

State Representative Sean Patrick Brennan

Ohio House District 14

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| August 2023

*Proudly serving Parma, Parma Heights, and
Cleveland's West Park Neighborhood!*

Dear District 14 Resident:

It is time to eliminate the cost of corruption. Recently, my colleague, State Representative Casey Weinstein, and I introduced House Bill 120 (HB 120), which would repeal a subsidy that has already cost electric customers in Ohio over \$200 million (about \$150,000 a day) since 2020 and, if our bill does not pass, will ultimately cost you close to an estimated \$850 million by 2030. The subsidy we are paying is known as a “rider” on your electric bill. Riders are how the electric utilities hide added costs to your electric bill on top of the cost of the electricity you use each month.

This particular rider is paid to American Electric Power (AEP), Duke Energy, and Applied Energy Services (AES), who own the Ohio Valley Electric Company (OVEC). OVEC operates two 1950s antiquated coal fired power plants – one in southeast Ohio – the other in Indiana, yes Indiana.

How did this corporate welfare paid by you end up on your electric bill? As alluded to with my opening sentence, it was wrapped into the most corrupt law ever passed by the Ohio General Assembly – HB 6 - in July, 2019. Incidentally, it has been found that AEP, like First Energy, paid substantial funds to the dark money PAC behind HB 6. It is unclear if these funds came from ratepayers like you, by the way. Interestingly, First Energy, who provides a large share of our power in northeast Ohio, divested its interest in OVEC in 2020, *but* we continue to pay the subsidy to OVEC's current owners.

AEP, Duke, and AES have never proven that the subsidies are needed to keep the plants open. In fact, the credit rating agency FitchRatings stated, “Fitch does not expect a direct impact to OVEC if Ohio House Bill 6 is repealed.” Further, the operating agreement for the OVEC plants is binding on its owners. Because of these facts, which the owners of OVEC do not want to admit, the operation of the plants and the corresponding jobs they support are not likely to be affected by the repeal of the subsidy.

Now, we are not unsympathetic to the hard working Ohioans at the Ohio plant. However, these plants have far outlived their expected viability. Thus, it is not a matter of *if*, but *when* the plants will close. Our hope is that AEP, Duke, and AES will put together a transition plan for the employees that could include training for smooth transitioning to jobs in cleaner energy production technologies. It should also be noted that coal power plants produce pollution that can impact people and the environment.

It has been admitted to us that the OVEC subsidies would have never been passed on their own by the General Assembly. It took a corrupt bargain to get them done. Ohio's electric production is supposed to be deregulated and operating in an open market. The OVEC subsidies are an affront to our nation's free market economic principles in which the market best decides winners and losers, not the government, especially when it is the people's money being used to help prop up inefficient, dirty, and money losing business ventures.

Our bill would not only end the subsidies you are paying to OVEC's owners, but refund you the money you have paid to them already. We will continue to stand up to the powerful special interests and fight to eliminate this corporate bailout paid directly by you on your already rising monthly electric bill. Our bill is a simple way for the General Assembly and Governor DeWine, who has publicly stated his support, to give Ohio residents some relief from our current inflationary environment and garner back some of the trust they lost in their state government as a result of HB 6 by showing them that we reject the culture of corruption that the OVEC subsidies represent.

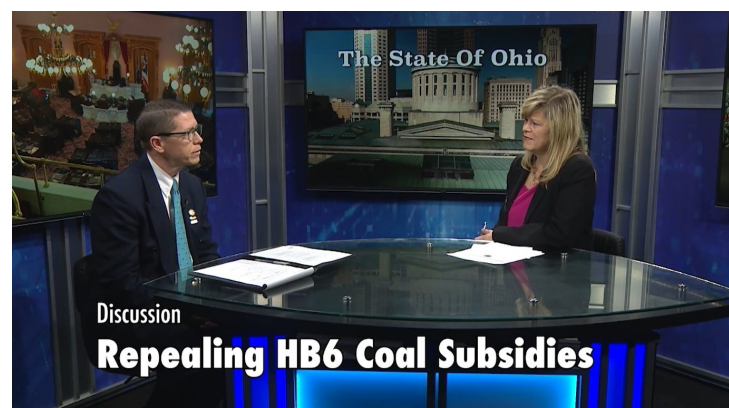
Sincerely,

Sean Patrick Brennan

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I was honored to speak to Statehouse News Bureau Chief Karen Kasler on the State of Ohio program about my efforts to advocate for Ohio's consumers.



