

# State Representative Richard Dell'Aquila

## Ohio House District 15

(614) 466-3100 | [rep15@ohiohouse.gov](mailto:rep15@ohiohouse.gov) | [@RickDellAquila](https://twitter.com/RickDellAquila) | [facebook.com/RepDellAquila](https://facebook.com/RepDellAquila)



| November 2023

### Committees:

- *Financial Institutions (Ranking Member)*
- *Aviation and Aerospace*
- *Commerce and Labor*
- *Economic and Workforce Development*
- *Ways and Means*
- *9-1-1 Steering Committee*

Dear Neighbors,

I hope you are all doing well. As we continue through the Fall months, I also hope that these monthly newsletters serve as a resource and continue to be informative. While the legislative work continues, I want to repeat and affirm my accessibility to you all. Should I ever be of use to you and your family, please do not hesitate to reach out to me and to my office.

In this month's newsletter, I will detail several advocacy and legislative updates that you may find informational as these bills begin to be discussed within the Ohio House. Initiatives such as pension reform, efforts to ensure rail safety across Ohio's railways, and the ongoing effort to improve Ohio's Homestead Exemption system are just several of the issues mentioned this month.

With new property valuations beginning shortly, the timing is paramount to ensure that Ohio's qualifying senior and disabled veteran homeowners can live comfortably and free from increased economic hardship. While I am proud to be pushing for economic development initiatives to support all Ohioans, time is running out before increased property valuations and the associated taxes will be upon us.

Lastly, I am beginning to formulate legislation to assist workers having difficulty getting to and from their workplace. Throughout the state, our public transportation system can often be underutilized and overlooked when it comes to getting Ohioans directly to work. In view of rising car payments and operating costs, more needs to be done to make sure that our workers can get to work to provide for their families. I hope to be introducing legislation soon to assist in these efforts to fill these gaps within our state's transportation systems.

Thank you again for allowing me to represent you, and please feel free to reach out should I ever be of assistance.

Sincerely,

*Richard Dell'Aquila*

State Representative Richard Dell'Aquila  
77 South High Street, 11th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215  
Office: (614) 466-3100





## Legislative Updates

### Homestead Exemption

As you may have read previously, one bill I have jointly sponsored is legislation to expand the Homestead Exemption for qualifying senior and disabled veteran homeowners. For most of us, our largest investment is our home. But increased valuations also mean increased property taxes. As our various county auditors are now in the process of reappraising real property around the state, we in the House, and particularly in the Ways & Means Committee on which I serve, are acutely aware of this problem.

I previously served as Mayor and Safety Director of one of the demographically oldest communities in Ohio—a middle class residential community in which many senior residents continue to reside well into their retirement years. I learned first-hand of their struggles to pay increasing property taxes on fixed incomes. We even found it necessary to establish a food pantry at city hall to help struggling families meet their living expenses.

The bill I am jointly sponsoring would raise the Homestead exemption from \$25,000 to \$50,000 of valuation for qualifying Ohioans. I had also proposed this idea earlier in the session. At that time, legislation did pass to index any future increases to the rate of inflation but did not provide any immediate relief. Our bipartisan bill under consideration would provide immediate tax relief, and is long overdue to ensure that our older Ohioans can comfortably live in the homes they worked tirelessly for.

### HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION



### Auto Sear Manufacturing Prohibition

An **auto sear** is a device that modifies a firearm to fully automatic operation. with a single, continuous pull of the trigger—i.e. a **machine gun**. Fully automatic firearms are illegal under United States federal law without the required licensing or authority.

The ATF has determined that these devices, as small as the tip of your finger, will allow a semiautomatic pistol to **discharge 30 rounds in two seconds**. Law Enforcement continues to find these illegal devices in arrests of alleged firearms violators.

This past September for example, the U.S. Marshall in Cleveland arrested almost 60 people and confiscated around 200 allegedly illegal weapons, **including 28 auto sears**. Although illegal, they have been imported from places like China. Recently, individuals have now found ways to manufacture auto sears on 3D printers.



Due to the intense heat and stresses of automatic firing, machine gun barrels are designed with greater tolerances and other protections than a small handgun barrel. Without being properly designed for such use, these handgun barrels can more easily warp or become obstructed by fully automatic operation. The potential for disaster is enormous.

