



A legislative update from
STATE REP. MEREDITH R. LAWSON-ROWE
HOUSE DISTRICT 5



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 @OHHouseDems

 @staterepmeredithlawson-rowe



From the desk of Rep. Lawson-Rowe

Dear Neighbor,

The 136th General Assembly is well underway! Last month, we received our committee assignments (*see page 2*), allowing us to work on improving our state and communities. Work has already begun on various bills that will be debated and voted on in committee as well as on the floor of the House.

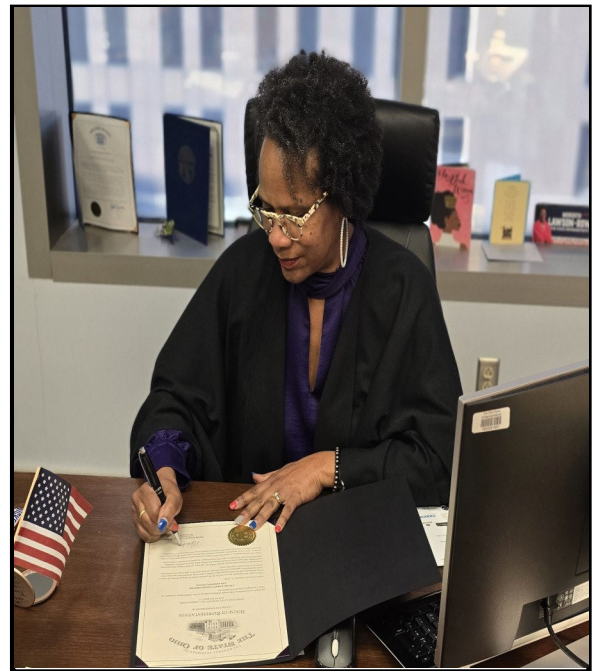
February is Black History Month! Black history is American history. Democrats in Ohio are fighting hard every day, building a state that supports and uplifts Black Ohioans. As such, I am committed to work as your state representative towards an Ohio that provides freedom, liberty, and equality to all.

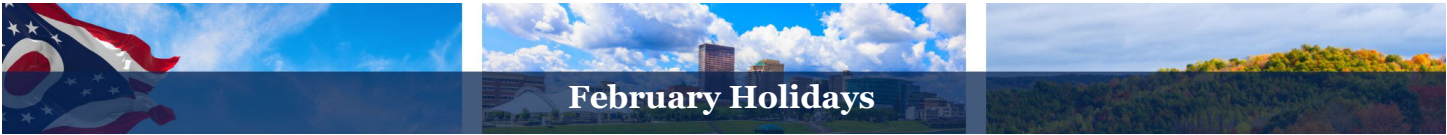
House districts changed between the 135th and 136th General Assemblies. Please ensure you still reside in my district by going to <https://ohiohouse.gov/members/district-map> to confirm your House district!

Always remember, I work for you and am here to be a resource to you in whatever are your needs. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

Meredith R. Lawson-Rowe
State Representative
Ohio House District 5

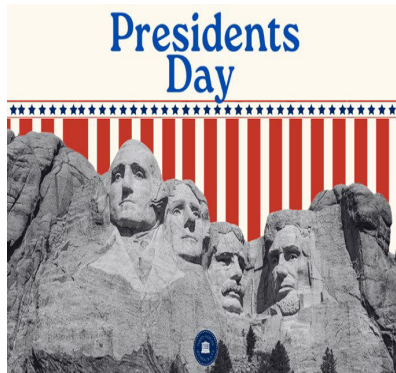
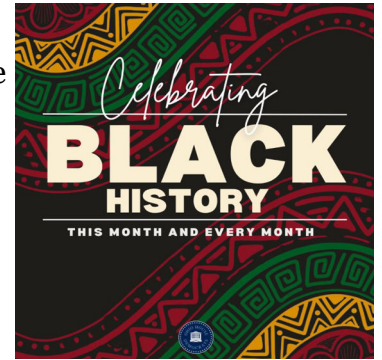




February Holidays

This month, and every month, I am proud to celebrate Black history and I invite you to do the same. Take some time to ponder the amazing strides we as a nation have made in civil rights and racial equality, while also reflecting on the progress that still needs to be made.

It is with this spirit that I am actively working on several pieces of legislation specifically addressing inequality, racism, and discrimination, and that will have a direct benefit for marginalized populations and the entire state of Ohio. More on this will be featured in future newsletters.



February 17th will mark this year's observance of President's Day. This federal holiday recognizes the birthdays of Presidents Abraham Lincoln (Feb. 12th) and George Washington (Feb. 22nd). It also brings to light the importance of understanding this country's history and the democratic values we have fostered, or need to improve.

Take some time on this day to honor great presidents throughout our history, and to reflect on the august power and responsibility that comes with the seat of the presidency, and the danger of taking that power and responsibility, and who we bestow it to, lightly.