Brennan Fights Powerful Utilities to Save Ohioans Over \$1 Billion on Electric Bills (Continued)

OPINION

It's time to repeal all the remaining tainted provisions of HB 6: Editorial

Updated: Jul. 16, 2023, 5:56 a.m. | Published: Jul. 16, 2023, 5:45 a.m.

Four years ago this month, the Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 6, a pro-utility bill that spawned the biggest Statehouse scandal in 220 years of statehood.

Yet most of HB 6 remains the law of Ohio, which, plainly put, isn't just a disgrace -- albeit in a state whose legislature seems incapable of embarrassment -- but also a burden to electricity consumers and a blot on Ohio's environment.

As it is, ex-House Speaker Larry Householder, a Perry County Republican, is serving a 20-year prison sentence for his role in pushing HB 6 to passage in July 2019.

The bill's best-known feature: Authorizing a billion-dollar bailout of two money-losing nuclear power plants then owned by Akron's FirstEnergy Corp., including Greater Cleveland's Perry plant. With the help of some Democratic votes, Republicans in the Ohio House of Representatives and Ohio Senate passed HB 6, and Republican Gov. Mike DeWine immediately signed it into law, on July 23, 2019.

The bill's prime sponsors were Rep. Jamie Callender, of Concord, and then-Rep. Shane Wilkin, of Hillsboro. (Voters have since promoted Wilkin to the state Senate.)

In July 2020, a year and a week later after DeWine signed HB 6, a federal grand jury indicted Householder, former Republican State Chair Matthew Borges, three other Statehouse figures and a 501(c)(4) entity known as Generation Now. Grand jurors accused the defendants of a \$60 million scheme to pass HB 6 for FirstEnergy's benefit.

Then in March 2021, the General Assembly passed, and DeWine quietly signed, a partial -- very partial -- repeal of HB 6. The repeal bill is known as HB 128, and it is highly selective in what it does.

True, 2021's partial repeal did junk HB 6's nuclear power plant subsidies -- something the plants' new owners didn't oppose. And the 2021 bill repealed a part of HB 6 that had let FirstEnergy boost how much it collected from ratepayers even if power usage was flat or down -- regulatory mumbo-jumbo called "decoupling."

But as [cleveland.com](https://www.cleveland.com)'s Jeremy Pelzer also reported, 2021's partial repeal left untouched parts of HB 6 "gutting Ohio's energy-efficiency programs and renewable-energy mandates, [and requiring] statewide subsidies for two coal plants -- one in Indiana, one in Ohio -- owned by a consortium of [Ohio electric] companies" (Ohio Valley Electric Corp., of which Columbus-based American Electric Power Co. owns the largest share).

First, Ohio must again require energy efficiency- and renewable energy mandates: Anything less amounts to environmental suicide. Yet the parts of HB 6 that undercut energy efficiency and renewable energy are still the law of Ohio. That's unacceptable.

Also utterly unjustifiable are the coal-plant subsidies HB 6 still imposes. According to the Ohio Office of Consumers' Counsel, which represents residential ratepayers in front of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, Ohioans are paying more than \$130,000 a day -- since Jan. 1, 2020, a total of nearly \$166.2 million -- to cover the plants' losses. Moreover, a study sponsored by the Ohio Manufacturers' Association found that Ohioans will have paid \$850 million in coal plant subsidies by 2030 if HB 6 remains as-is.

Now pending in the General Assembly is a measure (House Bill 120) sponsored by Democratic Reps. Casey Weinstein and Sean Brennan to repeal the coal plant subsidies and require the refund of the amounts already collected from customers.

But thanks to a parliamentary maneuver, the Weinstein-Brennan bill has been bottled up -- for now -- by House Speaker Jason Stephens, a Kitts Hill Republican whose district includes Gallia County.

The bill had been stuck in the House's Public Utilities Committee. But the bill's backers had been circulating a "discharge petition" to free the bill from the committee and send the measure directly to the House floor for an up-or-down vote.

