



Dear Neighbor,

Happy April! For the past several months, I have been busy working on House Bill 96, the Biennial State Operating Budget. My priority has been working hard to guarantee that Ohioans are supported and can thrive here in Ohio. I am committed to putting people first. When we put People First, we are putting Ohioans at the center of every decision. We are focusing on the issues that matter most: better pay, better healthcare, fairer taxes, safer communities, affordable housing, real opportunities, and a secure economic future. Though the budget that was passed by the House falls short of these goals, I will continue fighting for a state government that better serves you.

April is National Minority Health Month, a time to focus on the health disparities in minority communities across the state and country. Latina and Black women are more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer at a later stage than white women. In addition, infant mortality rates among Black Americans and Native groups are higher than other racial or ethnic groups in the United States. Improving healthcare in minority communities is one of the most important issues facing our state. I will continue to support quality, equitable healthcare so that everyone, no matter their zip code, can thrive here in Ohio.

Also in April, taxes are due by April 15th! Make sure you file your taxes and take advantage of any returns you may be offered. If you cannot file your taxes by April 15th, make sure to request an extension which will give you until October 15th to file your tax return.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, comments, or concerns.

Sincerely,



Beryl Brown Piccolantonio  
State Representative  
Ohio House District 4

To unsubscribe please email [repo4@ohiohouse.gov](mailto:repo4@ohiohouse.gov)

### District 4 Office Hours

Please join me for my next District 4 Office Hours

#### April Office Hour

Saturday, April 19

10:00 a.m.-11:00 p.m.

Westerville Library, Pink Study Room

126 S State St, Westerville, OH 43081

**Please note the updated time from when this date was first announced.**

Please contact my office if you would like to schedule a one-on-one meeting, or if you would like to meet at a different time or location that is more convenient for you.

### Budget Update

I voted “NO” on the state operating budget, **House Bill (HB) 96**, because it arbitrarily and recklessly slashes critical state funding areas while failing to benefit everyday Ohioans. Rather than provide real and meaningful support to Ohio’s citizens, the House Majority chose to [dismantle the constitutional and bipartisan fair school funding formula](#), [dump more taxpayer money into vouchers for charter non-public and private schools that benefit the wealthiest Ohioans](#), and [authorize a \\$600M handout to billionaires](#) to build a new Browns stadium outside of Cleveland amidst opposition by local leaders.

One of the clearest funding directives in the Ohio Constitution and among my highest responsibilities and priorities as a state legislator is to uphold Ohio’s constitutional obligation to provide a quality education to all our students. A lack of investment from the state means that school districts will have to request even more from their local communities at a time when they can least afford it. When that system is under strain, we risk our ability to provide opportunity and therefore risk our future.

In the 1990s when the Court found Ohio’s system of funding public education to be unconstitutional based on a lack of investment from the state, the average state share was 40%. Now, nearly 30 years later, this budget takes that average state share backward and destroys the first real progress we’ve had toward a constitutional funding model. It is unconscionable that we are not continuing to move forward with implementation of the Fair School Funding Plan this budget cycle.

This abandonment of the Fair School Funding Plan in combination with other provisions in this budget that reflect zero understanding of how school levy cycles work will actually increase the local property tax burden at a time when Ohioans are screaming for real property tax relief. Ohio already has school levies on the ballot more often than any other state in our nation.

This budget is a missed opportunity to provide real solutions for our constituents and our communities. Budgets are policy documents that reflect our values. I could not support the budget because it does not reflect my values or the values of our district.

This budget is fiscally irresponsible and will cost Ohioans more while failing to meet our most pressing needs. HB 96 cuts key investments from what Governor Mike DeWine proposed in [childcare](#), [public schools](#), [Medicaid](#), [public libraries](#), [affordable housing](#), [clean drinking water](#), [pediatric cancer research](#), [lead abatement](#)

[funding](#), [food assistance](#), and [programs that save the lives of mothers and their babies](#). It also fails to [provide real property tax relief](#); makes future school levies more likely; launches [more attacks against the LGBTQ+ community](#), minority-owned businesses, and the collective bargaining rights of workers; and ignores the will of voters by reducing the amount of marijuana sales tax revenue returned to local host communities.

Some of the most damaging provisions found in **HB 96** include:

**Foregoing Fair School Funding:** Dismantling the bipartisan, constitutional, school fair school funding formula that was created by education experts and passed by this legislature to fund our children's public school education. Around 90% of Ohio's school age children attend their local public school.

**Forcing Schools to Put More Property Tax Levies on the Ballot:** Inexplicably limiting public school districts from carrying over more than 30% of reserve funds from the previous fiscal year in their operating budget, an arbitrary and unvetted cap, and stripping funds from the district if reserves exceed the cap. This will force local districts to recklessly spend down cash reserves or lose the funding, which will result in public districts needing to rely more heavily on local levies more often at a time when Ohio is the most levied state in the nation.

**More Giveaways for School Vouchers:** Accelerating the shifting of taxpayer dollars for vouchers and expansion to entirely unaccountable non-public, non-chartered schools in the amount of \$2.4 billion over the biennium, which will continue to benefit the wealthiest Ohioans. This amounts to a 16.5% increase over current state voucher program funding. This will not result in greater school choice—it will only result in more taxpayer dollars being dumped into unaccountable systems—as parents only have real choice when all schools eligible for public funds are held to the same standards.