Resources

As your state representative, I want to be a resource to you in whatever your needs might be. Should you ever need anything from:

My Office

Call me (614) 644-6002	Email me rep05@ohiohouse.gov	Instagram @replawsonrowe
Twitter @mlawsonrowe	Facebook State Rep. Meredith Lawson-Rowe	Mailing Address 77 S. High St., 10th Floor Columbus, OH 43215



State of Ohio Agencies

Workers' Compensation (800) 644-6292	Medicaid (800) 324-8680	Unemployment (614) 466-6282
Environmental Protection Agency (614) 644-3020	Taxation 1 (800) 282-1780	Transportation (614) 466-7170
Rehabilitation and Correction (614) 387-0588	Commerce (614) 466-3636	Veterans Services (614) 644-0898
	Education/Workforce (877) 644-6338	Civil Rights (888) 278-7101

Franklin County Agencies:

Legal Aid (614) 221-7201	Jobs and Family Services 1 (844) 640-6446
Aging (614) 525-5230	Developmental Disabilities (614) 475-6440
Animal Care & Control (614) 525-3400	Mental Health and Addiction (614) 224-1057
Board of Elections (614) 525-3100	



Rep. Lawson-Rowe Announces Committee Assignments for 136th GA

I am proud to announce my service on the following committees for this General Assembly:

- House Local Government
- House Community Revitalization
- House Veterans and Military Development

I am excited to bring to these committees my experience in local government as President of Reynoldsburg City Council, and my passion for expanding supply and access of affordable housing, raising awareness around mental health and addiction, and for honoring our veterans' selfless sacrifice to this nation and our community.

It is my promise that my work on these committees will underscore my passion and pride to the people and proud communities that envelop House District 5.



Legislative Update

This General Assembly is already proving to be a busy one. Throughout this term, I will be sharing high-level pertinent legislative updates in my newsletters.

Senate Bill 1, and its companion House Bill 6, are **bills to watch** this General Assembly. Labeled the “Advance Ohio Higher Education Act”, these bills are actually an assault to higher education. Among other provisions, these bills would ban mandatory diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs and trainings at all public universities in the state, and would forbid professors and instructors at public universities in Ohio from striking or participating in any other form of collective bargaining. It is my firm belief that DEI should be affirmed, encouraged, and supported, not discarded, forbid, or characterized as threatening. The principles of DEI are what makes societies function and industries thrive. As well, every worker, irrespective of industry, deserves to negotiate their worth and advocate for themselves. Their voices should not be stifled, or their jobs attacked, simply because they exercise their first amendment right to speak up and speak out, whether for themselves or others.



Senate Bill 56 is another **bill to watch**. This bill would make changes to the citizens-initiated and approved state constitutional amendment from 2023 that legalized recreational marijuana in Ohio. As passed by voters, portions of revenue generated by recreational marijuana sales legalized under the amendment would go to the municipalities in which the product was sold (*i.e., a portion of money from weed sold in Reynoldsburg would go to the City of Reynoldsburg*). Senate Bill 56 would upend this provision, rerouting these monies to the state's general revenue fund. I will always be a firm advocate for local governments. It is time that we as a state provide adequate funding to local governments, instead of continuing attempts to extrapolate resources from them.



House Bill 96 is a **very important bill to watch** as it will make state operating budget appropriations for the next two years. The budget bill is perhaps the most important bill passed by lawmakers each General Assembly, not only because it makes appropriations to fund the operations of our state, but because it generally serves as the largest policy document the General Assembly considers each term. More on the budget will be featured in upcoming newsletters.





Community Note

Based on recent national events, I am sharing the following information from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) surrounding immigration. Always, know your rights!

IF ICE AGENTS SHOW UP AT YOUR DOOR

1. You do not have to open the door. If you do, stay calm—you have rights.
2. Ask what they are there for (and ask for an interpreter if you need one).
3. If they ask to enter, ask if they have a warrant signed by a judge and if so, ask to see it (through a window or slipped under the door).
4. If they do not have a warrant **signed by a judge**, you may refuse to let them in. Ask them to leave any information at your door.
5. If they force their way in, do not resist. Tell everyone in the residence to remain silent.
6. If you are arrested, you have the right to remain silent. Do not sign anything until you speak with a lawyer.

KNOW
YOUR
RIGHTS

ACLU

IF YOU INTERACT WITH ICE AGENTS AT WORK

1. Ask if you are free to leave. If so, you may calmly walk out.
2. You have the right to refuse consent to a search.
3. You have the right to remain silent. You do not have to discuss your immigration status with anyone, such as about where you were born, whether you are a citizen, or how you entered the country.
4. If you have valid immigration documents, you should show them. Never provide fake documents.
5. If you are arrested, say that you wish to remain silent until speaking with a lawyer.
6. You have the right to record your interaction with immigration agents as long as you do not interfere.

KNOW
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ACLU



SAVE A TREE!

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<https://ohiohouse.gov/members/meredith-r-lawson-rowe>