

# State Representative Richard Dell'Aquila

*Ohio House District 15*

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## **Committees:**

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

Dear Neighbor,

Due to our busy schedule at the Statehouse this month, in addition to the amount of local and statewide information that we have received, I felt it important to update you with this second April newsletter with current information on the happenings in the Capital and within our district.

I am pleased to announce that I have been appointed by Speaker of the House Jason Stephens to serve on the Statewide Emergency Services Internet Protocol Committee. The Ohio ESINet Steering Committee is tasked with:

- Addressing the development of a statewide ESINet, including a review of the current funding model for this state's 9-1-1 systems;
- Examining the readiness of the state's current technology infrastructure to support Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1);
- Researching legislative authority with regard to governance and funding;
- Making recommendations for consolidation of public-safety-answering-point operations in this state to accommodate next-generation 9-1-1 technology and to facilitate a more efficient and effective emergency services system;
- Recommending policies, procedures, and statutory or regulatory authority to effectively govern a statewide emergency services internet protocol network;
- Coordinating with statewide initiatives and associations.

I am honored to have been nominated by Leader Russo and appointed by House Speaker Stephens to this important duty. During my time as Seven Hills' mayor, I worked with the mayors of Brecksville, Independence and Broadview Heights in the establishment of the new Cuyahoga Valley Emergency Dispatch Center. I will bring that experience to this position. As a licensed ham radio operator (KD8SCT), I am also interested in the MARCS radio technology that facilitates communication between and among our emergency first responders. I look forward to participating in the important work of this committee to advance the safety of all Ohioans.

The Cuyahoga Valley Emergency Dispatch Center, now as part of the Chagrin Valley Emergency Dispatch Center, currently serves 33 agencies. The MARCS (Multi-Agency Radio Communication System) is dedicated to providing Ohio's first responders and public safety providers with state-of-the-art wireless digital communications, and to promote interoperability, in order to save lives and maximize effectiveness in both normal operations and emergency situations. This includes local, state and federal agencies.

I hope you will find the contents of this newsletter informative and helpful. Please feel free to reach out to me or my Legislative Aide, Cole Weidman, with anything we can assist you with. As always, **Thank You** for the opportunity to represent you and all of District 15 in the Ohio House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

*Richard Dell'Aquila*

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## Legislative Updates

As this update is being written, the Ohio House has just passed its biennial budget (House Bill 33) by a vote of 78-19, and it now proceeds over to the Senate. This is the first time in Ohio history that the state has budgeted an amount (\$1.3B) that approaches its fair share to support public education. Among many other things, HB 33 also:

- Increases teachers' base salaries from \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year.
- Provides for infrastructure improvements, including MARCS radio technology for first responders.
- Indexes Ohio's Homestead exemption to the cost of inflation to better help seniors and the disabled.
- Exempts some of the sales tax relief for baby and child care products.
- Incentivizes low income housing construction to help workforce development.
- Adjusts tax policy to help farmers and business invest in heavy equipment and other capital purchases.
- Flattens Ohio's income tax and applies the benefit to the majority of lower and middle income Ohioans.

[Click here for the full text of House Bill 33.](#)

Two other major pieces of legislation are advancing through the House and Senate. [House Joint Resolution 1](#) and [Senate Joint Resolution 2](#), which would raise from a simple majority to 60% the voter approval threshold for amendments to the Ohio Constitution and would also revive August special elections in Ohio.

In his letter to the General Assembly of April 24, 2023, former Governor Robert Taft urged a "NO" vote on this legislation calling it "especially bad policy" to revive low turnout August special elections for the purpose of voting on something so important as changing Ohioans' voting and constitutional rights. He explained that other initiatives would also be impossible to pass if a 60% threshold is passed and signed into law by the Governor.

Another seldom reported aspect of this legislation is that it requires an initiative petition to amend the Constitution to be signed by at least 5% of the electors in each of Ohio's 88 counties rather than just half of them. This is an almost burden to meet, especially in certain very lightly populated counties.

