School recently to read The Giving Tree to the first graders. 3- It was a pleasure meeting Parma resident Sydney Busa who recently opened the Grocery Outlet on Broadview Road near Snow Road. 4- Ever since serving on Parma City Council I have enjoyed speaking to the students who visit Parma City Hall each month. Recently, I stopped by to speak about state government to the fourth graders from Pleasant Valley Elementary. 5- Quarterly Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb invites local members of the Ohio House and Senate to Cleveland City Hall to talk. Recently, my colleagues and I visited to speak about the Browns, state funding to our cities, community safety, economic development, lakefront development, and a multitude of other issues. 6- Now that I represent Old Brooklyn, I recently stopped by the Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation to talk about how we can work together for the good of the neighborhood. 7- I often meet with the folks at the Ohio Department of Transportation about plans for improving our roadways and bridges in the region. It was quite a learning opportunity to ride along with one of the very talented plow drivers on one of our recent dumping of snow. Experiences like this make me a better legislator.