

Statehouse Update September 2023

From the Office of State Representative Mary Lightbody
House District 4 | 614-466-4847 <><> Rep04@ohiohouse.gov



Dear Neighbor,

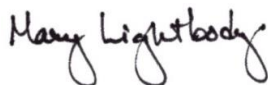
Summer is almost over, but we are not slowing down in the legislature. I will be hosting a People First Town Hall in order to connect with you and share what we're doing to put more money in your pocket and protect your fundamental freedoms— like making health care decisions. More importantly, you'll have the opportunity to ask questions and offer input on other issues facing your community. I hope you will plan to join me on **October 12 at 7:30 p.m. at the Westerville Library.**

I believe that wherever you come from and whatever your background, everyone should have the opportunity to raise happy, healthy families. That's why I want to share how my work on a comprehensive People First agenda will improve our quality of life in the Buckeye State. Putting People First means working together to ensure all Ohioans—no matter your race, gender or economic status—have the freedom to be who they are, the dignity of a safe community and secure job, and the opportunity to thrive.

These town hall events are free and open to the public. I will be hosting a town hall event as noted above on October 12 at 7:30 p.m. at the Westerville Library. I encourage you to come and bring your own view on our community's needs. Please save the date!

Thanks to all of you who contact my office with questions or to express your opinions. If there is anything my office can do, please do contact me by email at Rep04@ohiohouse.gov or by phone at (614) 466-4847. I am happy to answer any questions, and to respond to any comments or concerns you bring to my attention.

Sincerely,



Mary Lightbody
State Representative
Ohio House District 4

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District 4 Spotlight

Congratulations to Mark Lowrie, a broadcast journalism teacher at Gahanna Lincoln High School, for being named the Ohio Department of Education [2024 Ohio Teacher of the Year](#)! His past accomplishments include numerous national and regional student-production Emmy Awards, alumni who are working journalists, and many more students who have benefited from his instruction and mentorship.

Have an idea for a future District 4 spotlight? Please contact my office!

Remembering September 11

September 11, 2001 is a day that we will never forget. The horrifying attacks on our country killed 2,977 people from 93 nations, including 441 brave emergency responders.

These attacks have had a lasting impact on America and the world. I continue to extend my sincere gratitude to the brave men and women who have since served overseas to protect our country. I will always prioritize bills that help support first responders, active military members, veterans, and their families to honor those who serve our nation.

Working Parents Day

On September 16th, we celebrate working parents and acknowledge the hard work and sacrifices working parents make every day to support their family. Working parents are feeling the squeeze of high costs for everyday expenses including healthcare, groceries, and rent.

There are several provisions in the recently passed state budget to secure strong working families:

- Expanded publicly funded child care initial eligibility
- Established infant capacity building and early childhood learning
- Expanded the existing “sales tax holiday” for Ohio families
- Increased “homestead exemption” property tax break for senior citizens and disabled veterans

I know that family always comes first, and Ohioans should have the opportunity to raise happy, healthy families. I am working to ensure families have the resources they need to raise safe, healthy children without breaking the bank.

Community Backyards Workshop

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District will be hosting a Community Backyards Workshop at the Heit Center in New Albany on September 27 at 6 p.m. This is an opportunity to learn more about "gardening for clean water." Plus, attendees can receive a \$50 or \$100 rebate voucher for a rain barrel, compost bin, or native plants – or up to a \$250 rain garden rebate. You can register for the workshop here: <https://conta.cc/487hi5t>

National Library Card Sign-up Month

National Library Card Sign-Up Month is held each September to mark the beginning of the school year. A library card is an important tool for learning! Ohio's public libraries are currently working to ensure every student has their own free library card. Both Columbus and Westerville Public Libraries have Kindergarten Readiness Programs, homework help, family fun days, and more! For adults, many branches have job assistance programs, author talks, and even trivia nights!

The Columbus library is even doing a drawing for ten \$50 amazon gift cards for new cardholders this month. You can register online for a card at <https://www.columbuslibrary.org/> or by visiting any of the library's 23 locations around Columbus including locations in Gahanna and New Albany. Adults need a valid photo ID, but kids do not.

Westerville Public libraries has a similar process for applying for a library card, <https://westervillelibrary.org/faq/library-cards/>

HHS Selects the First Drugs for Medicare Drug Price Negotiation

For the first time, thanks to President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act – the historic law lowering health care costs – Medicare is able to negotiate the prices of prescription drugs. Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), announced the first 10 drugs covered under Medicare Part D selected for negotiation.