**This is not a 2nd Amendment issue. It is a safety issue.** I will soon propose legislation to prohibit the manufacture of auto sears on 3D printers, or otherwise, without the proper licensing or authorization.

### Last Mile Legislation

Workforce Development is critical to Ohio's economic advancement. The technological and industrial development of our state has created a need for a more skilled workforce. That need can be met by more training, apprenticeships and partnerships with industry to develop skilled employees. Not everyone needs or wants a college degree. There are great opportunities in the skilled trades—and everyone wins.

Employers gain skilled employees, who develop marketable skills, and society gains through greater development and thriving, more prosperous, communities. However, with recent inflation and skyrocketing costs, it is more unaffordable than ever for Ohioans to be able to get to their place of employment. One of the issues confronted by those just entering the workforce is that of transportation to and from work. So, another piece of legislation that I am currently working on regards "last mile" transportation to and from work.



## Around the District

**WARD 13**—Ward 13 will be having a Community Meeting on Wednesday, **November 8th at 6:00pm** to discuss various topics with Councilman Kris Harsh. OBCDC will also be there to provide Old Brooklyn updates and to chat with attendees. The address is **4125 Fulton Road**.

The **Second District Policing Committee** will have a meeting on **November 14th at 6:00pm**; formerly the Second District Community Relations, there will be updates from the Commander and other safety forces/community organizations. Address: **3389 Fulton Road**.

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY**— Judge Joan Synenberg is hosting the last of her Pro Bono Collaborative on **November 17th** to assist community members. Registration is required!



Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court

**Judge Joan Synenberg's**

# **PRO BONO COLLABORATIVE**

**Civil Legal Assistance For Those in Need**

Expungement, Driver's License Suspensions, Collections,  
Evictions /Foreclosures, Child Support, Child Custody / Visitation

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2023 9:30 AM**

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2023 9:30 AM**

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2023 9:30 AM**

**Registration Required**

Raleigh O'Brien  
(216) 443-8875  
rsobrien@cuyahogacounty.us

**The Justice Center**

Courtroom 15-D  
1200 Ontario St.  
Cleveland, OH 44113

With the generous support from our **VOLUNTEER ATTORNEYS!**  
Thank you to our partners at the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland and  
the Nord Family Foundation.

