

A legislative update from
STATE REP. ANITA SOMANI
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From the desk of Rep. Somani

Dear Neighbor,

Happy June! This month, the 2024-2025 Operating Budget will come back to the House from the Senate. The budget must pass and be signed into law before July 1. My Democratic colleagues and I fought hard for fully funding our public schools, funding Ohio's food banks, and investments in affordable housing. We anticipate some changes from the Senate but are hopeful Ohioans will benefit from this budget.

On June 14, I will be traveling to the White House alongside Leader Russo for the White House State Legislative Convening on Reproductive Rights. I am grateful for this invitation and look forward to contributing to the conversation! I will not stop fighting for reproductive freedom here in Ohio.

As we head into our summer break, please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

Anita Somani

Anita Somani, MD
 State Representative
 Ohio House District 11

GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

OHIOANS WANT
SAFE & RESPONSIBLE GUN OWNERSHIP LAWS.

June is Gun Violence Awareness Month. Gun violence is an epidemic in this country, and we know that the majority of Ohioans want stricter gun laws. Yet Republicans continue to loosen regulations and pass legislation like permit less carry.

My Democratic colleague, Representative Cecil Thomas, and I will be introducing legislation this month requiring trigger locks to be attached and provided with firearm sales. This is just one measure that can prevent senseless shootings and save innocent lives.

Happy Pride Month!

Happy Pride Month! June is designated as National Pride Month to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community and to honor the protests at Stonewall. This month reflects the strides towards equal justice and opportunity for the LGBTQ+ community.

While the Ohio GOP continues to try and strip rights away from all LGBTQ+ Ohioans, my Democratic colleagues and I continue to fight back against the hate and misinformation spread at the Statehouse.

The annual Stonewall Columbus Pride Parade will be taking place on **Friday, June 16** from 4-10 p.m. and **Saturday, June 17th** from 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. More information about the pride parade and other events this month can be found at: www.stonewallcolumbus.org/pride/.



Local celebrations are also being held in Hilliard on **Saturday, June 10** from 12-3pm and in Dublin on **Saturday, June 24** at 12pm.

Legislative Updates before Summer Recess

Before the Ohio Legislature breaks for Summer recess, we are anticipating bills, both good and bad, to move to the floor quickly this month.

Some bad bills that take away the rights of Ohioans to watch out for are:

- **HB 6:** Bans transgender athletes from participating in girls' sports. HB 6 has passed out of committee **and is anticipated to be brought up for a House vote**. Contact all Republican members to voice your opposition to this bill.
- **HB 68:** Bans gender affirming care for minors, including all mental health services. HB 68 is anticipated to **pass out of Public Health Committee and move to the House floor**. Contact Chairman Lipps at rep55@ohiohouse.gov to voice your opposition.
- **SB 83/151:** These bills eliminates higher education employees' right to strike, bars institutions from receiving state funding if they have DEI programs, and censors free speech.

SB 83 **passed out of the Senate**, and both bills now sit in the House Higher Education Committee. Reach out to Chairman Tom Young at rep37@ohiohouse.gov to stop these bills.

Despite the numerous bills in the Ohio Legislature that are detrimental to Ohioans, there are pieces of legislation that will benefit all. These include:

- **HB 171:** Changes the model social studies curriculum to include the history and contributions of cultural minority groups
- **HB 170:** Creates Red Flag Laws in the state of Ohio
- **HB 57:** Increases the Homestead Exemption to account for inflation. This **passed the House last month and heads to the Senate**.

We must continue to work to solve the real life problems facing Ohioans, like the economy, funding our public schools, and keeping everyone safe from gun violence.

SJR2/Issue 1 Updates

On May 9, the House passed SJR2, despite hundreds of Ohioans showing up to protest at the Statehouse. SJR2, now known as Issue 1, will create minority rule by taking away the last option for citizens to be a check on the Statehouse.

House Republicans amended the resolution to allow for a special election in August, just months after they voted to get rid of all special elections for being too costly to taxpayers. The passage of this resolution was a blatant violation of our constitutional rights.

This should not be a partisan issue, but it has become one. If Issue 1 passes, no constitutional amendment would pass without a 60% vote.

Here is a timeline of what is to come:

- **Monday July 10:** Deadline to register for the August 8 election
- **Tuesday, July 11:** Early, in-person absentee voting begins
- **Tuesday, July 11:** Deadline for absentee ballot applications to be received by the county Boards of Elections. Boards will be open until 8:30 p.m. that day
- **Tuesday, August 8:** Election Day. Polls will be open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Important Notice for Increases in Electricity Bills

Starting this month, both AEP and FirstEnergy users may experience higher electricity bills due to rising demand and energy prices worldwide.

AEP rates are going up 28% and do not apply to customers who have shopped around for another provider or are covered by a government aggregation program. More information on this hike and how to potentially avoid it can be found here: <https://www.axios.com/local/columbus/2023/05/30/aep-electricity-bills-increasing-columbus-ohio>

FirstEnergy usage cost will go from 5.3 cents per kw/hour to an estimated 10.2 cents. PUCO has been advising Ohioans to shop around for other energy companies.

Using EnergyChoiceOhio.gov and then using the [Apples to Apples](#) comparison tool, Ohioans can view rates, terms, and conditions associated with competitive generation supply offerings. More information can be found on PUCO's website at: <https://puc.ohio.gov/news/news-bureau-energy-choice>.

Out & About

In May, I continued meeting with local and state organizations and attended several exciting events such as the OEA Summer Celebration of Diverse Readers, PhRMA's annual Luncheon, and the National Veterans Memorial and Museum Memorial Day event.

I also stood alongside fellow advocates of the AAPI Community at the press conference for House Bill 171, sponsored by Representative Lightbody to add AAPI history to social studies curriculum!

I had the opportunity to celebrate AAPI Heritage month by speaking at ASIA Ohio's Advocacy Day, attending the Asian Festival Gala, and volunteering at the festival! I am grateful for so many opportunities to get out in the community and meet constituents.

