

Statehouse Update

From the Office of State Representative Mary Lightbody
House District 19 | 614-466-4847 <><> Rep19@ohiohouse.gov

Dear Neighbor,

Happy Holidays! December is full of celebrations and valued time spent with family and friends. As we gather to reflect on the year and look ahead to what's to come, I wish you a warm and safe season of joy.

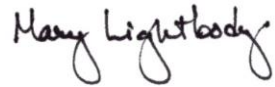
I'm proud of the work we've done together this year at the Statehouse, especially the passage and enactment of HB 95, which will ease the transition to the next generation of Ohio farmers by establishing a tax credit to assist beginner farmers in the transfer of land, equipment, and other agricultural assets.

Looking ahead to the new year, I'm optimistic for the future of our state. I am looking forward to working for you and your family every day in the halls of the Statehouse and our community. When the 135th General Assembly begins, I will be working on legislation to ensure good paying jobs, expand healthcare access, improve education, and protect our environment.

With that, I hope you have a healthy, happy holiday season. Before gathering with loved ones, make sure you are up-to-date on your flu and COVID-19 vaccines. Visit <https://www.vaccines.gov/find-vaccines/> to find a vaccine provider near you.

I am proud to be your state representative. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,



I work for you.

Please NOTE:

NEW email address:

Rep04@ohiohouse.gov
Effective January 3, 2023

Please contact me about any issues of concern and reach out anytime for updates on legislation in committees or votes by the legislature, as well as any upcoming district events that you would like me to attend.

Please contact my office at any time:

Office: 614-466-4847

Email until Dec 31, 2022
Rep19@ohiohouse.gov



Upcoming Open Office Hours

Please join me for either of my last open office hours for 2022. I look forward to meeting with you. There is no RSVP needed. Please contact my office if you would prefer a private meeting.

❖ **Sunday, December 18, 2022**

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Upper Cup Coffee
121 Mill Street, Gahanna

❖ **Wednesday, December 28, 2022**

9:00am - 10:30am
Westerville Public Library, Pink Study Room

Open Enrollment for Healthcare Coverage

The Marketplace Open Enrollment Period runs until January 15, 2023. Ohioans who enroll by midnight on December 15, 2022 can get full year coverage that starts January 1, 2023. Get covered today at [healthcare.gov!](https://healthcare.gov/)

Year in Review

This was a busy year working for you and the people of House District 19. I'm proud of the work my staff and I did in 2022. I have been all over the district throughout the past two years, as these numbers show:

- Over 1100 phone calls, emails, and letters to constituents
- Hosted 3 Town Halls and 23 Open Office Hours
- Assisted at least 35 constituents through casework
- Advocated for over \$20,000,000 in funding for a number of projects of significance to Franklin County in the Capital budget including \$100,000 for the Gahanna Exploration Center, \$100,000 for the Veterans Memorial at Rose Run Park in New Albany, and \$300,000 for the Edge Adventure Park in Westerville.

Legislative Update

Activity has picked back up at the Ohio Statehouse as we work to complete the business of the 134th General Assembly (GA). A number of bills that I have introduced have had first hearings or progressed through the legislative process in recent weeks. Any legislation that does not pass by the end of the GA, which ends in December, must start over in the next GA, which begins in January. I intend to keep working on many of the bills listed below. Please contact me if you have feedback on them or other legislation I should consider.