- Eliquis
- Jardiance
- Xarelto
- Fiasp; Fiasp FlexTouch; Fiasp PenFill; NovoLog; NovoLog FlexPen; NovoLog PenFill
- Januvia
- Farxiga
- Entresto

- Enbrel
- Imbruvica
- Stelara

More information on the Medicare Drug Price Negotiation Program is available at <https://www.cms.gov/inflation-reduction-act-and-medicare/medicare-drug-price-negotiation>.

Ohio Parks

Researchers have found that time spent in nature benefits your mental and physical health. They found that several diseases were less frequent among those who either lived near or frequented outdoor green space. Other benefits were improved memory, stress and inflammation relief, and increased job performance!

Find out more about your local parks here:

<https://parks.westerville.org/>

<https://www.gahanna.gov/parks-recreation/>

<https://www.naparks.org/>

<https://www.metroparks.net/parks-and-trails/>

<https://www.columbus.gov/recreationandparks/>

Updates from the Franklin County Auditor's Office

Affordable Housing Resource Fair

On Saturday, September 30, from 11:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m. the auditor's office will host and Affordable Housing Resource Fair. This fall event will be held at Beechcroft High School (6100 Beechcroft Rd., Columbus OH 43229). All are welcome to attend and connect with, learn more about, and access the resources of many Central Ohio organizations that provide a wide range of affordable, accessible, and high-quality housing and social services.

Participants will include:

- Financial institutions will be present with information on mortgages and other assistance
- Home repair, down payment assistance and rental assistance programs
- Utility assistance programs
- Homebuying information
- Wellbeing and Health resources
- Legal resources
- Youth and family services
- And more!

This event is free and open to the public. Please RSVP at <https://ahrfo93023.eventbrite.com/>

Property Value Reviews for Franklin County Property Owners

Time is of the essence for Franklin County property owners who wish to schedule a Property Value Review, a process which allows property owners to have a voice in establishing their property value.

The reviews are being held throughout the month of September at locations across Franklin County as well as virtually. The process allows property owners to discuss their opinion of their property's new tentative value with Auditor's office appraisal representatives. To schedule a Property Value Review, visit the [Know Your Home Value website](#) or call the Auditor's office at 614-525-3388.

The nearest [Review Session](#) will be on September 30th from 9am-5pm at the Church of the Resurrection, 6300 E Dublin Granville, Rd, New Albany, OH 43054.

Franklin County Auditor Michael Stinziano encourages anyone who feels their tentative value is too high or too low to schedule a Property Value Review and ensure your opinion is heard.

The reviews are part of the 2023 Reappraisal, a once-every-six-year comprehensive property value update of all properties throughout the County that is required by state law.

To prepare for a Property Value Review, homeowners are encouraged to provide documentation in support of their opinion of the property's value. Documentation can include photos of detrimental property conditions, a private appraisal, evidence of nearby home sales, or a copy of a conveyance form or purchase agreement.

Final value determinations will be sent to property owners in December. For more information on Property Value Reviews, how to prepare for your review, and tentative property values, visit the Know Your Home Value site at <https://audr-kyhv.franklincountyohio.gov/>.

Federal Student Loan Payments

As you may know, most federal student loan borrowers have had their payments paused since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 emergency. This student loan relief has come to an end and will not be extended. The accrual of interest on federal student loans resumed on September 1, 2023, and loan payments will become due in October 2023.

Here are some resources for you and your family to ease this transition. If you are a student loan borrower, here are [6 ways you can prepare](#):