It should be recognized that the debate over reproductive rights will continue regardless whether Ohio's Constitution is amended or not. However, stacking the deck this way will only assure that the debate will become even more contentious because it is so unfair. There will also likely come a time when issues supported by the current proponents of this legislation, such as general obligation financing or to build highways or schools, to protect the environment or create jobs will be impaired by this 60% threshold.

Such legislation is a farce to democracy, and should be noted that as legislators who are elected by a simple majority, that should not result in elected officials attempting to make it harder for everyday Ohioans to support and advocate for what they feel a majority of Ohioans would like changed within our state.

There are a few other pieces of legislation that have been going through the legislative process.

[House Bill 52](#) was voted out of the House and makes changes to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) training and the facilities they take place in. The bill gives rural communities to have access to accredited sites with credentialed trainers.

[The Biennium Transportation Budget](#) was allotted \$13.5 billion to projects such as highway improvements, bridge maintenance, local government projects, and public transportation over the next two fiscal years.

A new [Distracted Driving Law](#) went into effect on April 4 that would now include holding any phone or electric device while driving as distracted driving.

[Center for American Progress](#)—a nonpartisan policy research organization—has provided updates on how legislatures can better work to utilize federal transportation projects, address the pay gap, and educate constituents policy areas across the state. [Attached](#) is their website which has many resources on many topics on moving the country forward.

## Old Brooklyn: Memphis — Pearl Development Project

After receiving the input of over 275 community members, the corner of Memphis Ave. and Pearl Rd. in Old Brooklyn, is in gear for revitalization. The Old Brooklyn Community Development Corporation (OBCDC) and Architecture and Development firm Desmone collaboration will bring additional multi-family housing, community space, and a number of commercial opportunities as a goal to maintain and attract future residents and businesses alike. Visit online for more information on the [Memphis—Pearl Development Project](#).



## April is Second Chance Month

The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) serves individuals who have recently returned home from incarceration and connect them to a job and career. CEO's services have transformed the lives of numerous individuals and families within Northeast Ohio and across the state.

I had the opportunity to make a site visit recently at CEO Cleveland to learn more; through their job readiness training and transitional employment assistance, CEO's programming has led to a 22% reduction in recidivism and a 48% increase in employment after 3 years.

For more detail on services and statistics on service outcomes, visit their [Center for Employment Opportunities](#) website.



## Opening of New Metro Health Vector and Cellular Facility

MetroHealth, University Hospitals and the Cleveland Clinic form the basis of a health care structure here in northeast Ohio that is second to none in providing medical services to patients from around the world. I most recently had the honor to see first hand one of the newest additions to that impressive panoply, when I attended the opening ceremony of the New Vector and Cellular Department at MetroHealth. I toured the facility and learned of all the new medical advances that will be taking place there. The facility will produce vital cellular immunotherapies, which will help treat cancer in our community and further cancer research across the county. More information on the opening of the MetroHealth facility can be found on [Cleveland.com](http://Cleveland.com) and at [MetroHealth's website](http://MetroHealth's website).



## Walmart Electric Vehicle Charging Network



Walmart deserves to be commended for planning to open 2,500 electric vehicle charging stations at store locations across the country by 2030. This development for a greener future also aligns with recent developments made by Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA). NOACA is seeking to increase charging stations for electric vehicles across greater Cleveland area; this all comes as the amount of electric vehicles in the state of Ohio have significantly increased in recent years.

<https://github.com/>

## Cleveland's Global Change Agents

Red Wine & Blue (RWB) is a full force and active organization native to Cleveland, OH and operated by Suburban Women with the vision of unity and anti-oppressive actions. Through their numerous community events, RWB continues to challenge legislation that oppresses Education and Reproductive Rights for citizens across the United States. For more detail on values and upcoming events visit their website [Red, Wine, & Blue](http://Red, Wine, & Blue).

