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'Ohio Legislative Report'

Ohio Legislative Report

Is published electronically at the start of each month to report on the latest information about legislative issues taking place in Columbus that could affect the lives of Veterans, Military Personnel, and their families in Ohio.

It is emailed at no charge to all who would like to receive it.

To subscribe, send your name and email address to:

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Editor: David K. Root

Statehouse Happenings

Legislators did not hold any hearings on veteran/military bills in March. The March Primary election and Easter break took up most of the legislator's time.

This column is usually devoted to covering the hearings that took place during the previous month. But since there were not any and there were only three bills introduced, we will instead talk a little about the results of the primary election. We want to give you a look at what you might be dealing with in November.

First, we want to remind our readers that the 135th General Assembly is still dealing with the issue of districts. Pay attention because your previous district could have changed and the candidates you have voted for in the past may be in a different district this time. In short make sure you know what district you are in and follow the correct candidates.

Second, candidates you have voted for in past elections may be running for a different office or may not be running for anything in this

election. Some of our legislators have 'termed out' (Ohio voters passed term limits for Ohio legislators in 1992) so they cannot run for the same seat again. Some are running for an office on a more local level or a state level.

To give you as idea of what the November election is starting to look like, here are a few

ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, November 5th

Polls are open 6:30 AM to 7:30 PM

Oct. 07: Deadline for voter registration for Nov. 5 general election (30 days before general election)

Oct. 08: Early in-person absentee voting begins (first day after close of voter registration)

Oct. 29: Applications for absentee ballots to be mailed for Nov. 5 general election must be received by boards of elections by the close of business (7 days before general election)

Nov. 05: General Election Day. -Polls open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Absentee ballots, returned in person or via a method other than U.S. Mail, must be received by the boards of elections by close of polls

facts. Except for one independent, all candidates are running as a republican or democrat.

Of the 99 house seats, 71 have incumbents running. There are currently 16 candidates running unopposed. Two candidates are currently serving in the state senate. There are 100 or more who have never held an elected office.

On the senate side there are 16 seats up for grabs. There

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BILLS & RESOLUTIONS INTRODUCED IN MARCH

HB 447:

Introduced by Representative **Mike Loychik** (District 65) on March 12th.

It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would amend sections 319.301, 323.151, 323.152, 323.153, 323.156, 3317.01, 4503.064, 4503.065, 4503.066, 4503.068, and 5715.01 of the Revised Code to modify and expand property tax homestead exemptions, to gradually reduce school districts' 20-mill floor, and to modify the formula for determining farmland's current agricultural use value.

HB 453:

Introduced by Representative **Don Jones** (District 95) on March 20th.

It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact section 5534.615 of the Revised Code to designate a portion of I-77 in Noble County as the "Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway."

SR 315:

Introduced by Senators **Terry Johnson** (District 14) and **Stephanie Kunze** (District 16) on March 27th.

The resolution was adopted by the senate the same day.

The resolution: RESOLVED, That we, the members of the Senate of the 135th General Assembly of Ohio, in adopting this Resolution, recognize April 2024 as the Month of the Military Child in Ohio and applaud military children for their tenacity and courage.

HB 458:

Introduced by **James M. Hoops** (District 81) on March 27th.

It has not been referred to a committee yet.

The bill would enact sections 5534.878 and 5534.879 of the Revised Code to designate a bridge and a viaduct that are located in the Village of Montpelier, in Williams County, as the "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and the "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."

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are 10 incumbents and 5 who are currently serving in the house. No one is running unopposed.

Many of you will have to choose between two or more candidates who have little or no political experience. There will be names you have never heard of before. Making a wise choice will be difficult but not impossible.

Most candidates have a campaign website and use social media. Following them will give you a good sense of what they stand for and believe in. That will tell you what their priorities will be if they end up with a seat in the next general assembly.

