

STATE REPRESENTATIVE Tracy Richardson

GETTING OHIO BACK TO WORK

Dear Neighbor,

The Ohio General Assembly may be in recess for the summer, but that doesn't mean my work stops! I'm enjoying spending more time in the district and hearing directly from my constituents on issues important to you. It has been an extremely busy few months at the Ohio Statehouse since my last newsletter and I'm glad to share that the time intensive process of creating a new state budget is complete.

As I seek to help get Ohio fully recovered from the pandemic, it is very clear that we must get Ohioans back to work and keep our state open for business. With this in mind, I am supportive of Ohio ending the additional unemployment bonuses from the federal government. This is a step in the right direction in addressing the labor shortage in industries across our state.

Additionally, House Bill 168 uses federal funds to repay a loan of approximately \$1.5 billion to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund for benefits paid out during the pandemic. The efficient repayment of this loan will prevent Ohio businesses from experiencing large increases in their federal unemployment payroll taxes. I was proud to cosponsor this bill and support businesses across Ohio. When businesses succeed, our communities thrive and paychecks increase.

Please enjoy reading the rest of my newsletter which provides highlights of the budget and other key bills. As always, I am honored to serve you and to do my best to ensure your voice is heard in the General Assembly!

-Tracy Richardson



STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Budget Bill (HB 110): Investing in Essential Public Services with a Balanced Budget

I'm pleased to announce that Ohio's new, two-year state budget provides smart, targeted investments that will help our state make a full recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the key highlights include:

- **Putting Students First:** The Fair School Funding Plan is the result of more than three years of work by educators and policymakers. The budget also enhances EdChoice options. This historic collaboration has produced a comprehensive funding formula that is rational and predictable and will provide for children across Ohio.
- **Providing Tax Relief:** This budget includes a three percent across the board personal income tax cut. The bill also reduces the number of tax brackets from five to four, and eliminates the income tax for anyone making less than \$25,000 per year.
- **Keeping and Creating Jobs:** The plan includes important reforms to help make Ohio more competitive with other states so Ohio can keep the jobs it has and attract new jobs, new investment and new opportunity.
- **Supporting Law Enforcement, First Responders & Veterans:** A number of grants and initiatives are included in H.B. 110 to help keep our communities safe and provide more resources for those protecting the public.
- **Expanding Broadband:** H.B. 110 includes \$250 million to support grants under the Ohio Residential Expansion Grant Program and the Ohio Broadband Expansion Program Authority. This plan targets the problem of last mile to connectivity to households where it remains cost-prohibitive for private providers to otherwise extend their service.

OTHER KEY BILLS

Providing Relief to Ohio's Schools (House Bill 170)

I'm grateful that my legislation providing \$967 million in COVID-19 federal funding relief was signed into law earlier this summer. This legislation includes over \$787 million in federal funding to be directed to Ohio schools in order to get our state's classrooms back on track. This assistance is the first step in regaining a sense of normalcy for children and students going back to school and resuming in-person learning.

Protecting Against Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations (Amended House Bill 244)

The Ohio General Assembly recently voted to **prohibit** public schools and institutions of higher education **from requiring vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccine** that have not received full Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval. Although I believe there is more work to be done on this subject, this bill is a step in the right direction to protect Ohio's students and teachers from vaccine mandates and discrimination. House Bill 244 is now law.

Protecting Students from Indoctrination (House Bills 322 and 327)

I've cosponsored two bills that protect the integrity of our education system by ensuring divisive belief systems and ideologies, such as **critical race theory**, are not indoctrinating Ohio students. These bills do not prohibit teaching about the atrocities of racism and slavery. These pieces of legislation simply ensure students are NOT taught that an individual's moral standing or worth is determined by the individual's race or sex. Ohio's classrooms should uphold equal treatment under the law and equal opportunity for all students. It's my priority to eliminate or prevent any laws that aim to classify people by skin color or assign any sort of expectation or historical grievance based on skin color or group identity. I will continue to work to help all Ohioans live in freedom, equality, opportunity, achievement and dignity.

Supporting Survivors of Human Trafficking (House Bill 319)

Current law still labels some survivors of sex trafficking and all survivors of labor trafficking as criminals. I'm working to change that through this bill by providing aid to victims of human trafficking who have been compelled to commit crimes through no fault of their own. With the right safeguards in place, this legislation will truly help victims of human trafficking recover from a traumatic past and reach their full potential in life.

Caring for Loved Ones in Long-Term Care Facilities (House Bill 120)

During the pandemic, I heard heartbreaking stories about Ohioans not being able to see and care for their loved ones in long-term care facilities. This bill ensures family members have access to their loved ones in long-term care facilities in compassionate care situations. Earlier this summer, I provided sponsor testimony to the Ohio Senate and urged them to consider amending the bill to create a permanent policy that would ensure and provide compassionate care access in any future pandemic.

SERVING YOU



As I continue my work in the state legislature, please don't hesitate to contact my office if you need assistance with a state issue or would like to share your thoughts with me. I also encourage you to visit my official website and follow my social media for updates on what's happening in Columbus and our community.

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I believe the future for Ohio is bright. I remain committed to finding solutions to the challenges we face today in order to make our state a better place to live, work, and raise a family. I hope you have a safe and wonderful summer season!

Tracy M. Richardson