STATE REPRESENTATIVE
ASHLEY BRYANT BAILEY

newsletter

FEBRUARY 2026

Dear Neighbor,

We closed out February at full speed at the Statehouse. My committees have been deep in debate from proposed changes around childcare fraud enforcement to a statewide study on data centers and their long-term impact on our power grid, water supply, and local communities. These conversations matter. Childcare policy must support families and providers, not destabilize them, and as Ohio attracts more data centers, we have to balance growth with protecting neighborhoods and public resources.

The House also passed a ban on ranked choice voting this month. I voted no. Local communities should have the freedom to determine how they run their elections without the state stepping in to limit options before voters even have a say.

February is Black History Month, and the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus hosted a press conference on the State of Black Ohio. I spoke about healthcare disparities from maternal health to chronic disease and mental health access and the work still required to close those gaps. We also mourned the passing of Reverend Jesse Jackson, and I had the honor of recognizing his extraordinary legacy on the House floor.

There is a lot happening, and the pace is not slowing down. I remain focused on protecting our communities, expanding opportunity, and ensuring District 26's voice is heard clearly and consistently at the Statehouse.

In unity,

Ashley Bryant Bailey
State Representative
Ohio House District 26

CLICK HERE TO SIGNUP FOR OUR DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

CLICK HERE FOR CONSTITUENT SERVICES FORM

CLICK HERE FOR COMMENDATION/ MEMORIAL REQUEST FORM

PRIMARY ELECTION DAY: MAY 5TH

LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE:
MONDAY, APRIL 6TH

EARLY IN-PERSON & MAIL-IN VOTING BEGINS:
TUESDAY, APRIL 7TH

LAST DAY TO REQUEST MAIL-IN BALLOTS:
TUESDAY, APRIL 28TH

PRIMARY ELECTION DAY:
TUESDAY MAY 5TH

ABSENTEE BALLOT CHANGES

Big changes are coming to absentee ballots this election season. Here's what you need to know:

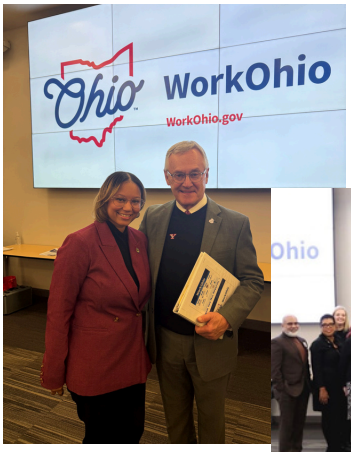
- The **four-day grace period for mail-in** absentee ballots to arrive after Election Day is **being eliminated.**
- To be counted, mail-in absentee ballots **must be received before the polls close on Election Day**. Ballots received after the polls close will not be considered.

Ohio House District 26 (614) 466-1308 rep26@ohiohouse.gov

WORKOHIO

State Rep. Ashley Bryant Bailey joined the first stop on Ohio Lt. Governor Jim Tressel's statewide WorkOhio Kickoff Tour, underscoring Southwest Ohio's leadership role in advancing innovative workforce solutions across the state. The kickoff event was hosted by the Cincinnati Regional Chamber's Workforce Innovation Center, which has been selected as one of seven Regional Job Hubs statewide to lead WorkOhio efforts and will provide coordinated, one-on-one support to help Ohioans access job opportunities, training programs, and wraparound services.

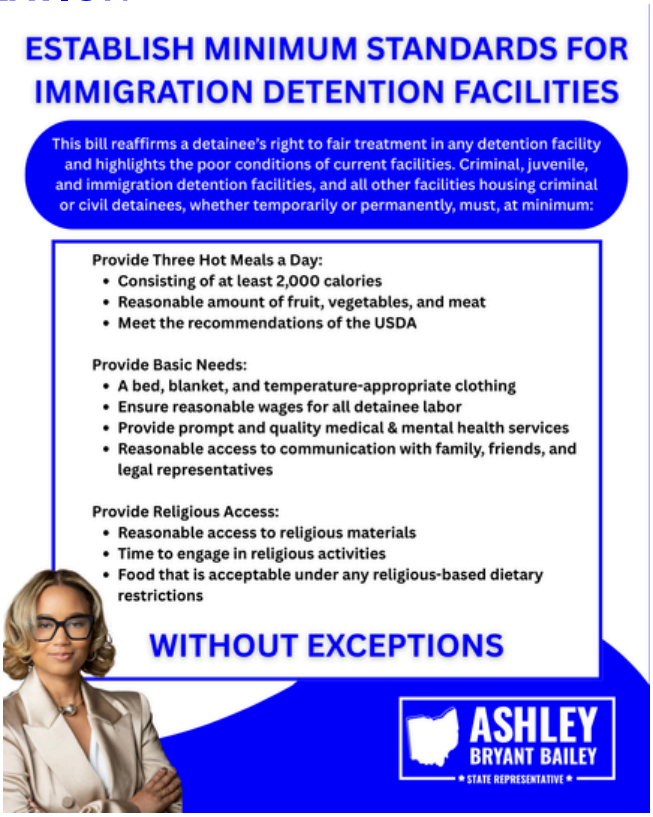
For more information visit:
work.ohio.gov



NEW LEGISLATION

The Ohio House Democrats introduced a package of 8 bills to protect communities and ensure accountability with the rising activity of ICE in Ohio. I, along with Representative Sims, introduced a bill to guarantee fair treatment and quality of conditions in all of Ohio's detention facilities.

