

State Representative Richard Dell'Aquila

Ohio House District 15

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Committees:

- *Financial Institutions (Ranking Member)*
- *Aviation and Aerospace*
- *Commerce and Labor*
- *Economic and Workforce Development*
- *Ways and Means*
- *9-1-1 Steering Committee*

Dear Neighbors,

I again hope that you and your families are doing well as we approach the halfway mark of 2024. There are several key updates I will share with you in this month's newsletter, including urgent changes that are happening in Columbus.

First, you may be aware that in late May, Governor DeWine called for a special session to be held to resolve the issue under Ohio law that prevents presidential candidates from being certified to appear the state ballot this November. To be clear, this issue has arisen in previous presidential election years, but now political disagreements over unrelated matters such as the funding for citizens' ballot initiatives are getting in the way of ensuring that all Ohioans have the opportunity to vote for the presidential candidate of their choosing. I will detail further what is at stake, and how this relates to the citizen-led ballot initiatives that were passed overwhelmingly in 2023.

Second, I was recently honored to provide Sponsor Testimony on HB 405 in the House Ways & Means Committee, proposing to allocate funds to assist caregivers and both aging and disabled Ohioans to receive the quality of care that they deserve and reside at home instead of an outside facility.

I have additionally included in the following pages information on a few local resources for you and your families as we approach the Summer months of 2024. I hope you enjoy and find this newsletter informative. As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office if I can ever be of assistance to you and your family.

Sincerely,

Richard Dell'Aquila

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Legislative Updates

Special Session/Presidential Ballot Issue in Ohio

On May 30th, the Ohio House met in a special session to consider **HB 1**, an emergency proposal to expand campaign finance law regarding foreign contributions related to citizen-led ballot initiatives and to transfer investigation and enforcement authority from the Ohio Elections Commission to the Ohio Attorney General. Unfortunately, this poorly drafted bill will have a chilling effect on future citizen-led ballot initiatives.



The nature of the emergency for the special session meeting was not explained, nor was the justification for circumventing the normal committee process, including hastened proponent and opponent public testimony, and simply rush it to the floor for a vote, where it was passed along party lines. To be clear, no one wants, nor should we tolerate, foreign money or foreign influence in our

elections. However, this concern could have been resolved by simply codifying existing federal law into state law.

Our founders clearly set out the right in the Ohio Constitution for citizens to propose ballot initiatives. Making citizen-led ballot initiatives more difficult for Ohioans to use their constitutional privilege will unfairly restrict citizens' opportunities to check the power of their state government—similar to what we saw with the several ballot initiative issues in 2023 that passed by overwhelming majorities.

Currently, campaign finance complaints are investigated by the Ohio Elections Commission, staffed by independent, bipartisan, professionals in this area of the law. The OEC conducts investigations and makes referrals to the Attorney General for further action. If you have been following the trial of former President Trump in New York, you know how complicated campaign finance laws are.

With **HB 1**, any campaign finance complaint or allegation (baseless or otherwise) will now go directly to the Attorney General for mandatory investigation, without any prior investigation by the OEC staff of professionals. Instead of drafting a clean bill in or simply incorporating existing federal law into state law, the vague and overly broad provisions of **HB 1** will make it further difficult for Ohioans to voice their constitutional right through ballot initiatives. The failure to even address the “dark money” problems which were a major factor in the recent [HB 6 corruption debacle](#) leaves a gaping hole in the law.

We also considered **HB 2** on an emergency vote, which will delay the deadline (from 90 days to 60 days) for a major political party to certify its presidential and vice presidential candidates in the coming November election. That deadline would have expired prior to the convening of the Democratic Party convention in Chicago, thereby preventing their nominees from appearing on the ballot this November.

An amendment to make this change permanent and eliminate the same problem in future presidential election years—offered by Rep. Mike Skindell (D-Lakewood)—was voted down, also along party lines. This has been a recurring problem dating back to previous presidential elections, where both Republican and Democratic presidential nominees



failed to meet Ohio's deadline for certification to appear on the state ballot. **In each previous iteration**, the legislature passed exceptions to this rule, but failed to create a permanent solution for the problem.