Attend all the candidate nights, debates, and other public events the candidates participate in. Ask them questions and listen to their answers. Do not rely on the media or the ads you see on TV or get in the mail. Don't rely on what your

friends and neighbor think.

You have about seven months to cram for the exam that will come on Tuesday, November 5, 2024 and there is more at stake than a good grade.

Reflections

"We shall never change our political leaders until we change the people who elect them."

-Mark Skousen



Student Honored for Taking a Stand

March 13, 2024

Harrison, OH - East Central High School senior Cameron Blasek (center) was honored by the members of Yeager-Benson Memorial American Legion Post 199. State Representative Cindy Abrams (right) was also at the post when the veterans presented Blasek with a commendation. The presentation was made after Blasek refused to remove the American flag from his truck when he was asked to by his school. Because he stood up for his beliefs, the school sent letters to students and parents informing them that after careful consideration the school would allow U.S. flags to be displayed by students in the school parking lot.

(Photo captured from WXIX news broadcast)



State Rep Attends Vietnam Veterans Pinning Ceremony

March 30, 2024

Elyria, OH - A pinning ceremony to honor 14 veterans of the Vietnam War was preformed by the Nathan Perry Chapter of the NSDAR at American Legion Post 12. Attending the event was State Representative Gayle Manning (front row; fourth from right).

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS

If you have news or photos of a state representative or senator doing veteran/military stuff in their district, send it to us.

Email photos and all info to:
oh.leg.report@gmail.com

Hello,

I will be hosting a series of town halls across Ohio's 21st Senate District in April. The purpose of these town halls will be to educate constituents and local leaders on matters affecting them in the legislature, share my legislative priorities, and take questions. These town halls will take place on the following dates.

Shaker Heights: Monday, April 1 from 6:30-8:00 pm Shaker Heights Public Library-Bertram Woods Branch

Beachwood: Tuesday, April 2 from 6:30-8:00 pm Beachwood Community Center Richmond Room 25225 Fairmount Blvd, Beachwood, OH 44122

Garfield Heights: Thursday, April 4 from 6:30-8:00 pm Garfield Heights Civic Center 5407 Turney Rd, Cleveland, OH 44125

Collinwood: Saturday, April 6 from 10:30 am-12:00 pm CPL-Collinwood Branch 856 E 152nd St, Cleveland, OH 44110

University Heights: Saturday, April 6 from 2:30-4:00 pm Heights Public Library University Heights Branch Room 1 13866 Cedar Rd, Cleveland, OH 44118

Maple Heights: Monday, April 8 from 7:30-9:00 pm, CCPL Maple Heights Branch Large Meeting Room 5225 Library Ln, Maple Heights, OH 44137

All town hall meetings are free and open to the public. Please spread the word about these meetings to anyone who might be interested in attending. If you want a share a graphic about the town halls, you can find one on my state Senate web page (www.ohiosenate.gov/members/kent-smith/news) which includes the relevant location, date and time information. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my office (614-466-4857 or smith@ohiosenate.gov) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Senator Kent Smith
Ohio Senate, District 21



State Rep is Keynote Speaker at Veterans Event

March 27, 2024

Parma, OH - The Parma Area Senior Veterans held a luncheon to honor all Vietnam Veterans at the Donna Small Activities Center. The event was held to celebrate National Vietnam War Veterans Day which is March 29th. The keynote speaker was State Representative Sean Brennon (District 14).

GUEST EDITOR

Building Relationships With Legislators

By: Kristal Kent

As an advocate focused mostly on healthcare policy and legislative advocacy, I am often asked how I connect with, and establish relationships with my legislators. Here are some of my tips to help you strengthen connections with your legislators. Please note, I live in the United States. While some of the governmental systems I reference differ from other countries, some of the tips I share can be utilized by advocates living throughout the world.

Establish relationships with local and state government

As advocates, too often we only focus on our Federal House of Representatives, Senators and/or Governor. However, it is beneficial to establish relationships with your local and state government officials as well, such as: Township Trustees, City Council Representatives, City Mayors, County Commissioners, County Executives, State House of Representatives, and your State Senate.

