



March 2022 Legislative Update From STATE REP. JUANITA BRENT

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From the Desk of Rep. Brent

Dear Neighbor,

February was a busy month at the Statehouse with committee meetings and House session all addressing important legislation. The redistricting process in Ohio for both statehouse and congressional maps is still ongoing, as the Republican led redistricting commission failed to meet the Supreme Court's second order to draw constitutional statehouse maps for the third time. The court deemed the most recent state legislative maps unconstitutional, while the congressional maps still await a verdict.

This month we celebrate Women's History Month and honor the achievements women have made throughout American history and every day. As one of the thirty-three women serving in the Ohio House of Representatives, I celebrate those who came before me and paved the way for women to have a place in the legislature, the workforce, and history.

March also brings us the celebrations of Mari Gras and Ash Wednesday, the Spring Equinox, Holi, and St. Patrick's day. I wish you well as you celebrate and look forward to a beautiful beginning of Spring!

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

Sincerely,

Juanita O. Brent
State Representative
Ohio House District 12



Upcoming Office Hours

**Virtual Office Hours
March 21, 4:00PM**

This is a time for you to talk with Rep. Brent and share your questions, comments or concerns!

All office hours will be held via LIVE on Facebook at fb.com/JuanitaOBrent and Instagram @Juanita_Brent.



Bills to Watch

Bill Highlight: HB 60

HB 109: Increase certain penalties for certain criminal offenses-peace officer suits

(Passed House and sent to the Senate)

- Would discourage Ohioans and philanthropic institutions from participating in lawful protests and civil demonstrations for fear of running afoul of the proposed law's broad and vague language.
- A direct refusal from the Republican supermajority to listen to the will of their constituents and have meaningful conversations about issues such as race.

HB 327, Prohibit teaching, advocating, or promoting divisive concepts in schools

(Referred to House State and Local Government Committee)

- Would prohibit teaching or discussion of systemic racism or societal factors that influence how one is treated based on nationality, color, ethnicity, race or sex.
- This bill attempts to address "critical race theory" which is not taught at the K-12 level and rarely at the university level.

Rep. Brent's own HB 60 to authorize medical cannabis for patients with autism passed the House in a 77-14 vote

- Would add make autism spectrum disorder the 22nd medical condition to qualify for Ohio's Medical Marijuana Control Program
- Will help ensure legal access to a plant-based solution free from costly prescription medications or other outdated and sometimes harmful treatments
- The bill now moves to the senate for further hearings
- Rep. Brent was joined by long time advocates of the bill for its successful passage through the House on Wednesday, March 2nd



Redistricting Update:

For the third time, Ohioans are left with maps that fail to meet the Constitution, instead of fair, proportional maps. The state legislative maps passed by the Commission on February 24th in a third attempt to meet Constitutional and Court guidelines did not meet the proportionality requirements in the Constitution and the Court's order. The Supreme Court again ruled the proposed state legislative maps unconstitutional on March 16th. The redistricting commission also submitted new congressional maps along party lines to the court on March 2 and currently awaits a ruling on objections to that map.

The current concern of voters and legislators alike is now the fast approaching May 3rd Primary date. The best course of action is to move the primary election to ensure all Ohioans have access to one complete, fair, and constitutional ballot. While some lawmakers are proposing holding two separate primaries, in reality that would be extremely costly for taxpayers and add an undue burden on voters and elections officials. At the end of the day, this is a self-induced crisis by Republican commissioners that could have been avoided by adopting fair, constitutional maps last year. The legislature has the power to move the primary to ensure a smooth election and to avoid having two primaries at great and unnecessary cost.



Breakdown of Roles in Redistricting Process

	Redistricting Commission	Ohio Supreme Court	State Legislature	Secretary of State
Roles and responsibilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must redraw legislative district maps for the State Legislature districts and Congressional districts • Must ensure that new districts for all maps reflect Ohio's voter preferences of 54% Republican and 46% Democratic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can hear arguments of constitutionality regarding legislative maps. • Can make suggestions and set deadlines for the redistricting commission • Can not draw maps themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can move the Ohio primary vote to ensure voter access and correct ballots • Can appropriate money to aid the Secretary of States office • Can not draw maps, approve maps, or rule on constitutionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must ensure the safety, integrity, and accessibility of Ohio elections • Must print all ballots and ensure ballots get sent to absentee and overseas requestors • Can not change the election date
Current state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three times has submitted maps that do not comply with the constitution or Ohio voters preferences • Must redraw state legislative maps by March 28th, 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested that the Redistricting Commission: draft maps in public, convene frequent meetings and use an independent mapmaker • Set deadline for new state House and Senate maps by March 28th 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has not acted to move the primary date • Passed HB 188 which effectively shortened amount of time active duty military personnel have to vote, while lengthening time for state to send ballots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledged that we are "out of time" to complete work to hold elections for state representatives and Senators as scheduled