Legislative Updates (continued)

HB 405/Caregiver Tax Credit

In May, I was honored to have the opportunity to provide Sponsor Testimony before the House Ways & Means Committee, regarding my bill to offer more financial assistance to families that expend time, savings, and their own wellbeing to care for their elderly or disabled loved ones. [Click here](#) to watch my testimony (near the end of Committee) and for more information on [HB 405](#).



I am so proud to propose this piece of bi-partisan legislation, and hope that the committee will continue to advance it through the House. I anticipate having proponent testimony on [HB 405](#), possibly as soon as mid-June. **If you would be interested in sharing your caregiver experience or providing proponent testimony on this bill, please reach out to my office.** [Click here](#) to see the written version of the testimony I provided to the committee members.

Pending Legislation—Now that we are roughly six months out from the end of the 135th General Assembly, I wanted to provide an overview of a few of the pending bills I have been working on:

- **HB 134**—Introduced jointly with former Rep. Tavia Galonski, the first bill I had introduced would require advance notice to mortgage lienholders on tax delinquent properties before tax certificates are sold, giving property owners more time to work with their county treasurer's office to resolve any delinquencies. Many smaller community banks explained to me that if they had advance prior notice of these foreclosure sales, they could work with their borrowers to assist them in saving their homes from the auction block, thereby cutting costs to all stakeholders involved and helping Ohio homeowners to remain in their homes.



- **HB 204**—I jointly-sponsored legislation with Rep. Dani Isaacsohn (D-Cincinnati) to designate the month of April as "[Arab American Heritage Month](#)" in celebration of our Arab American communities and friends, making such recognition permanent in the Ohio Revised Code. We have so far not received a hearing on HB 204.
- **HB 274**— In another jointly sponsored bill, this one with Rep. Adam Matthews (R-Lebanon) we proposed a bipartisan solution to expand Ohio's Homestead Exemption, primarily through increasing the property tax exemption to assist long-term homeowners and disabled veterans. This important bill is awaiting passage out of the Ways & Means Committee.
- **HB 297**— With the historic house featured in the classic Christmas movie being located in District 15, I introduced legislation to codify November 18th as "A Christmas Story Family Day" to give state recognition to the movie's popularity and influence in our community and even world-wide.

Legislative Updates (continued)

- **HB 346**—After learning of serious concerns from law enforcement, I introduced HB 346 to prohibit the manufacture or 3-D printing of auto sears—small devices capable of illegally modifying semi-automatic weapons into fully automatic, illegal, machine guns. Capable of discharging 30 rounds in two seconds according to ATF, these dangerous devices are being seized ever more frequently in firearms related arrests. Having consulted with law enforcement and spoken with many gun owners and others, this clearly is not a Second Amendment issue, since machine guns are already prohibited by law without a special license. While I have not yet received a hearing on this bill, I hope the legislature moves quickly to address this epidemic.



- **HB 489**—Together with Rep. Elgin Rogers, (D-Toledo) [we introduced legislation](#) to protect consumer data by prohibiting digital parking fee services from selling personal data obtained through credit or debit card parking fees or other digital forms of payment. Our bill would prevent these firms from monetizing parking meter information by requiring the purging of all such digital information once the parking fee has been paid.

- **HB 530**—After hearing local business and restaurantur concerns, I [introduced legislation with Rep. Adam Mathews](#) (R-Lebanon) to modify existing law to expand the opportunities for “cigar bars” and permitting cigar use in such establishments. This will permit businesses to offer venues for cigar smoking by adjusting the restrictive revenue percentage requirements currently in place.
- **Hb 541**—[I partnered with Rep. Lauren McNally](#) (D-Youngstown) on legislation to strengthen the prevention of child labor law violations, and to hold employers more accountable for their well-being. We are awaiting our first hearing in the Commerce and Labor Committee.
- **HB 593**—Moreover, [I reintroduced bipartisan legislation](#), now jointly sponsored in this version by Rep. Josh Williams (R-Sylvania), to address the child enticement issues that our communities around the state have experienced in that courts have been obligated to dismiss certain criminal cases under the existing statute (O.R.C. §2905.05(A)). The issue is that the Ohio Supreme Court declared several years ago that the current statute is unconstitutionally overbroad since, as written, it would also prohibit certain otherwise legal and activities. Since then, there have been no legislative fixes to protect our communities.

