



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

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Dear Neighbor,

As we dive into 2026, I could not be more excited to continue serving our community in the Ohio House of Representatives.

This is my second year as your voice in the state legislature and I pledge the same promise I made to you when I was seated last year: to work hard and advocate harder for you and your family each and every day.

February is Black History Month! Black history is American history. Keep reading to see some amazing highlights of Black history right in House District 5! And as always, I am committed to work as your state representative towards an Ohio that provides freedom, liberty, and equality to all.

The colors that embroider the pages of this newsletter are culturally significant; they are the official colors of Pan-Africanism, the unity movement of diasporic Black people around the world. Each color is poignantly symbolic: **red** for the struggle, **black** for the people, and **green** for the power that comes from the struggle. As a reminder, Black Americans are apart of the fabric of this country, and our history **IS** American history!

Sincerely,

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





HAPPY BLACK HISTORY MONTH

This month marks the centennial anniversary of the first observation of what would become “Black History Month.” First observed as “Negro History Week” during the second week of February 1926, the week was conceptualized by Professor Carter G. Woodson (pictured right), a profound journalist, premiere scholar, and prolific author, as a culmination of his life’s work to scholastically preserve the history of all Black people of the diaspora, particularly in the United States.



The timing for Negro History Month was designated to coincide with the birthdays of abolitionist Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln. Fervor behind the week quickly spread across the country, materializing over the next five decades in parades, breakfasts, banquets, lecture series, exhibits, and many other displays throughout the nation. In 1970, Black students and faculty at Kent State University expanded the observance to the entire month of February, and in 1976, President Gerald Ford proclaimed the first nationwide observance of “Black History Month.”

Black History in Reynoldsburg

Reynoldsburg is home to an abundance of Black history. Here are just some highlights:



- George Stebout, born in 1843, ran for Reynoldsburg Village Council in 1863, becoming the first African American to do so. After his defeat, he enlisted in the Union Army where he served in Company F, 5th U.S. Colored Infantry, during the Civil War for two years before receiving an honorable discharge in September 1865. His life post-Civil War is a mystery, but what is known is that he is buried in the Seceder Cemetery, Reynoldsburg’s first cemetery, located behind the Bibibop on State Route 256.

- Lindsey William Mitchell, born in 1927, was a 1945 graduate of Reynoldsburg High School, after which he enlisted in the United States Army, serving with honor during the Korean War. He held the rank of Corporal and was a heavy weapons infantryman with the 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. Cpl. Mitchell was killed in action in North Korea, October 29, 1951, aged 24. I have introduced bipartisan House Bill 451 which would designate the portion of I-70 east between Brice Road and State Route 256 as the “Cpl. Lindsey William Mitchell Memorial Highway” in honor of this hometown hero.



Legislative Update

I am elated to announce that my bipartisan House Bill 247 (Avery’s Law) will officially become law on March 19. This bill was a passion project for me inspired by the story of Avery Russell, who, at 11-years-old, was viciously mauled by pitbulls while at a playdate in Reynoldsburg; dogs who, unbeknownst to authorities, attacked before.

Avery’s Law provides a much-needed modernization of our state’s dog laws and creates mechanisms of greater accountability and liability for owners of nuisance, dangerous and vicious dogs. Perhaps, most importantly, Rep. Kevin Miller and I, through this bill, finally eliminated the “two free kills” clause that pervaded for decades, which allowed for dogs to serious mane or kill twice before being legally put down.



I am still working on many other pieces of legislation, and will in the coming weeks drop bills to expand child-care access to children of veterans and active-duty service members, increase funding for counties putting on military celebratory events (such as Memorial Day parades), and to incentivize employers to pay a share of employees’ childcare expenses. More on these pieces of legislation will come in future newsletters.



SAVE A TREE!

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<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

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State Rep. Meredith
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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	