- The House Agriculture Committee held a first hearing on **HB 649**, legislation I introduced with Rep. Mike Skindell (D-Lakewood) to designate the last full week of June of each year as "Pollinator Week." This designation was subsequently added as an amendment to **HB 432**, which is headed to the governor's desk for his signature
- I presented sponsor testimony to the Senate Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee on **HCR 32**. This resolution, joint sponsored by Rep. Brian Lampton (R-Beavercreek) recommends that the Air Force Research Lab at Wright Patterson Air Force Base recognize Colonel William J. Cavanaugh for his contribution to the design and architecture of the AFRL Bio Acoustics Laboratory. His son John Cavanaugh lives in Gahanna. This resolution passed out of committee on December 6 and passed the full Senate on December 7.
- I presented sponsor testimony on **HB 554** along with my joint sponsor Rep. Adam Bird (R-New Richmond) to the Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee. This legislation would simplify the process for former licensed teachers who left the profession in good standing to return to the classroom. It had a number of unrelated amendments added and then passed the Senate. It now also awaits the Governor's signature.
- I presented sponsor testimony on **HB 662** to the Ways and Means Committee. This bill would permit municipal parks and recreation districts to propose a bond levy and operating levy as a single ballot question for parks and recreational purposes.
- The Finance Committee invited Rep. Jim Hoops (R-Napoleon) and me to present sponsor testimony on **HB 664**. This bill would eliminate the age cap (65) from the Medicaid Buy in for Workers with Disabilities program.
- I have two proposals to address the shortage of teachers. **HB 663** would create a student loan repayment program for Ohioans who teach in STEM fields in certain schools for at least 5 years. **HB 667** would establish a "Grow Your Own Teacher" scholarship program for students and staff who agree to return to their districts once they obtain their teaching certification. The Higher Education and Career Readiness Committee heard both of these bills on December 6.
- I presented Sponsor Testimony on **HB 579**, which would prohibit the surface application of "brine" from oil and gas wells on Ohio's roads to the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.
- The State and Local Government Committee held a first hearing on **HCR 20**. This resolution, joint sponsored by Rep. Juanita Brent (D-Cleveland) would urge Congress to pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act. It is necessary and urgent that we make progress towards addressing the issue of police violence in this country, especially towards Black Americans. I ask Senators Brown and Portman to help bring this bill to the floor of the U.S. Senate for a vote during their lame duck session.

Legislation to Support our Seniors

I support legislation to counter rising costs and ensure older Ohioans on fixed incomes have economic security. The Support Our Seniors legislative package includes bills to reduce the costs of expenses such as healthcare, prescription drugs and utilities. These policies would also put more money into the pockets of older Ohioans by lowering property taxes and reinstating cost-of-living adjustments for certain retirees.

This General Assembly, I introduced:

- **HB 125**— Enact the Pre-Existing Condition Protection Act
- **HB 601**— Establish minimum cost-of-living adjustments for teachers and other school employees and increase employer contributions for the first time since 1988

I support other bills to support our seniors including:

- **HB 135**—Reduce the cost of prescription drugs
- **HB 305**— Cap the cost of insulin at \$35 a month
- **HB 57**— Fully repeal HB 6, corrupt corporate bailout legislation costing Ohioans \$150 million per year
- **HB 260**— Require refunds to improperly charged utility customers
- **HB 389**— Re-establish energy efficiency programs that will save utility ratepayers money and reduce energy usage
- **HB 207**—Expand the Homestead Exemption Act
- **HB 562**— Reinstating the cost-of-living adjustments for Ohio's retired teachers
- **HB 79**— Establish the Caregiver Expenses Tax Credit

Opposing anti-voter legislation

As the members of the House of Representatives worked on the final legislation of the General Assembly, the Majority included among their priorities legislation to restrict the freedom to vote in Ohio. Ohio has long had laws, policies, and procedures in place that enable voters to safely and freely exercise their rights to vote. I support policies that ensure the process continues to be fair, equal, and free.

A proposed resolution, HJR 6, which would have made it harder for Ohioans to amend the constitution was ultimately **not** brought forward for a vote. This measure would have required a supermajority, or 60%, of Ohio voters to pass a citizen-initiated constitutional amendment instead of a simple majority.

Another bill that was not brought forward for a vote is the Anti-Voter bill, HB 294. However, many aspects of that bill were amended into House Bill 458, which passed the House and the Senate.

HB 458 will:

- Eliminate most August special elections;
- Require photo ID in order to vote in person;
- Shorten the period of time which a voter can apply for an absentee ballot;
- Require absentee ballots to arrive back to the board of elections sooner;
- Limit drop boxes to one per county on the premises of the board of elections;
- Eliminate voting on the Monday before Election Day.

I would expect that the Franklin County Board of Elections will work to provide updates in the coming months as they work to implement these restrictive changes. I intend to continue my work to protect Ohioans' constitutional right to vote and expand voter access.



Out and about in District 19 and the Statehouse

In recent months I have:

- Attended the dedication of the Westerville Veterans Memorial;
- Joined Rep. West for a press conference;
- Cheered on our student athletes at playoff games;
- Spoken to incoming Members of the House during new member orientation;
- and more!