1. Update your contact information with your loan servicer and at [StudentAid.gov](https://studentaid.gov).
2. Review information about your next payment. This information can be found on your billing statement or by contacting your loan servicer.
3. Use the Federal Student Aid [Loan Simulator](#) to make sure you are on the best repayment plan, especially if your financial situation has changed.
4. Consider applying for, or switching to a new, income-driven repayment (IDR) plan. An IDR plan can make your monthly payment more affordable. Borrowers who consistently make monthly payments may see their debt forgiven after a certain number of years. The Biden administration recently announced a new IDR plan – Saving on Valuable Education (SAVE) – that will help more than 20 million American borrowers.
5. If you cannot afford a repayment plan right now, contact your loan servicer to discuss short term relief options, such as deferment or forbearance. Make certain you understand how these options may affect your loan, loan payments and eligibility for loan forgiveness under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness and IDR plans.
6. Understand what may happen if you don't repay your loan. While delinquent payments can have a negative impact on your finances, the Biden administration has instituted a 12-month "on-ramp" period – October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024 – to reduce the impact on borrowers who are not able to resume their loan payments immediately. During this period, borrowers will not be considered delinquent, be reported to the credit bureaus, placed in default, or referred to debt collection agencies. However, borrowers should be aware that delinquent loan payments will continue to accrue interest and may impact when you qualify for loan forgiveness under the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program or an IDR plan.

Free professional learning series: Artificial Intelligence 101 for Teachers

Discover how artificial intelligence (AI) can transform teaching and learning by joining [AI 101 for Teachers](#), a free professional learning series bringing together renowned experts to unpack AI's role in education.

Presented by [Code.org](#), [International Society for Technology in Education](#) (ISTE), [ETS](#) and [Khan Academy](#), these sessions enable educators to deeply explore topics from mitigating algorithmic bias to AI-driven personalized learning.

Educators will walk away with an expanded vision of how to implement AI ethically to enhance student outcomes.

[Sign up here for early access to AI 101 for Teachers](#) and be notified when new sessions are launched.

September Dates of Note

Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15 to Oct. 15)

Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. Their achievements and culture have made Ohio, and America, a better place for us all. I am dedicated to ensuring all Ohioans are welcomed and supported, so we can continue to thrive.

National Rehabilitation Awareness Week (Sept 18 - Sept 24)

Everyone deserves a fair chance to thrive, regardless of who they are. National Rehabilitation Awareness Week recognizes both the benefits of rehabilitation and the successes of those who have received treatment, focusing on promoting education, developing programs, and helping those who are disabled to live up to their fullest potential. House Democrats will continue to ensure that all Ohioans receive the resources they need to succeed.

Labor Day (Sept 4)

Labor Day was a time to reflect and appreciate all who campaigned for workers' rights during the labor movement in the late 19th century. Because of them, we have working rights like a 40-hour work week, safe working conditions, paid time off, and sick leave. I will always stand with our unions, supporting initiatives to improve job security, provide fair wages, and ensure a collective voice in negotiations.

World Suicide Prevention Day (Sept 10)

September 10th was #SuicidePreventionDay. No matter what you are going through, you are not alone. Help is available 24/7 by dialing the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 9-8-8. I will continue to work to provide for mental health resources for all, so that everyone can thrive.

International Day of Democracy (Sept 15)

The International Day of Democracy provides an opportunity to review the state of democracy in the world and how it can be made into a reality to be enjoyed by everyone, no matter who you are. I will always stand for the freedom, dignity, and opportunity that democracy provides.

Rosh Hashanah (begins evening of Sept 15)

Happy Rosh Hashanah to those who celebrate! I wish you a joyous and fulfilled new year!

International Equal Pay Day (Sept 18)

International Equal Pay Day represents the longstanding efforts towards the achievement of equal pay for all, building upon the United Nations' commitment to human rights and against all forms of discrimination. I support bills like HB 115, Ohio's Equal Pay Act. This legislation will take crucial and long overdue steps to close the gender and racial wealth gap that currently hurts too many working families in Ohio.

National Voter Registration Day (Sept 19)

Voting is one of the most fundamental rights that we have. September 19th, make sure you register to vote for the upcoming November election, where we will vote to determine our future. Make your voice heard! The last day to register for the November general election is October 10th. Need to register or check your status? Register at: vote.ohio.gov.

International Day of Peace (Sept 21)

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Today, we recognize our individual and collective responsibility to foster peace, inviting everyone to join the call to take action by fighting inequality, drive action on climate change, and promote & protect human rights throughout the world. I will always support having a more peaceful, just, and inclusive Ohio, free from fear and violence.

Emancipation Day (Sept 22)

#EmancipationDay commemorates the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation to end slavery in the U.S. Did you Know? The state of Ohio has the longest-running celebration for #EmancipationDay. I celebrate this pivotal moment, while also acknowledging that we are still fighting for true freedom for all.

I work for you

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: Rep04@ohiohouse.gov

