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Statehouse Newsletter

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Message From Chris

As I end my first year serving as your State Representative, I want to keep you informed of my efforts to bring our money back from Columbus. I am also offering my plans for what can be achieved over the next year.

My focus will always be on lowering costs for residents and pursuing legislation that benefits our community. If my office can ever be of assistance to you or your loved ones, please don't hesitate to reach out.

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Utility Reform

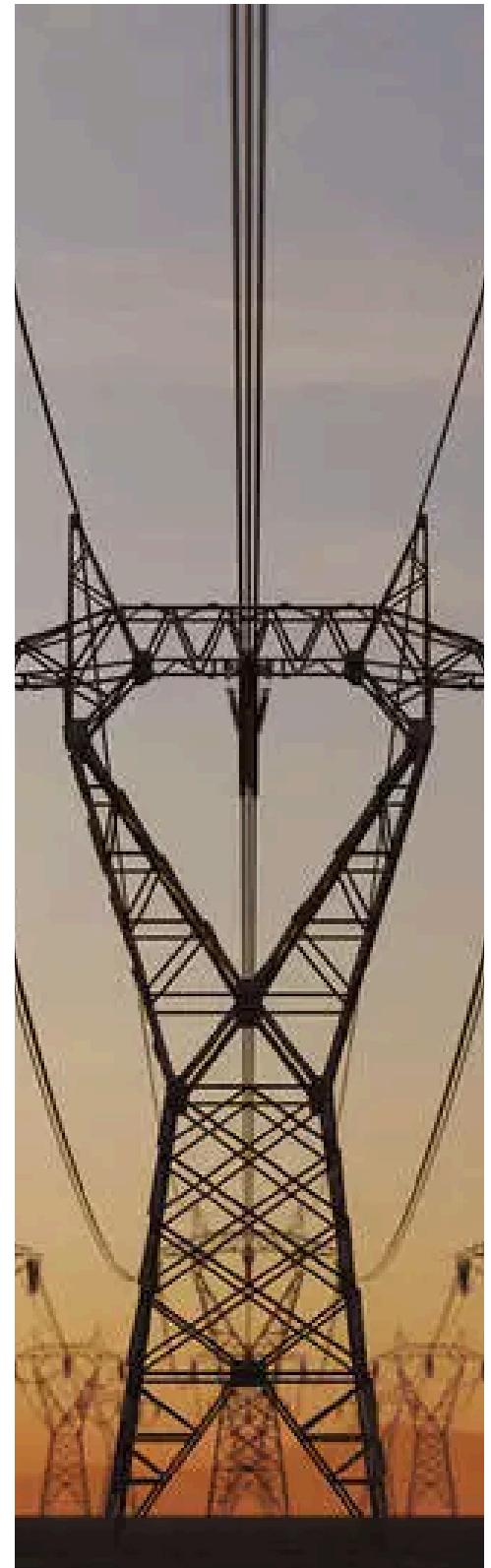
Bills for electric, gas, water, and sewer utilities have been rising too much across Ohio. Service reliability, or lack thereof, has been unacceptable in Greater Cleveland as well. Electric reliability has been the worst. To take action on both fronts, I helped craft Ohio House Bill 15, which passed in May 2025 and primarily takes effect starting this January 2026. HB 15 improves the state's electrical grid, slows rate growth for consumers, increases transparency, cuts out corruption subsidies, and increases accountability for all utility companies.

First provision to take effect already started in September- the removal of a \$1.50 monthly charge to support OVEC. This subsidy was created as part of the state corruption scandal of 2021 and did not benefit Ohioans. Finally, that charge is off our bills. It should've been removed years ago.

Power outages have been wreaking havoc on our communities in recent years. Too many families are missing work or having to throw out whole refrigerators full of food that has spoiled due to lengthy outages. Incredibly, there previously were no standards in state law for the outages. To address this, I successfully passed an amendment in HB 15 to create clear standards for power reliability that will eventually end the outrageous power outages. With these new tools, the Ohio Public Utilities Commission (PUCO) can require utilities to make repairs on each circuit if there are more than 5 outages in a year or if an outage lasts more than one hour. Utilities will also have to justify their rates annually and prove that our funds are being used to repair and improve system reliability.