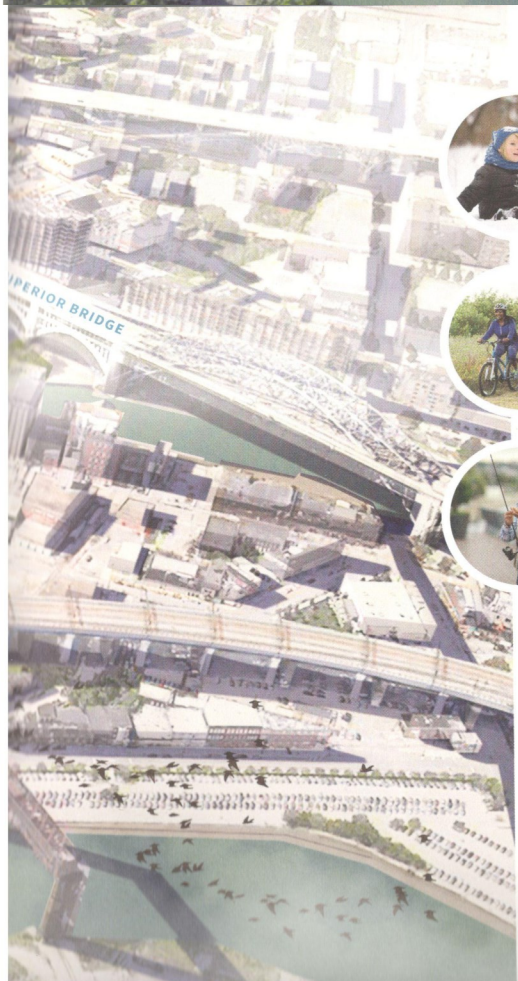
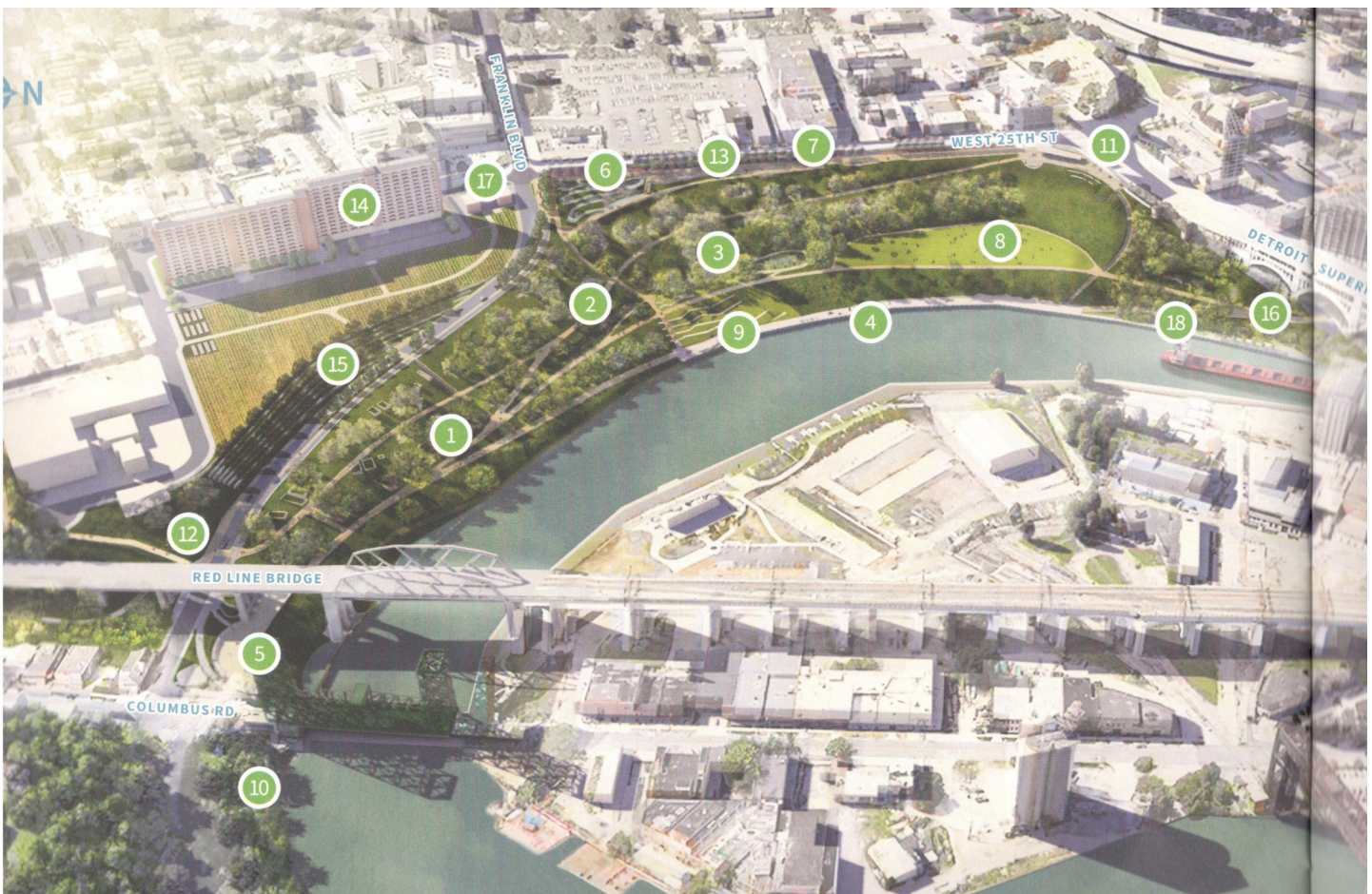




# Around the District

## Irishtown Bend Development

In Cleveland, just north of our District 15, an exciting 23 acre park and redevelopment project is underway along the Cuyahoga River, in an area originally settled by Irish immigrants in the early 19th century. This hillside area is sliding into the river, posing environmental and navigational risks, and threatening a large sewer interceptor. These problems are being remedied with various public and private funding sources, and a plan is underway to redevelop the area for greenspace and to create the final link of the 101 mile canal towpath, connecting to Lake Erie. Below is a graphic describing the design of the project; more information is available at [IrishtownBendPark.com](http://IrishtownBendPark.com).