But on June 20, when the petition had garnered 22 of the required 50 signatures, Stephens "recalled" the Weinstein-Brennan bill from the Public Utilities committee to the Rules and Reference Committee, which Stephens chairs. Recalling the bill to Rules and Reference had the effect of freezing the petition effort for 30 days because House rules say a bill can't be discharged by petition till it has been lodged in a committee for at least 30 days.

As it happens, one of the coal-fueled power plants HB 6 forces Ohio ratepayers to bail out (Kyger Creek) is in Gallia County. OVEC reports the plant has 232 employees and an annual payroll of \$24 million. The Census reports that Gallia's poverty rate is 16.4%. (Statewide, Ohio's poverty rate is 13.4%.)

Stephens's likely concerns, as a practical politician and the district's representative, are understandable.

But as a matter of fairness and legislative transparency, the question of subsidizing the Gallia County plant should be debated on its own, in separate legislation.

Meanwhile, it's long past time to wipe HB 6 from Ohio's slate, which was and remains bad for Ohio's environment, and consumers, and whose passage was a textbook illustration of Statehouse scheming. It's time to pass the Weinstein-Brennan bill.

Now.

About our editorials: Editorials express the view of the [editorial board of cleveland.com](https://www.cleveland.com) and *The Plain Dealer* -- the senior leadership and editorial-writing staff. As is traditional, editorials are unsigned and intended to be seen as the voice of the news organization.

To watch my interview with Karen Kalsner about HB 120 on The State of Ohio program visit:

<https://www.pbs.org/video/the-state-of-ohio-show-march-17-2023-4lelia/>

An Accessible Public Servant Who Gets Around District 14

Here are some pictures of State Representative Sean Brennan from the month of July.

- 1 - State Rep. Brennan with the youth baseball team he sponsors at Ries Park in Parma.
- 2—State Rep. Brennan commending Dr. and Mrs. Newman of Parma on their 50th wedding anniversary.
- 3 - State Rep. Brennan with Mr. and Mrs. Dworzniak of Parma at the Statehouse in Columbus.
- 4 - State Rep. Brennan attends the concert in the park in Parma Heights with Mayor Marie Gallo and others.
- 5 - State Rep. Brennan, director of the Parma Run-Walk for Pierogies, with Cuyahoga Community College security detail.
- 6 - State Rep. Brennan showing his appreciation for Parma’s finest.
- 7 - State Rep. Brennan with his close friend Tony Jackman of Parma after finishing the Burning River 100-mile run.
- 8 - State Rep. Brennan standing with a beautiful Parma resident who attended one of his town hall meetings.
- 9 - State Rep. Brennan with Bill Devito of the Iron Workers and Jerry Miluk, Parma Heights Firefighters’ President.
- 10 - State Rep. Brennan with his friends at the Parma Independence Day parade.





VA Aid and Attendance Benefits for Veterans

VA Aid and Attendance benefits and Housebound allowance

VA Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits provide monthly payments added to the amount of a monthly VA pension for qualified Veterans and survivors. If you need help with daily activities, or you're housebound, find out if you qualify.

Am I eligible for VA Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits as a Veteran or survivor?

VA Aid and Attendance eligibility

You may be eligible for this benefit if you get a VA pension and you meet at least one of these requirements.

At least one of these must be true:

- You need another person to help you perform daily activities, like bathing, feeding, and dressing, **or**
- You have to stay in bed—or spend a large portion of the day in bed—because of illness, **or**
- You are a patient in a nursing home due to the loss of mental or physical abilities related to a disability, **or**
- Your eyesight is limited (even with glasses or contact lenses you have only 5/200 or less in both eyes; or concentric contraction of the visual field to 5 degrees or less)

Housebound benefits eligibility

You may be eligible for this benefit if you get a VA pension and you spend most of your time in your home because of a permanent disability (a disability that doesn't go away).

Note: You can't get Aid and Attendance benefits and Housebound benefits at the same time.

To Find Out More and How to Apply:

Cleveland VA Regional Benefit Office

1240 E. 9th Street
A.J. Celebrezze Federal Building
Cleveland, OH 44199
Main number: [800-827-1000](tel:800-827-1000)

<https://www.va.gov/pension/aid-attendance-housebound/>