**No Real Property Tax Relief:** Failing to provide real property tax relief for the thousands of Ohioans who have reached out to their lawmakers asking them to act. Instead, this budget includes a fake and unvetted scheme that will actually raise Ohioans property tax bills and punish public schools for responsible financial planning, forcing more levies at a time when homeowners' tax bills are already too high.

**Fewer Childcare Slots to Support Working Ohioans:** Slashes the Governor's proposed expansion of childcare eligibility to Ohio's hardest working families, which means more families and children will leave the state and many that stay will not be able to enter the workforce due to childcare needs. The governor proposed addressing the childcare crisis that Ohio families are facing by increasing access to childcare for 30,000 kids, helping tens of thousands of parents pursue better jobs and stabilize their families, and this House budget contains funding for 20,000 fewer children. The Ohio Chamber of Commerce estimates that more than \$5 billion in economic growth is being lost each year due to Ohio's lack of adequate childcare.

**Risking Medicaid Expansion for nearly 800k Ohioans:** Makes it easier to kick 770,000 Ohioans off Medicaid by implementing a mandatory trigger to withdraw from the Medicaid expansion if there is even a \$1 decrease in federal share reimbursement to the program. This cruel and unnecessary trigger as a method to kick off hundreds of thousands of Ohioans from healthcare coverage. If the trigger occurs, many hospitals will be at risk for immediate closure, especially in rural communities, because Medicaid expansion covers a large portion of patients served. Ohioans will be less likely to seek preventative care without insurance coverage, ultimately increasing emergency room visits and uncompensated care costs to our healthcare system overall. This affects all of us.

**Cuts to Public Libraries:** Reduces public library funding from what libraries currently receive in State funding by \$40M in FY '26 when compared to projected FY '25. The budget cuts also amount to a nearly \$100 million funding cut compared to the Governor's proposal and eliminates the Public Library Fund, which has funded Ohio's libraries for nearly one-hundred years. Instead there is a line-item block amount, eliminating future predictable funding for Ohio's local public library systems.

**Rolls Back Will of the Voters on Marijuana Funding:** Voters overwhelmingly passed Issue 2 to allocate substantial tax revenue from cannabis sales to the local host communities. The budget cuts that funding by 44% and ends it after 5 years, sending the remainder of the money to the state budget to subsidize private school vouchers.

**Making Our State Hostile for LGBTQ+ Ohioans:** Makes Ohio more hostile to LGBTQ+ individuals by legislating state health policy regarding gender identity, vaguely and ignorantly requiring public libraries to hide books that, “relate to sexual orientation or gender identity,” and prohibiting the distribution of funding for youth homeless centers that support or affirm trans identities. We know that a significant portion of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+, and codifying these kinds of heartless policies in our budget is unnecessary and harmful to children in Ohio.

**Limits Minority-Owned Businesses Access to State Contracts:** Eliminates certain filing requirements that support the state’s affirmative action contracting provisions for state contracts which could render useless the state-sponsored programs that help more minority-owned businesses to secure state contracts.

**Cuts to Clean Water Programs:** Cuts \$120 million (nearly 45% of funding) from H2Ohio which is a successful program to clean up our waterways, address algal blooms and protect our drinking water. H2Ohio also supports local communities to make critical water infrastructure upgrades to protect against lead and PFAS contamination. Recent polling shows that 75% of Ohioans support programs funded by H2Ohio, yet this budget cuts programs that protect the health and wellbeing of our people and our water sources.

**Attacks on Collective Bargaining and Organized Labor:** Attacks unions and collective bargaining by prohibiting workers from negotiating about their working location assignments both in an education setting and as a state employee—even when that working assignment has nothing to do with working from home—which is a key component of an employees’ working conditions. Conversations around work reporting locations are critical so that employees can effectively perform their job duties without wasted time and costs, better serving the people of Ohio and the students in our schools.

**Putting the State’s Credit on the Line for \$600M to Billionaire Browns’ Owners but Doing Nothing for Food Banks:** The budget still includes the state fronting \$600 million to secure bonds to build a new Cleveland Browns stadium in a suburb of Cleveland, which would move the stadium from its downtown location, which is opposed by local leaders.

**HB 96** passed the **Ohio House of Representatives** by a vote of 60-39. It now heads to the **Ohio Senate** for further consideration.

### **National Minority Health Month**

National Minority Health Month is observed in April and focuses on the health disparities minority communities experience in the United States. Black men are more likely to die from cancer than Caucasian men and Black women are more likely to die from breast cancer than white women. We must provide more linguistically and culturally appropriate health education as well as remove barriers to receiving healthcare. I will continue to support quality, equitable healthcare so that everyone can succeed.

