

A legislative update from  
**STATE REP. ANITA SOMANI**  
 HOUSE DISTRICT 11



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**From the desk of Rep. Somani**

Dear Neighbor,

Happy Women's History Month! This month, it's important to reflect on the struggles women continue to face. International Women's Day is a day to honor the trailblazers around the world who have led the fight for women's equality. As trailblazers in Ohio, we have enshrined reproductive rights into our constitution. Now, it's time to work on establishing International Women's Day in Ohio!

My colleague Rep. Munira Abdullahi and I introduced legislation to establish March 8th as International Women's Day in the state of Ohio.

With the passage of Issue 1 in November 2023, access to reproductive care has been enshrined into the Ohio Constitution. Since then, I have continued to fight for women's rights in the reproductive field with the introduction of The Reproductive Care Act, legislation that would remove barriers to reproductive care and provide protections for patients and providers.

This month, celebrate all the strong women in your lives!

Sincerely,

*Anita Somani*  
**Anita Somani M.D.**  
 State Representative  
 Ohio House District 11



Ramadan is considered one of the holiest months of the year for Muslims. During Ramadan, Muslims commemorate the revelation of the Qur'an, and fast from food and drink from sunrise to sunset as a means of drawing closer to Allah and cultivating self-control, gratitude, and compassion for those less fortunate. Ramadan Mubarak!

**March 19th Primary Election Dates**

**IMPORTANT MARCH PRIMARY ELECTION DATES**

- MARCH 17** Last Day of Early In-Person Voting
- MARCH 18** Absentee Ballots Must Be Postmarked By This date
- MARCH 19** Election Day! Ballots Must Be Received By BOEs By 7:30 p.m.

VISIT [VOTEOHIO.GOV](http://VOTEOHIO.GOV) FOR MORE INFORMATION

REP. ANITA SOMANI M.D., OHIO HOUSE DISTRICT 11

The March 19th primary election is less than a week away! Make sure you and your family and friends have a plan to vote. Here are a list of important dates leading up to the election:

- March 17: Early voting ends. See Secretary of State's website for hours.
- March 18: Mailed absentee ballots must be postmarked by this date.
- March 19: Election Day! Polls are open from 6:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.
- March 19: Absentee Ballots may be returned by mail or personally delivered to your county board of elections. If not returned by mail, absentee ballots must be received by your board of elections by 7:30 p.m.

Visit [VoteOhio.gov](http://VoteOhio.gov) for more information!

**White House Office of National Drug Control Hosts Policy Roundtable Event**

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)'s Dr. Rahul Gupta traveled to Columbus to meet with myself and other legislators to host a conversation around drug policy in the US.

The ONDCP is working on [disrupting Fentanyl trafficking](#) across the southwest borders. We discussed how the state of Ohio can use federal money to expand access to drug testing strips, work with hospitals, and continue to address the Fentanyl crisis in our state.



**How Does Alabama's IVF Ruling Affect Ohio?**

On February 21, the [Alabama State Supreme Court](#) ruled that frozen embryos used for IVF can be considered children under state law. The ruling poses significant legal threats to medical providers and facilities that specialize in administering IVF treatment. Following the ruling, Alabama policymakers [passed legislation](#) that would ensure protections for IVF health providers.

In Ohio, IVF is protected under Issue 1. In light of this recent, IVF decision in Alabama, I am working on preventative measures to protect IVF health providers. This includes data and civil protections, securing immunity for health providers, and expanding protections to LGBTQ+ couples trying to conceive.

In addition, our office is continuing to monitor personhood bills. [At least 14 states](#) have introduced these bills, which would give fetuses civil rights. This also threatens IVF services and, many clinics have halted their treatment.

While many Republicans say this will not apply to IVF, the language is so vague that physicians are worried it will ban IVF.

Last week, I was on a panel of experts with the Buckeye Justice Forum explaining the IVF ruling, the status of reproductive rights in Ohio since Issue 1 passed, and the need to continue to support legislation in this area. Access to abortion impacts maternal and infant mortality directly. In states that have abortions restrictions mothers are three times more likely to die from pregnancy complications.

Ohio is facing the issue of retaining medical students in the state due to the past restrictions on abortion and the conservative legislature. An [ACOG survey](#) of 3rd and 4th year medical students found that 58% were unlikely to apply for residency in states that had abortion restrictions, with OB/GYN applicants making up 21.6% of these students. This will impact access to care in the future.

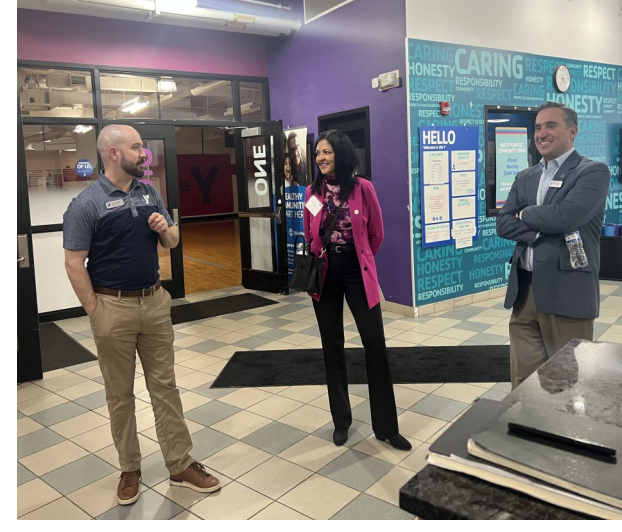
**Out and About**

This month, I had the pleasure of attending several district events to more about our community.



Ohio Health and the Dublin Chamber of Commerce hosted me for their breakfast exploring economic trends that will affect businesses in 2024. It was great to see my physician coworkers while representing District 11 as their State Representative!

I met with members of CAIR-Ohio on their advocacy day. We discussed the events going on in the Middle East. I strongly condemn violence against any group and believe that we should call for a ceasefire. The situation there is affecting civilians on both sides and is a tragedy. Rep Weinstein and I have introduced a [Hate Crimes legislation](#) to combat racism and violence against all minority groups in Ohio.



I toured the Eldon and Elsie Ward YMCA in Hilliard, where I learned more about their three year strategic plan to prioritize Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility.



I had the pleasure of joining another Sirius XM Radio Show, Mornings with Zerlina for a special Women's History Month episode! I and another STEM legislator shared how our backgrounds shape legislation and the importance of facts and data for creating good legislation.



My colleague Rep. Adam Miller and I showed support for construction workers' union benefits at the Columbus Regional Airport amid construction on the new terminal.

CBAs reduce the risk of labor disputes and ensure construction workers receive fair wages, health insurance, retirement benefits and protections on the job. My Franklin County colleagues previously signed onto a letter to the CRAA advocating for union benefits.