Legislative Updates (continued)

Committee Activity—Additionally, I want to share and provide a quick overview of some of the committee work that I am working on in the various committees to which I belong:

Financial Institutions

As Ranking Member of the Financial Institutions Committee, I am considering several controversial bills introduced, including legislation to increase interest rates and provide attorney fees to lenders ([HB 182](#)) seeking to enforce collection actions on delinquent accounts. This committee is also considering measures to prohibit “ESG” (Environmental, Societal and Governmental) restrictions on public pension plan fiduciaries when making investment decisions on behalf of their retirees. There is also legislation proposed to regulate digital assets and cryptocurrencies ([HB 406](#)), somewhat analogous to the also controversial concept of “CBDC,” (Commercial Bank Digital Currency), at the federal level.



Aviation and Aerospace

In this new committee, among several matters of first impression, we are working on legislation to establish requirements in the Ohio Revised Code to regulate the use of aerial vehicles such as drones as a means of surveillance ([HB 149](#)) and related search warrant issues, as well as aligning state and federal law with airspace obstructions and permit guidelines ([HB 185](#)).

Commerce and Labor

A variety of bills have passed through Commerce and Labor, unfortunately, some of which may be harmful to our fellow Ohioans under the claimed justification of necessary measures to enhance our workforce. For example, [SB 30](#) was passed out of committee last year to allow children to work later hours during the school year, despite objections raised by opponents and potential conflicts with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. This, together with other labor rollbacks, is why I have worked with Rep. McNally on [HB 541](#), discussed above.



Thankfully, there are also notable bills, such as [HB 115](#), that would create positive changes in support of our state’s workforce, and also address the gender pay gap that persists.



Legislative Updates (continued)

Economic and Workforce Development

Similarly, we have seen several bills in this committee that enhance the state's ability to expand economic activity, such as [HB 3](#), which would authorize a state tax credit for affordable or workforce housing in the state. The state transportation budget, HB 23, included a provision that would facilitate the construction of an I-71 interchange at Boston Road (on the Cuyahoga and Medina County boundary) that would substantially affect residents in that area, as well as a portion of District 15 to include the city of North Royalton. Many local residents testified before this committee to express their opposition to that interchange and their support for [HB 276](#), which would eliminate the construction of that proposed interchange.

Ways and Means

This is one of the House's busiest committees, with substantial responsibility for tax policy, and where we have worked on many bills through the hearing process to reduce the rising property tax burdens that many Ohioans are facing as a consequence of increasing valuations. We have seen a fair number of Homestead Exemption bills (including my own HB 274) that tackle homeownership affordability from a variety of angles. From [authorizing a tax credit for landlords who allow their tenants to have companion animals](#), to [modifying the homestead exemption valuation for disabled veterans](#), we have been looking at helping Ohioans from a comprehensive point of view.



9-1-1 Steering Committee

As one of the only two House members on this committee, we are working on the design, implementation and funding of Ohio's next generation of 9-1-1 emergency call system and facilities. The goal is to update current technology, advance cohesion between all departments, and reduce emergency response times for Ohio's first responders.





Around the District

Step Forward Offering Utility Payment Plan Assistance + Summer Cooling Program. The PIPP Plus Program helps eligible households maintain gas and electric services throughout the year by paying a percentage of their household income. Beginning July 1, the Summer Cooling Program is also available to eligible Cuyahoga County residents. For more information or to apply for these energy assistance programs, [visit their website](#). For any other questions, call 216-350-8008.



SEVEN HILLS—The city's annual Baseball Opening Day is Saturday, June 1st, at 11:00am at Calvin Park! [Click here](#) for more information.

OLD BROOKLYN—The Better Streets Committee will hold their monthly meeting to discuss changes and solutions for safer biking in our communities! [Click here](#) for more information and to get an RSVP link.



NORTH ROYALTON—On June 7th, the city will hold the George Modock Jr. Fishing Derby. George—an avid fisherman and family man who enjoyed sharing his hobby—will be honored. Registration begins at 9:00am, but [click here](#) for more information.

BRECKSVILLE—BROADVIEW HEIGHTS—BBH's second-annual Pride Fest city event will be held Saturday, June 8th, at the Broadview Heights City Campus & Amphitheater. To learn more or to register, [click here](#).

BBH  Brecksville-Broadview Heights
PRIDE
A Community Where You Can BEE Yourself!