### **ODWLC Celebrates Women’s History Month**

Last month, the Ohio Democratic Women’s Legislative Caucus hosted the Women’s’ History Month Legislative News Conference, where members highlighted legislative priorities we are fighting for that empower and support women and families across Ohio:

- [HB 128: Reproductive Care Act](#) (Somani, Tims)
- Ohio Equal Pay Act (Brent, Lawson-Rowe)
- [HB 141: Prescribed Pediatric Extended Care Act](#) (Baker)
- [HB 136: Anti-discrimination bill](#) (Rader, Lett)



## Recent Events

*ODWLC's Leading Ladies of the Legislature Listening Tour in Dublin*



*ODWLC's Leading Ladies of the Legislature Listening Tour in Akron*



*Conversation with Otterbein University Student Government leaders*



*OSU Newark*



*Ohio PTA*



*Westerville City Schools*



*Ohio School Board Association Statehouse Day*



*Visit from Westerville City Council and OEA Members*



*Visit from advocates with Susan G. Komen*



*Optometry Advocacy Day*



*Meeting with students from Miami University*



*Ohio Realtors Statehouse Day*





*Meeting with OSU Undergraduate Student Government Representatives*



*Planned Parenthood Advocacy Day*



*Meeting with ServeOhio*



*Project Medical Education at OSU*





### *PACE Tour*



### **April 2025 Dates of Note**

#### **Sexual Assault Awareness Month**

Every 68 seconds an American is sexually assaulted. April is designated Sexual Assault Awareness Month and is meant to raise awareness regarding the prevalence of sexual assault, educating people on how to minimize the risk of sexual assault as well as how to help survivors. If you or someone you know has been a victim of sexual assault, you can call 800-656-4673 to be connected to a local sexual assault service provider. More information here: <https://www.rainn.org/get-help>

#### **National Arab American Heritage Month**

April is National Arab American Heritage Month! This month celebrates Arab American culture and achievements which have made Ohio, and America, a better place for all. Ohio is proud to have the country's eighth-largest Arab American population. I am dedicated to ensuring Arab Americans in Ohio are welcomed and supported, so we can all thrive.

#### **National Distracted Driving Awareness Month**

Did you know that in 2022, distracted driving killed 3,308 people? National Distracted Driving Awareness Month is a good time to regroup and take responsibility for the choices we make when we're on the road. Cell phone use – specifically, texting, talking, and social media use – has become the most common distraction. Just because you can, doesn't mean you should!

#### **World Autism Day – April 2**

April 2<sup>nd</sup> was World Autism Day, and it kicks off Autism Awareness Month. This UN recognized holiday highlights the need to help improve the quality of life of those with autism so they can lead full and meaningful lives as an integral part of society. I am committed to fighting for quality and affordable healthcare for all Ohioans, including those with developmental disabilities like Autism.

#### **World Health Day – April 7**

At least 4.5B people were not fully covered by essential health services in 2021. World Health Day aims to call for the rights of everyone-no matter who you are-to have access to quality health services, education, and information. Everyone deserves the right to safe drinking water, clean air, good nutrition, quality housing, decent working conditions, and freedom from discrimination.

#### **Passover – Begins evening of April 12**

Chag Pesach Sameach!

#### **Tax Day – April 15**

Taxes are due by April 15th this year! Make sure you file your taxes and take advantage of any returns you may be offered. If you cannot file your taxes by April 15th, make sure to request an extension which will give you until October 15th to file your tax return.

**Easter – April 20**

I want to wish you a happy Easter!

**Earth Day – April 22**

April 22nd is Earth Day, a celebration of all the Earth offers us and a time to reflect on how we can protect our planet. We only have one Earth, and we must do all we can to protect and care for it. Climate change is one of the biggest issues we face as a planet. I will always stand up for sustainable and environmentally friendly policies that create clean, renewable and affordable energy that can power our cities and heat our homes.

**Workers Memorial Day – April 28**

April 28 commemorates the day when the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act was enacted. This landmark legislation greatly improved Ohioans safety in the workplace. Workers Memorial Day remembers workers who have been killed, injured, or made sick on the job. Ohio's workers keep our state competitive and are the reason Ohio is an economic leader in America. I am committed to fighting for workers' rights to ensure we all have safe workplaces, proper training and fair pay.

**National Library Week – April 6 to 12**

Knowledge is power! National Library Week is a time to celebrate our nation's libraries, library workers' contributions and promote library use and support. No matter who you are or where you come from—the library provides an inclusive and supportive community where everyone belongs. This year's theme is #DrawnToTheLibrary which celebrates the diverse ways people utilize libraries.

**National Public Health Week – April 7 to 13**

During the first full week of April each year, National Public Health Week is a time to recognize the contributions of public health and highlight issues that are important to improving our nation. All Ohioans deserve access to an environment free from pollution, safe drinking water and food, and fostering relationships in our communities-no matter who you are.

**Black Maternal Health Week – April 11 to 17**

The week of April 11-17 is Black Maternal Health Week. Black mothers are 3x more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications compared to white women. We must address this injustice by removing barriers many Black mothers face to receiving quality healthcare.

**Ohio Child Care Worker Appreciation Week – April 13 to 19**

Childcare workers are some of our most essential workers, caring and nurturing our children through compassion, patience, and kindness. This year's Child Care Worker Appreciation Week honors and remembers the childcare workers who were killed in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995.