

State Representative Richard Dell'Aquila

Ohio House District 15

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OHIO'S BUDGETARY PROCESS

In the coming weeks the General Assembly will be working on Ohio's operating budget. Of the many bills we will consider this term, none is more important than those that establish Ohio's budget. Following the enactment of these bills, the General Assembly can then carefully manage and allocate the state's financial resources among the competing funding priorities, like infrastructure, law enforcement, education, and the many other things that make Ohio such a great place to live.

Ohio's fiscal year begins on July 1 and runs through June 30 of the following year. The state budget is normally in effect for a period of two fiscal years, with some exceptions.

I wish to acknowledge the prior General Assembly and Ohio Senate for their legislative work in the lame duck session, and Governor DeWine, for signing into law House Bill 45 on January 12, 2023, thereby allocating billions of dollars to entities in Ohio, mostly from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The bipartisan bill passed the Senate with only 1 "No" vote, and passed in the House by a vote of 71 to 10.



Ohio Capitol

OHIO'S HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

There is a long overdue need for adjustments to Ohio's Homestead Property Tax Exemption program. As Mayor of one of the demographically oldest communities in Cuyahoga County, I learned of far too many of our senior and disabled citizens on fixed incomes, struggling to pay the increasing burden of property taxes.

And there are many more Ohioans in the same difficult position through no fault of their own.



This targeted real property tax relief pro-

gram is the least we can do to assist disabled veterans, other disabled individuals and seniors who built our communities, raised their families here and deserve to retire without fear of losing their homes due to their real estate tax bills.

I will soon introduce legislation with Representative Daniel Troy (D-23) and Representative Latyna Humphrey (D-2), to increase the amount of the property value reduction and also expand the household income qualification to participate. It is also encouraging that there may be some bipartisan support to remedy this problem.

We all know about the enormous cost of living increases since this program was last adjusted in 2007. Under this proposal, the \$25,000 of true value reduction (unchanged for almost 16 years), would be increased to \$40,000 and indexed for an inflationary increase each year. The current annual income eligibility amount not to exceed \$34,200 per household would be increased to \$45,000, and also indexed for annual adjustments. There will be more on this bill and others as they proceed forward.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

A significant contributing cause of our homeless crisis, apart from addiction and mental illness, is insufficient income to pay for housing. In Ohio the average rental for just a two bedroom apartment is \$892 per month.

Increasing the minimum wage offers only limited economic application as it drives up costs. We should also create conditions to allow our citizens to reach their full earning potential by increasing opportunities for higher paid employment.

Not everyone wants or needs a college degree. Many high income jobs are left unfilled in the trades and other skilled careers for lack of sufficient qualified employees. Ohio is a leader in attracting employers in technology. We must also be a leader in workforce development to fill the new positions required by these and other businesses.

This is why I asked to be assigned to the Economic and Workforce Development Committee. There is so much more work to be done to facilitate these promising developments by incentivizing employers to train and hire our citizens right here in Ohio. Fostering more skilled labor means more employers moving to Ohio, increasing the availability of better paying jobs and the demand for higher-end housing, all of which advances Ohio's economic development.

Employers are using a variety of workforce development strategies, such as retraining their existing employees in new skills, even removing requirements for a 4-year degree, and emphasizing more specialized on-the-job training. Technical apprenticeships can help fill the need for specialized employee skills by training people without college degrees for tech jobs. This is the rationale behind the National Apprenticeship Act of 2021 (H.R. 447) which earmarks \$3.5 billion to expand such apprenticeship programs.

Housing supports workforce development. Employers seeking higher skilled employees increases housing demand and strongly influences corporate site location choices. Clearly, economic development, corporate site selection, housing and developing a skilled workforce are all pieces of the same puzzle.



Ohio House Chamber

HOUSE RULES ADOPTED

At our General Assembly meeting January 24, we passed the House rules for this term. Some of these rules will increase transparency by requiring more time for members to consider legislation before voting. This is a win for the public.

By passing these rules we can start business, and I am particularly excited to start committee work, focusing on issues that the vast majority of Ohioans agree on, and doing good bipartisan work. Although reaching across the aisle, we are not always going to agree on everything. But it is important to seek common ground. Things like education, infant/maternal mortality, infrastructure, and making sure that Ohio is a place where all citizens can thrive are matters to focus on.

Gratefully, the Governor has prioritized issues like mental healthcare, improving maternal and infant health outcomes, improving affordable housing options and building off the opportunities presented by technology industries like Intel coming to Ohio.



Ohio House Representative Richard Dell'Aquila being sworn in by House Minority Leader Allison Russo with his daughter, Jessica, holding the Bible.

BIPARTISANSHIP

Partisanship is best defined as a strong loyalty to a political party, agenda or an ideology, with an equally strong negative opinion of opposing viewpoints or any opposing party. Politicians from both parties regularly describe bipartisanship as a positive approach to good government and criticize those they deem to be too partisan.



On leaving office, former President George Washington warned of the dangers of excessive partisanship. He knew that an effective democracy requires us to work with those we disagree with to get things done for our constituents, even though we will not always agree on everything.

This is what people expect from their elected leaders, that we remain engaged with our colleagues of both parties on important issues for all Ohioans. After all, you sent us here to work on your behalf not to have overly partisan fights with each other.

On January 31st, I had the opportunity to attend Governor DeWine's State of the State address regarding this year's budgetary priorities and initiatives. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on the details of the forthcoming budget. We will have more to say on this subject in the coming days.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

As part of the appointment process, Minority Leader Russo asked us each to list the House committees on which we would prefer to serve. As a four decade practicing Attorney, former Councilman and Mayor over two decades, I am honored that my experience and skills will be put to good use, as I have been appointed to these Committees:

- Financial Institutions (Ranking Member) Ways and Means
- Aviation and Aerospace
- Commerce and Labor
- Economic & Workforce Development

The committee level is where much of the detailed legislative work is performed. As a member of these committees, I will be able to work even more directly with the bills and legislation that will allow greater advocacy for workforce development, ensuring that District 15 remains a safe and prosperous area to live, work and raise our families, and to foster greater governmental transparency and efficiency. I am excited to get started on this important work for our constituents. Committee meetings are open to the public, and can be viewed at www.Ohiohouse.gov or www.Ohiochannel.org. The schedule is at www.Ohiohouse.gov.

Sincerely,

Rep. Rick Dell'Aquila

OHIO HOUSE DISTRICT 15

Precincts of Cleveland in Wards 12, 13, 14 and 3, Linndale, Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights, Seven Hills, Broadview Heights and North Royalton

A Diverse District of the People who make NE Ohio such a great place to Live, Raise a Family, Work and Play!

It is truly an honor to serve as your State Representative!