Lastly, one of the most significant changes is to address the power supply to lower costs. Processes have been streamlined and taxes lowered for all types of new energy generation. Further, new data centers -one of the largest new users of power- will be required to generate power in their own facility or pay for their impact on the grid.

Plenty of work remains to be done. I look forward to working with my colleagues to tackle other proposals that would strengthen Ohio's energy grid and lower the cost of utilities for consumers. The Energy Committee is already considering legislation on subjects such as demand response programs which pay you when you reduce use, community energy initiatives to increase supply, sub-metering fairness, and improvements to the reliability and supply of our natural gas infrastructure.



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Property Taxes

For the first time in recent Ohio history, property taxes have become the leading expense in Ohioans' budgets. These increases are pricing residents out of their homes and forcing fixed-income residents to make undue sacrifices to stay in our communities.

Unlike most issues of affordability, this problem was not primarily caused by inflation. This has largely been caused by state funding cuts for police, fire, and school services. Instead, that money has been redirected to tax breaks for millionaires and "incentive" deals for special interests that failed to create jobs.

To work on this issue, I have first done what I could that would gain broad support. I helped pass five bipartisan bills that together will cap future unvoted property tax increases to the rate of inflation. I am currently working on an additional set of similar bipartisan reforms to make tax bills easier to understand and require county tax departments to treat you fairly.

These are important reforms, but they are not enough to solve the larger problem. The state of Ohio used to pay 10% of our property tax bills, but is slowly phasing this credit out. This is the wrong time to end the credit, and I am supporting legislation to restore the full 10%.

The state of Ohio has also cut police, fire, EMS, and local services by more than 50%. The state has also previously committed to paying education costs in the Fair School Funding Plan. I opposed the state budget for making these cuts and will be introducing legislation to restore the funding.

Addressing Property Taxes and related funding should be the number one issue in Columbus, and it is the number one issue for me. The citizens are calling on their leaders to fix this before they have to solve it themselves. At this moment, there is a citizen-led ballot initiative that would amend the Ohio Constitution to abolish all forms of property tax. This effort highlights the immense frustration many people feel and the need to provide immediate relief.

State and local governments should function as a partnership. I will continue to work on leading bipartisan efforts to get as much done as possible.

However, for too many years, state decision makers have taken our money that paid for these services away and given them away to bad deals that simply haven't paid off. These need to be reversed now, or the voters will rightfully do it themselves.

Resources for Brook Park



SNAP

How to Apply

- Online: Create or access your online account at ssp.benefits.ohio.gov.
- Mail: the completed application to your county JFS office.
- In-Person: Complete, sign, and turn in the application to your county JFS office.
- Phone: Call 844-640-6446



Local Food Banks

- **Location:** 16845 Holland Road Brook Park OH 44142
- **Dates**
 - Mondays: 11:30am - 2:00pm
 - Thursdays: 4:00pm- 7:00pm

Make sure to bring valid state ID and proof of current address



Unemployment

How to Apply

- Online: To start receiving unemployment benefits apply online:
<https://unemployment.cmt.ohio.gov/cmtview/>
- Phone: Call center hours are Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. 877-644-6562.



Property Taxes

Contact the Cuyahoga County tax outreach team to learn about tax reduction programs:

The Homestead Tax Exemption is designed to help senior citizens, disabled homeowners call to learn more: 216-443-7050.



Senior Citizens

- Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging
 - Coordinates assistance services for older adults and individuals with disabilities in Cuyahoga County
 - Contact: 800-626-7277
- Ombudsman Program
 - Advocates on the behalf of long-term care residents
 - Contact: 800-365-3112

Delinquent Tax Payment Plan Call the Treasurer's Office at [216-443-7420](tel:216-443-7420) (choose option 1) to see if you qualify

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