### IRISHTOWN BEND PARK

## Where Visitors Belong

Irishtown Bend Park will become a **top Northeast Ohio attraction**, drawing visitors from around the region and across the country due to its unique features and the connection to a previously inaccessible waterfront. This Park will draw cyclists, runners, and hikers who want to explore new connections formed by this critical link in the Ohio & Erie Canalway trail system.

Planned Park features include:

- 1 Irish Archaeological Site
- 2 Network of Multi-Purpose Trails
- 3 Wetlands
- 4 Riverfront Boardwalk
- 5 Southern Park Gateway
- 6 Universally Accessible Play Space
- 7 Overlook with Downtown Views
- 8 Community Event Lawn
- 9 Outdoor Amphitheater
- 10 Centennial Lake Link Trail
- 11 Hilltop Park Plaza
- 12 Red Line Greenway Gateway
- 13 Hilltop Grilling Area
- 14 Riverview Towers (CMHA)
- 15 Ohio City Farm Connector
- 16 Northern Park Gateway
- 17 Welcome Center
- 18 Coal Dock Remnants



## **A few Items of Import to Place on your Radar Over the Coming Months:**

### **ESG Legislation**

Pension funds today are in a crisis in the United States. We are seeing a growing recent idea, which began with public employees' pension plans, by which pension fund managers may be required to consider the social impact of their financial decisions.

A **fiduciary duty** is the highest standard of care in law owed by a fiduciary, who is thereby required to be extremely loyal to the person(s) to whom he or she owes the duty. A pension fund manager is a fiduciary for the fund's retirees and beneficiaries. The concept of a fiduciary has always required that pension investment managers must only consider the risk or return of an investment when directing retiree investments.

Although important to our society, other factors when making business decisions are outside the scope of the fiduciary relationship. However, the **ESG** investment concept (for environmental, social and governance) would place other priorities ahead of that fiduciary duty to utilize best efforts in managing other people's money.

**ESG** is based on the idea that companies should recognize that they have a role in solving rising external threats, and those that do not should be disfavored for investment. This runs contrary to the fiduciary requirement that pension fund managers must exercise their power for the maximum legal return solely in the interest of their beneficiaries.

### **E. Palestine Derailment**

Early in the current term, the catastrophic train derailment in E. Palestine occurred and is still causing major disruptions to that community and the surrounding area. Several House members visited the site to meet with the residents and leaders there and to observe first-hand the many issues they are dealing with in the aftermath of that derailment. While I have been able to see the disaster firsthand and share this story across the District and State, more must be done to support this community.

Even months later now, their small community is still facing an environmental disaster.

For the past several years, rail labor unions have been warning about the dangers of a cost-cutting business model being implemented by the railroads called "**Precision Scheduled Railroading**." -- **PSR** for short. The idea is to cut personnel costs by emphasizing inspection technologies over human visual inspections.

It must be recognized that the regulations requiring rail cars to be inspected by qualified personnel exist because it is inherently dangerous to allow uninspected rail cars to travel the network. --And those inspections must be made by experienced personnel, who can identify a blown/leaking seal on a wheel bearing or other visible defects. Automated trackside detectors can only tell whether a bearing is hot or cold once the train is underway--and that may be too late to avoid another tragedy like E. Palestine. Automated wayside detectors and PSR cannot fully replace human inspections. We saw that in E. Palestine, where several trackside sensors detected excessive heat from a freight car wheel bearing, but the train continued travelling without notice to the operators until it actually derailed.



### **CBDC Pilot Plan Proposals**

No, it has nothing to do with marijuana! **CBDC** stands for "Commercial Bank Digital Currency." This is another newly developed idea that would replace paper money and coins as the nation's legal tender. This differs from Bitcoin and Imperium, which are private digital forms of currency. Pilot plans are being considered and the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank has more information, with "pros and cons" at [this link](#).