



A legislative update from  
**STATE REP. MEREDITH R. LAWSON-ROWE**  
HOUSE DISTRICT 5



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 @OHHouseDems

 @staterepmeredithlawson-rowe



Dear Neighbor,

It's month two of the 136th General Assembly and I am continuing to advocate for you. Last month, I helped pass the bipartisan state Transportation Budget ([House Bill 54](#)) through the Ohio House of Representatives. The largest 'jobs bill' of the General Assembly, the budget's appropriation of \$11.5 billion provides a significant investment in connecting the workforce to the worksite by improving roads, bridges, and transit systems across the state and in House District 5.

March is Women's History Month! This month, and every month, we celebrate the resiliency, strength, and determination of women. From Susan B. Anthony to Harriet Tubman, to the everyday wife, mother, sister, or daughter, our society is full of inspiring women who have contributed, and continue to contribute immensely to the fabric of our nation and our world. We honor and celebrate that history whilst looking forward towards a better and brighter future for all.

House districts changed between the 135th and 136th General Assemblies. Please ensure you still reside in my district by going to <https://ohiohouse.gov/members/district-map> to confirm your House district!

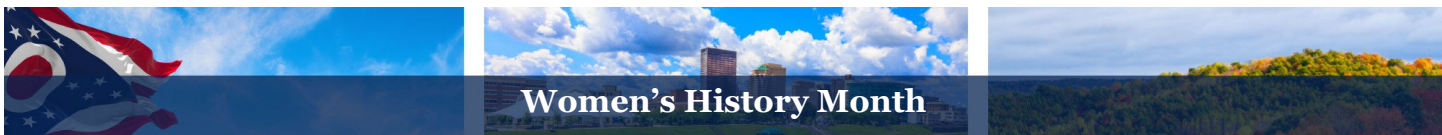
Always remember, I work for you and am here to be a resource to you in whatever are your needs. Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

**Meredith R. Lawson-Rowe**  
State Representative  
Ohio House District 5







## Women's History Month

In the spirit of Women's History Month, I want to highlight just a few of the women who have had a significant impact either on me or in House District 5.

### Mrs. Ruth M. Lawson

Mrs. Ruth M. Lawson is a serial community organizer, trailblazer, history-maker, and my mother. Growing up in Colorado, my mother came to Ohio to attend Central State University and eventually settled in Springfield, where she still lives today. She made history as the first Black female Chief Probation Officer for the Clark County Juvenile Court. Mom would later work for the Ohio Department of Youth Services and the United Methodist Church General Board of Global Ministries, from which she retired in 2003. To me, though, she is still my first teacher, mentor, and friend. Everything I learned about being an advocate came from my mother and I proud to be Ruth Marilyn's daughter.



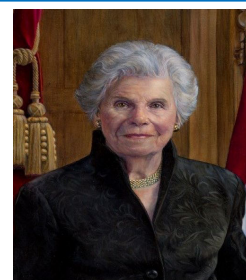
### Congresswoman Joyce Beatty



Congresswoman Joyce Beatty has honorably represented Ohio's third congressional district, which includes most of Franklin County, since 2013. She is a career public servant, serving previously as Director of the Montgomery County Health and Human Services and state representative and minority leader in the Ohio House of Representatives, where she championed legislation requiring financial literacy in Ohio public schools and to expand STEM curriculum throughout the state. In Congress, she serves on the Committee on Financial Services and is the Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on National Security, Illicit Finance, and International Financial Institutions, and was previously chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. I am also proud to call Congresswoman Beatty my *soror* (sorority sister) in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

### Speaker Jo Ann Davidson

Speaker Jo Ann Davidson dedicated much of her career in public service to advocating for the citizens of Reynoldsburg and the State of Ohio. With previous service to Reynoldsburg City Council and Truro Township Board of Trustees, in 1980 Davidson was elected to the Ohio House of Representatives. In 1995, she became the first woman, and to date, only woman in Ohio history to be elected Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives. After leaving the House in 2000, Davidson founded the Jo Ann Davidson Ohio Leadership Institute, an eight-month program created to encourage and train women in business and civic leadership to assume more prominent roles, either elected or appointed, in government. Under her leadership, the Institute graduated more than 400 women. Speaker Davidson died in 2024 at the age of 97.



### Our Mayors

House District 5 is privileged to have two phenomenal women serving in mayoral roles:

Angela Kirk has been the Mayor of Obetz since 2020. Previously, Mayor Kirk served on Obetz City Council for six years, and was an Administrative Assistant at Hamilton Township High School.

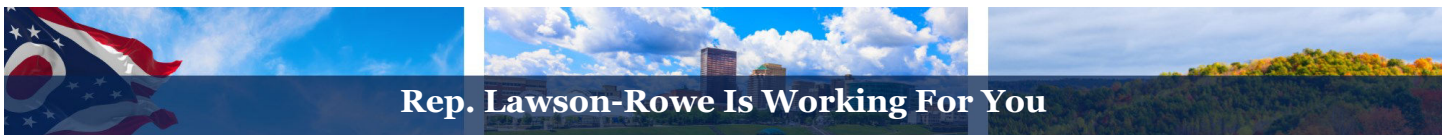
Mayor Kirk has dedicated her entire professional career to bettering her native community.



Christie Ward has been the Mayor of Lockbourne since 2016. Prior to being Mayor, Ward served nine years on Lockbourne Village Council, the last five were spent as President Pro-Tempore.

Ward continues to be committed to furthering the growth and economy of the Village of Lockbourne.





## Rep. Lawson-Rowe Is Working For You

I am proud to announce that I have introduced the following legislation this General Assembly:

- HB 104, with Rep. Kellie Deeter (R-Norwalk), to designate February 14 of each year as “Cardiovascular Awareness Day”.
- HB 135, with Rep. Terrence Upchurch (D-Cleveland), to prohibit income-based rental discrimination.
- HB 166, with Rep. Josh Williams (R-Sylvania Twp.), to designate March 10 each year as “Harriet Tubman Day”.
- HB 181, with Rep. Jamie Callender (R-Concord), to establish an indigent defense fund in Ohio to help assist in the defense of persons facing evictions who cannot afford a lawyer.

Also coming down the pike is legislation to revise the dog laws in this state and to help try to alleviate the property tax crisis in Ohio.



## Legislative Update

This General Assembly is already proving to be a busy one. Throughout this term, I will be sharing high-level pertinent legislative updates in my newsletters.

Senate Bill 113 is the latest assault on public education by our state legislature. This bill would ban diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in any form or fashion from all public primary and secondary schools in the state, with the threat of defunding those who do not comply. As ardently opposed as I was to Senate Bill 1, I am just as opposed to this bill. To reiterate my stance stated in a previous newsletter, I firmly believe that DEI should be affirmed, encouraged, and supported, not discarded, forbade, or characterized as threatening. The principles of DEI are what makes societies function and industries thrive.



The onslaught of anti-immigrant legislation coming from our legislature this term are other **bills to watch**. In the Senate, Senate Bill 153 would require proof of citizenship before a person can cast a vote in any election in the state. This bill is the perfect example of a solution looking for a problem. In Ohio, it is already illegal for noncitizens to vote, or even attempt to register to vote. In short, there is no need for this bill. Also, there has never been documented evidence of widespread voter fraud of any kind in Ohio, particularly involving non-citizens. In the House, House Bill 26 would basically allow law enforcement officials in Ohio to question and detain individuals due to their suspected citizenship status. This bill is the perfect example of government



overreach, which ironically the proponents of both these pieces of legislation claim to be against. I am vehemently opposed to both these pieces of legislation and to any attempt to criminalize immigration in our state.

House Bill 96 is still a **very important bill to watch** as it will make state operating budget appropriations for the next two years. The budget bill is perhaps the most important bill passed by lawmakers each General Assembly, not only because it makes appropriations to fund the operations of our state, but because it generally serves as the largest policy document the General Assembly considers each term. The House is slated to vote on House Bill 96 in the next couple weeks and I will be sure to give a status report of this in the April edition of my newsletter.







**SAVE A TREE!**

**SUBSCRIBE TO RECEIVE MY NEWSLETTER VIRTUALLY AT:**  
<https://ohiohouse.gov/members/meredith-r-lawson-rowe>

## Resources

As your state representative, I want to be a resource to you in whatever your needs might be. Should you ever need anything from:

### My Office

Call me  
(614) 644-6002

Email me  
rep05@ohiohouse.gov

Instagram  
@replawsonrowe

Twitter  
@mlawsonrowe

Facebook  
State Rep. Meredith  
Lawson-Rowe

Mailing Address  
77 S. High St., 10th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215



### State of Ohio Agencies

Workers' Compensation (800) 644-6292	Medicaid (800) 324-8680	Unemployment (614) 466-6282
Environmental Protection Agency (614) 644-3020	Taxation 1 (800) 282-1780	Transportation (614) 466-7170
Rehabilitation and Correction (614) 387-0588	Commerce (614) 466-3636	Veterans Services (614) 644-0898
	Education/Workforce (877) 644-6338	Civil Rights (888) 278-7101

### Franklin County Agencies:

Legal Aid (614) 221-7201	Jobs and Family Services 1 (844) 640-6446
Aging (614) 525-5230	Developmental Disabilities (614) 475-6440
Animal Care & Control (614) 525-3400	Mental Health and Addiction (614) 224-1057
Board of Elections (614) 525-3100	