These government officials are just as important as those working in your federal government and governor's office. Many of these individuals serving on the local level will move into higher positions in government such as State Governors, State Attorney General, Congress or U.S. Senate. So, it's beneficial to connect and build relationships with your local government officials because many of these individuals will move into a higher position in government. Thus, they will be in a better position to support your legislative advocacy efforts.

Sign up to receive email newsletters and updates from your local, state, and federal legislators

These newsletters will help you stay abreast of current issues your legislators are addressing and provide insight on how proposed or established legislation may impact your communities and advocacy efforts. Further,

You can find information about every state legislator, bill, and district pertaining to the 135th Ohio General Assembly.

www.legislature.ohio.gov

legislators will often use the email newsletter forum to inform their constituents of any upcoming events, meet and greets, round table discussions with constituents, or resource events which you can attend and interface with your legislator or their staff.

Check your legislator's calendar

You can do this on their website for any upcoming health and/or resource events, meet and greets, community events, or constituent specific "panel discussions" that you can attend, in order to continue relationship building with your legislators. I recommend reviewing your local, state, and federal legislators' website calendar monthly to check for new events or events that are rescheduled.

Follow your local, state, and federal legislators on social media

With the expansion of social media platforms, most government officials are utilizing these tools to share information in real time. This helps keep you on top of the issues they are working on that impact the communities you represent.

Further, most government leaders, or their staff, will post upcoming community events or town halls. In addition, they sometimes use social media to poll the public on community issues. This is yet another way to represent your communities, engage in advocacy via social media, and provide helpful insight/information on issues impacting your communities.

Become a resource vendor

If you have a non-profit, and your legislator is hosting a health, community, or veteran resource event, I recommend contacting your legislator's office by phone, and request information on how your organization can register to be a "resource vendor" at these types of events. Not only will you be able to outreach people in your local community, but this also keeps your advocacy and organizational efforts on your legislator's radar.

Attend town halls

Local, state, and federal legislators will often host telephone, virtual or in person "town halls" to meet with constituents, to update their constituents on the legislation they are working on to improve systems and discuss any concerns impacting their constituents.

Further, town halls provide updates on any issues, or potential laws, that can impact the communities you represent. It also keeps you "fresh" in your legislator's mind as a leader of the community. As a side note, it may not seem that current issues will impact your communities directly, but keep in mind we are

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Guest, from Page Four

supporting various groups of people, within our advocacy space. To tie this in, I will give a personal example.

My Federal Congressional Representative serves on the Farm/Agriculture subcommittee and the Science and Technology sub-committee. While these congressional committees may not seem to directly impact the communities I represent, nor my advocacy initiatives, I have individuals in my communities who live in rural/farm areas. I have individuals who have difficulty in accessing farm fresh foods. Moreover, I represent some individuals who upstarted small farm homesteads in various parts of the country.

In addition, science and technology can impact medical care and healthcare systems. Telehealth, medical apps, resource apps and Artificial Intelligence are areas of science and technology that will have an ongoing impact on medical systems and the delivery of healthcare services. Thus, it is important that I attend my Congressional Representatives Town Hall meetings, so I can stay abreast of how technology is evolving and its' impact on medical care, along with represent my community members who are involved in agriculture/ farming or live in food deserts.

Create your pitch

When you interface with your legislators at events, town hall meetings, etc. have a 2–3 minute overview prepared of who you are, what you are doing with your advocacy work and/or organization, and how your efforts are supporting constituents within the community. Keep in mind you will only have a few minutes at these events to interact with your legislator or their staff. So, keep your introduction of who you are and what you do short and concise.

ADVOCACY PRO TIP: If you have awareness swag, a pamphlet, or overview flyer about you or your organization, put together a small awareness swag bag to give to your legislator and their staff.

