

A legislative update from
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From the desk of Rep. Somani

Dear Neighbor,

Happy Summer! Last month, we reflected on the one-year anniversary of the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision.

On June 24, 2022, I made the announcement that I was running for office after it became apparent that we were headed back 50 plus years with each state now determining if abortion care was legal or not.


Since then, we have seen and read horrendous stories of women being denied care, women dying because of inadequate access to abortion and physicians being criminalized for the care they were providing. As a result, more Americans now support abortion access than ever before and believe that overturning Roe was a mistake.

Since this ruling, [25 states](#) have introduced or enacted legislation to ban or restrict abortion access. Some of these states face legal battles, including Florida and Ohio. After the decision, the Ohio Supreme Court lifted a hold on the Heartbeat Bill, a six-week ban on abortion in the state. A Hamilton County court put the ban on hold last fall, but the state continues to appeal the ruling.

I had the privilege of attending the White House State Legislative Convening on Reproductive Rights on June 14. Here, I joined other state legislators in discussing state-level attacks on reproductive rights and state efforts to protect and expand access to abortion care. I was inspired by legislators across the country fighting the good fight in GOP controlled states across the country!

I will continue to fight for reproductive freedom here in Ohio.

Sincerely,



Anita Somani, MD
 State Representative
 Ohio House District 11

Bill Spotlight: HB 217

I recently introduced [House Bill 217](#), alongside Representative Cecil Thomas, which will require the sale and attachment of trigger locks with all firearm sales. Trigger locks currently only must be offered at the time of a sale.

We know that firearms are the leading cause of death in children and young adults. Safe storage with trigger locks can prevent tragic deaths from loaded firearms. It can also prevent suicide deaths by firearms, making it harder to access firearms during mental health crises, especially for youth attempting suicide.

The bill now awaits its first hearing in the House Government Oversight Committee.

Moore v. Harper Ruling

The Supreme Court recently ruled in favor of fair maps advocates in their [Moore v. Harper](#) decision. The Court rejected the “independent state legislature theory”, ruling that state lawmakers’ power when it comes to drawing maps **can** be checked by courts and state constitutions. The case dealt with North Carolina’s gerrymandered congressional maps.

This is good news for Ohioans and our legal fight against the gerrymandered and unconstitutional map drawing that occurred last year!

Vote NO on Issue 1!

On August 8th, Ohio voters will vote to protect our constitution. Issue 1 will increase the threshold needed for constitutional amendments to pass to 60%, rather than the current 50% plus one. It is a blatant violation of our constitutional rights, aimed at taking control and privacy from the people. Make sure your voice is heard by voting NO on Issue 1 on August 8th.

Here is a timeline of important dates:

- **Monday, July 10:** Deadline to register for the August 8 elections
- **Tuesday, July 11:** Beginning of early, in-person absentee voting
- **Tuesday, August 1:** Deadline for applications for absentee ballots to be received by the county Boards of Elections. Boards will remain 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.

Make sure you are registered to vote by July 10th! If you have moved, make sure to update your address. You can register to vote online or update your registration at www.ohiosos.gov/elections/vote

These resources can help you stay involved on Issue 1:

- Subscribe to Cleveland.com’s [Capitol Letter](#) or read up on their [Issue 1 section](#)
- Subscribe to the [Ohio Capital Journal’s newsletter](#)
- Follow Statehouse reporters on Twitter such as [@MorganTrau](#), [@joingles](#), [@sustantebben](#), and [@DC_DeWitt](#)



Anti- LGBTQ+ Legislation Head to the Senate

Last month, House Republicans continued to silence the voices of Ohioans [by passing legislation that disregards evidence-based medicine and denies LGBTQ+ youth the ability to be their true, authentic selves.](#)

H.B. 68 bans doctors from providing any type of gender-affirming care for minors in Ohio, including the use of puberty blockers and hormone therapy. **H.B. 6**, the “Save Women’s Sports Act” was amended into H.B. 68. This requires schools and universities to designate single-sex sports teams. My Democratic Colleagues on the Public Health Policy Committee received over 11,000 emails **against** this bill and only 800 in support. Unfortunately, the voice of Ohioans are not being heard at the state house.

H.B. 8 requires public schools to give parents warning before teaching “sexuality content” and requires school staff to out students to their parents. In theory this sounds reasonable, but not all parents support their kids when they come out and this has led to a very high percentage of teen homelessness.

Ohio House and Senate Dems held a press conference introducing the Fairness Act legislation. This is bipartisan and bicameral legislation that prohibits discrimination against LGBTQ+ Ohioans in employment, housing, or public accommodations. I am proud to co-sponsor this legislation, as well as **House Bill 216**, the Anti-Bullying Act, requiring the Department of Education to develop a bullying policy investigation process to ensure the safety of LGBTQ+ youth.



State Budget Signed into Law

Governor DeWine signed the state Operating Budget for FY 2024-2025 into law. I voted against this budget because it is not a budget for Ohioans. The supermajority favored school vouchers, tax breaks for the wealthy and cuts to child care over investing in and protecting public education, health care and Ohio’s families.

Back in April, the House passed a well balanced, bipartisan budget that benefited all Ohioans through funds for expansion of health and dental care, money for public school, libraries, art museums and food banks, along with a host of other programs. However, this budget was gutted by the Senate who wanted to

fund tax cuts and keep people from getting health care and education. Among other things, the Senate looked to overhaul the Ohio Department of Education, ban DEI programs at universities, cut public school funding and expand EdChoice vouchers.

Governor DeWine [vetoed 44 line items](#), including a provision saying local governments cannot ban vaping products, as well as part of the income tax changes.

Podcast of the Month: Doctors in the House

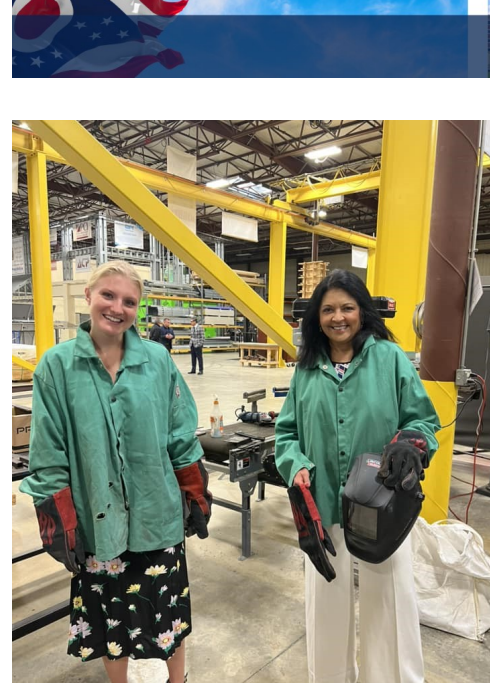
Every month, we will highlight a podcast that I have been featured on! These range from medical to political podcasts where you can stay informed on various issues and topics concerning Ohioans.

This month, I had the pleasure of talking with Malcom Porter, host of the Doctors in the House podcast. [In this episode](#), we discussed the Senate’s version of the State Operating Budget and the upcoming special election for Issue 1 on August 8th.

The Doctors in the House podcast is produced by the Columbus Medical Association and checks in with Representative Dr. Beth Liston and I to provide updates around the Ohio Statehouse!



Out & About



I’ve learned so much about the amazing district I represent! Last month, I had the opportunity to join NextEra Energy Resources to see how they donate solar panels to help train carpenters, welders and other tradespeople. The training center is fully funded by the Union. What an incredible partnership to help train the next generation.

As mentioned earlier, I had the amazing opportunity to visit the White House alongside other state legislators who are passionate about protecting women’s reproductive freedom across the country. I was able to meet Vice President Harris and attend alongside Leader Russo, Leader Antonio, and Senator Hicks-Hudson. I am so grateful for this opportunity!