CLICK HERE TO WATCH PRESS CONFERENCE



BILLS TO WATCH

DATA CENTERS: WHY THIS MATTERS (H.B. 646)

Ohio is seeing a surge in large data centers that use massive amounts of electricity and infrastructure. Without clear rules, the cost of powering these facilities can fall on everyday families through higher utility bills, strained energy systems, and reduced local control. Senate Democrats have introduced legislation to make sure data centers pay their fair share, protect the reliability of our power grid, and respect local communities' right to decide what development makes sense for them. H.B 646 would create a 6-month Data Center Study Commission.

FAVORABLE

HB 524 - AI SAFETY & SUICIDE PREVENTION PROTECTIONS

This bipartisan bill sets clear guardrails on artificial intelligence to prevent the promotion of self-harm or violence. It also directs penalties toward Ohio's 9-8-8 crisis line, strengthening mental health support statewide.

SB 143 - PROHIBIT EMPLOYERS FROM QUESTIONING CRIMINAL BACKGROUND ON APPLICATIONS

This legislation would limit when private employers can consider an applicant's criminal history, and require a fair review and notice process before denying employment. Strengthening anti-discrimination protections and expanding access to job opportunities.

PRO ICE BILLS

HB 42 - STATE COOPERATION WITH FEDERAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

This bill would force state and local governments to work more closely with federal immigration authorities, even when it undermines local trust. It could make people afraid to report crimes, seek help, or interact with local services.

SB 172 - ARREST AUTHORITY BASED ON IMMIGRATION STATUS

This bill would allow people to be arrested anywhere in Ohio based on suspected immigration status — even without a warrant. It opens the door to racial profiling and erodes basic due process protections.

UNFAVORABLE

HB 647 - CHANGES TO OHIO'S PUBLICLY FUNDED CHILD CARE PROGRAM (PFCC)

HB 647 eliminates enrollment-based payments and expands disciplinary oversight. These changes risk reducing provider participation, lessening childcare availability for working families, and allowing license suspensions without prior hearings.

HB 661 – PROHIBIT MIDDLE OR HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES FROM EARNING NIL COMPENSATION

This legislation would prohibit middle and high school student athletes from receiving compensation tied to their name, image, likeness, or team roster status and make students who receive such compensation ineligible to participate in the related sport, while requiring athletic governing organizations to create investigation and appeal procedures.

HB 649 - CAMERA SURVEILLANCE OF CHILD CARE CENTERS

This legislation will require each child care center to procure and maintain cameras at every entrance, exit, and in areas where children receive child care. Additionally, the Department of Children and Youth (DCY) can request access to every center camera, collection, or system, including the stored video.

SB 63 - PROHIBIT USE OF RANKED CHOICE VOTING

This legislation will prohibit the use of ranked-choice voting (RCV) which allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference, with votes redistributed in rounds until a candidate receives a majority. Any locality that adopts RCV is subject to a loss of Local Governmental Fund distributions.

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REP. BRYANT BAILEY IN ACTION

REP. BRYANT BAILEY IN THE NEWS

Ohio House Democrats held a press conference in Columbus & Cincinnati to unveil our new package of bills to Protect Communities, Ensure Accountability, and Defend Human Rights amid ICE activity.

LSC FELLOWSHIP

Do you know a recent Grad? Have them apply for our Legislative Fellowship Program!

Fellows have the opportunity to work in the House, Senate, or the Ohio Government Media. To learn more, email Fellowship@lsc.ohio.gov or call (614) 466-3615.

To apply, visit: https://www.lsc.ohio.gov/fellowship/program-home

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

For more details on these programs or to connect with resources near you feel free to contact my office.

Apply for a Black Maternal Health Week Spark Grant

The **bi3 Fund** is committed to improving maternal and infant health so that every mother and young child has the support needed to thrive from pregnancy through early childhood. BI3 is offering Spark Grants up to $7,500 to support free, community-based events during Black Maternal Health Week (April 11-17, 2026) that raise awareness, strengthen connections and advance better outcomes for mothers and babies across the region.

bi3 $100 MILLION IN GRANTS

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE & APPLY

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Cincinnati Minority Business Assistance Center: Certification Workshop & Lab

Business certifications can open the door to new funding streams, contracting opportunities, and long-term growth. This two-day Certification Workshop & Lab is designed to guide business owners through the certification process with the City of Cincinnati, the Ohio Department of Transportation, the Small Business Administration, the Women's Business Enterprise Council, the Ohio Minority Supplier Development Council, and more.

Ohio Department of Development
Minority Business Assistance Centers

This session will cover:

- Certification Strategy & Eligibility Guidance
- Step-by-step application support
- Resources to access funding and contracting opportunities
- Practical tools to move your certification forward.

Please note: Attendance on Day 1 is required to participate in Day 2. Participants must bring a laptop. Light refreshments will be provided. The first session begins on March 31st!

CLICK HERE TO RSVP

BRYANT BAILEY ON THE MOVE

STAY IN TOUCH

Are you, a family member, or a neighbor in need of assistance? My office is here to support you with a wide range of needs, from navigating state programs and agencies to resolving issues with unemployment benefits. If you have an issue you are passionate about, share it with us! Want to celebrate an outstanding accomplishment? Email my office and we are happy to recognize leaders in our community.

Call: (614) 466-1308 **Email:** rep26@ohiohouse.gov **Social Media**: @ashleyforohio