Create relationships with your legislator's staffers

This is often a missed opportunity because we do not realize how integral these staff are. Nine times out of 10, the staff are the ones helping resolve issues in the community and are the direct line of communication for the legislator's constituents. Further, if a legislator were to resign, move into another government position, or in some cases they are not re-elected, some of their staff will be hired by the new government official. In some instances, when a legislator moves to a different government position, a few of their staff may also

transfer with the legislator to support them in their new government office.

Creating a strong relationship with the staff can help open other doors or they can help connect you to the right people. Finally, many staff are the driving force behind policy and legislative advocacy. Some staff even help write legislative bills for Congressional Representatives and Senators. Therefore, cultivating relationships with staff is integral for successfully advocacy initiatives.

Send invites to events

If you or your organization is hosting a community wellness, awareness, or resource event, reach out to your local, state, and federal legislators and invite them to your event. Further, many state and federal legislators have staff assigned to oversee issues affecting different groups of people within their district such as Veterans, Senior Citizens, and people with Disabilities.

If you are hosting an event, inquire if any of the staff would like to participate in your event to provide information on how their legislator can assist people in these groups. **Example:** As a Disabled Army Veteran, I would ask if the staff assigned to oversee Veteran Issues and Social Security Disability Benefits, would be interested in participating in my event, so they can outreach constituents who may need assistance with a federal agency such as Social Security Administration or the Veteran Affairs, or need assistance with obtaining military records or military medals.

This is not only a great way to build relationships with legislators, but also a great form of community collaboration. **Side note:** Keep in mind that legislators and their staff schedules fill up quickly. If you would like to include these individuals at your community event, you should give at least 4-week notice, but 6-8 weeks would be more sufficient notice.

Send follow ups

If you meet with the staff or legislators, whether virtually, or at your State or Nation's Capital, always follow up with an email or a written thank you note. In this form of correspondence, simply thank them for taking time out of their schedule to discuss your advocacy efforts and you look forward to partnering with them in the future to address the needs of your community and fellow constituents. In the event you are advocating, let's say for funding to be appropriated for research on a medical condition, keep in touch with your legislators and their staff, to provide any updates on progress made with your advocacy efforts.

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Guest, from Page Five

Remember that your government officials and their staff are people too!

When engaging in Legislative Advocacy, be yourself, but most importantly, cultivate a human connection with all the government officials you meet and their staff. At the end of the day, we are all working towards the same goals, improving the lives of those we serve!

I hope everyone finds these tips helpful and I wish you all the best of advocacy success! Legislative Advocacy is not always easy but with passion,

determination, and hope we can accomplish anything!

Kristal Kent is a disabled Army Veteran. Kristal founded the initiatives, "The Fibromyalgia Pain Chronicles" and "Veteran Voices For Fibromyalgia". Her advocacy work on behalf of the Veteran and Fibromyalgia Communities has been recognized by several organizations. Kristal is currently a member of Society for Participatory Medicine, Social Health's Patient Leader Network, a Co-op member of Savvy Cooperative and a member of the American Legion.

Visit her website: www.veteranvoicesforfibromyalgia.com

Legislation In The 135th Ohio General Assembly

Pertaining to Ohio Veterans, Active Duty, Reserve & National Guard, and Their Families

- HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
- HB 53 Authorize refundable tax credits for hiring certain veterans
- HB 57 Index the homestead exemption to inflation
- HB 60 Increase amount of and expand the homestead exemption
- HB 69 Revise membership of county veterans service commissions
- HB 90 Authorize property tax exemption for disabled veterans, spouses
- HB 123 Designate Honor and Remember flag to honor fallen service members
- HB 126 Expand municipal income tax exemption for military pay
- HB 131 Designate Army SSgt. Charles V. Kettler Memorial Highway
- HB 132 Designate Army Sgt. Herbert C. Linville Memorial Highway
- HB 133 Designate Army Sgt. Ronnie Blair Memorial Highway
- HB 150 Prohibit rental discrimination based on lawful source of income
- HB 202 Designate Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway
- HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- HB 242 Establish the Armed Forces Reserve Component Scholarship Program and related funds
- HB 250 Revise the Military Enlistment diploma seal
- HB 252 Designate SM1 Cornelius Anthony McCafferty, Jr. Memorial Highway
- HB 253 Designate Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor
- HB 254 Expand and enhance the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- HB 269 Designate Sgt Bradley J. Harper USMC Memorial Highway
- HB 286 Designate Vienna Township Veterans Bridge
- HB 294 Designate Delaware County Veteran's Memorial Highway
- HB 299 Designate Specialist Five Frederick Wayne Taylor Memorial Highway
- HB 310 Regards STRS member purchase of military service credit
- HB 317 Designate Sgt. Cory M. Endlich Corridor
- HB 335 Designate Ottawa County Veterans Memorial Highway
- HB 350 Designate Lance Corporal Austin B. Schwenk Memorial Highway
- HB 355 Designate Licking County Veterans Memorial Highway
- HB 365 Designate multiple memorial highways

More Legislation on the NEXT PAGE...

Legislation, from Page Five

- HB 378 Permit homestead exemption-surviving spouses of service members
HB 409 Create the Ohio Cold War Victory Medal
HB 431 Designate Staff Sgt. Zachary Wobler Memorial Highway
HB 447 Regards property tax exemptions, restrictions and land value
HB 453 Designate Staff Sergeant George P. Mizik (USMC) Memorial Highway
HB 458 To designate "Gold and Blue Star Family Memorial Bridge" and "POW/MIA Memorial Viaduct."
- HR 95 Urge Congress to extend GI Bill benefits
HR 189 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1079 on its Centennial
HR 221 Honoring Dan Shroyer as a 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games Champion
HR 222 Honoring Dr. John Eichelberger as a 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games Champion
HR 258 Honoring American Legion DeWitt McConnell Post 235 on its Centennial
HR 302 Honoring Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1090 on its Centennial
HR 316 Honoring Jay Wilson American Legion Post 112 on its Centennial
- HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the United States
Space Command
HCR 9 Adopt Restoration of America's Readiness (ROAR) Resolution
- SB 12 Regards veteran-owned business enterprise certification program
SB 14 Expand veteran eligibility to teach without license
SB 15 Authorize Military License Plate Program permanent registration
SB 43 Modify homestead exemption-surviving spouse of a disabled veteran
SB 12 Regards veteran-owned business enterprise certification program
SB 14 Expand veteran eligibility to teach without license
SB 15 Authorize Military License Plate Program permanent registration
SB 43 Modify homestead exemption-surviving spouse of a disabled veteran
SB 45 Designate Veterans Memorial Bridge in Trumbull County
SB 63 Require plaintiff in asbestos claim to file specified disclosures
SB 64 Expand Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program
SB 110 Designate Sgt. Anthony Kress Vinnedge Memorial Highway
SB 113 Regards failure to comply with Military Selective Service System
SB 114 Designate Lance Corporal James F. Kimple Memorial Highway
SB 152 Designate Cpl. Jack O. McClure Memorial Highway
SB 154 Include Space Force in armed forces, armed and uniformed service
SB 167 Designate Marine Corporal Tim W. Russell Highway
SB 169 Designate Cortland Veterans Memorial Bridge
SB 183 Designate Lance Corporal James Patrick Rizzo Memorial Highway
SB 191 Designate PFC Richard 'Rick' Wesley McFarland Memorial Highway
SB 208 To require a military exception in an open enrollment policy
SB 225 To designate September 22 as Veterans Suicide Awareness and Prevention Day
- SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1079 as it commemorates its One
Hundredth Anniversary
SR 262 In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson
SR 315 Recognizing the Month of the Military Child in Ohio, April 2024
- SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment