

STATE OF BLACK OHIO

Policy in Action.

Black Policy Book for the
136th Ohio General Assembly



May 2026

Letter from the CEO

On behalf of the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus Foundation, I am pleased to present the State of Black Ohio Policy Book. As a former state representative, I understand firsthand how policy decisions are made and why visibility into that process matters.

Policy shapes more of our daily lives than most people realize. It determines the quality of our children's schools, the cost of insulin at the pharmacy, how many cars can be parked in your driveway, whether a stoplight gets installed on your corner, and how quickly a pothole on your street gets fixed. Policy is not abstract — it is the everyday fabric of how we live, work, and move through our communities.

Too often, the contributions of Black lawmakers go undocumented and underrecognized. This book was created to change that. Every piece of legislation highlighted in these pages represents policies actively moving through the 136th Ohio General Assembly with bipartisan support.

That distinction matters. It reflects the ability of Black legislators to build coalitions, find common ground, and advance meaningful legislation on behalf of their communities.

When Black legislators are at the table and legislation is moving, the issues that matter most to our communities are being addressed. This book documents that work.

OLBCF remains committed to expanding access to information, fostering civic engagement, and ensuring that the voices of Black Ohioans are reflected in the policies that govern our state. If this resource is valuable to you, **I encourage you to consider supporting OLBCF financially so we can continue this work. Donations can be made at www.olbcfoundation.org.**

Yours In Service,



Shayla L. Davis
President and CEO
Ohio Legislative Black Caucus Foundation

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OLBCF + OLBC Joint Press Conference & Legislative Summit: February 2026

Overview

This book was created to bring visibility to work happening every day within the Ohio General Assembly that is not always seen or fully understood. The contributions of Black legislators across political parties and policy areas are not always documented in a way that reflects their full scope and impact. This book was developed to close that gap.

The State of Black Ohio Policy Book provides a comprehensive look at legislative activity within the 136th Ohio General Assembly, with a focus on policies introduced and advanced by Black lawmakers serving communities across the state. It brings together key areas of policy, including public safety, healthcare, education, and economic development, to offer a clearer understanding of how legislation is developed, how priorities are shaped, and how decisions made at the Statehouse impact communities throughout Ohio.

At its core, this book centers the role of Black legislators in shaping Ohio's policy landscape. Across the General Assembly, Black lawmakers bring a range of perspectives, experiences, and policy approaches to their work, contributing to conversations and decisions that affect communities across the state. While individual priorities may differ, this book highlights the collective presence and impact of Black legislative leadership, reflecting how policies are not only introduced, but discussed, negotiated, and advanced through collaboration and engagement across party lines.

By documenting these efforts, this book provides greater visibility into the role Black legislators play in the policymaking process and the ways their leadership contributes to broader policy outcomes. The work shaping communities across Ohio deserves to be clearly documented, accessible, and understood.

About OLBCF

The [Ohio Legislative Black Caucus Foundation \(OLBCF\)](#) was established in 1994 as an independent nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization that works to educate the public, support policy research, and promote community engagement on issues affecting Black Ohioans.

Through research, policy publications, and community partnerships, it seeks to address disparities and expand opportunity.

OLBCF engages policymakers, community leaders, and stakeholders across the state on issues addressing economic mobility, educational opportunity, health equity, and community development.

The State of Black Ohio Policy In Action Book highlights legislative activity during the 136th Ohio General Assembly (2025-2026) and documents policy efforts impacting communities throughout Ohio.



Empowering Black Ohio. Driving Equitable Change!

Meet Ohio's Black Legislators

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The **22** Faces Of Black Legislative Power In Ohio.

Each Member of the Ohio Legislature is highlighted above by District numerical order. To learn more about the legislators you can go to <https://legislature.ohio.gov/>. Of the 132 lawmakers in the 136th Ohio General Assembly, these 22 represent the entire collective of Black legislative leadership. They make up nearly 17% of the General Assembly, which is slightly above Black Ohioans' 13% of the state population.

Importance of Black Legislative Leadership



Senator Hearcel Craig (Columbus), Ohio Statehouse rising of the Juneteenth Flag June 2025

Representation in government matters—not just in who is elected, but in how real-life experiences shape the decisions that affect everyday lives.

Black legislators in Ohio bring important perspectives to the policymaking process. Their leadership is informed not only by their professional backgrounds, but by a deep understanding of the communities they serve. Because of this, issues impacting Black communities are more likely to be recognized, understood, and addressed in meaningful ways.

Black legislative leadership is not limited to one issue or area of focus. Across the 136th Ohio General Assembly, Black lawmakers address a wide range of policies—from public safety and healthcare to education and economic development. Their work reflects the needs of communities across the state.

Advancing legislation requires collaboration. Progress often depends on building relationships, finding common ground, and working across party lines. Bipartisan cooperation moves policies forward, and the efforts documented here reflect that reality. Black legislative leadership is both representative and collaborative, shaped by lived experience, strengthened through partnerships, and grounded in a commitment to serve.

For Ohio to move forward, the presence and leadership of Black lawmakers is not optional, it is essential. Their leadership ensures that progress is not only made, but felt in communities across the state.

There are over 1.04 million registered Black voters in Ohio. Yet 603,000 of those registered voters do not participate in primary elections— the very elections that shape who represents them at the Statehouse (*OLBCF, The State of Black Ohio, Voters Voice,*

How To Use This Policy Book

Across Ohio, Black communities face longstanding challenges including healthcare, education, economic opportunity, and public safety. While these challenges are well documented, the work happening within the Ohio General Assembly to address them is often less visible. This book highlights the legislative efforts of Black lawmakers serving in the 136th Ohio General Assembly, across both political parties. These leaders bring a range of perspectives, experiences, and policy approaches, and share a common responsibility to represent and respond to the needs of their communities.

This guide provides a clear, nonpartisan view of current legislation that has meaningful implications for Black communities across the state. It focuses on policies that are actively being introduced, debated, and advanced, many of which are gaining bipartisan attention and support.

Each section of this guide provides an overview of legislative activity within the 136th Ohio General Assembly, with a focus on policies shaped by Black legislators and their implications for Black communities across the state.

Organized by policy area, this guide allows readers to navigate topics of interest and better understand how individual pieces of legislation connect to broader community outcomes.

Within each section, featured legislation is presented in a straightforward and consistent format, including bill summaries, legislative sponsors, and intended impact. **Every bill title is linked for you to learn more.**

This guide is designed to meet readers where they are:

- Community members can use it to better understand how state policy decisions, particularly those led by Black legislators, may affect their daily lives.
- Advocates and organizations can use it to inform outreach, education, and engagement efforts.
- Policymakers and stakeholders can use it to track legislative priorities and identify opportunities for collaboration

A Note on This Guide

This guide documents legislation introduced and advanced by **Black lawmakers in the 136th Ohio General Assembly**. It is not an exhaustive review of all state legislation. Bill analysis reflects legislation as of February 2026. Additional legislation may have been introduced or advanced since February.

For the most current information on legislation in the 136th Ohio General Assembly, visit legislature.ohio.gov.

Understanding the Language

Key Terms

The words **bill**, **legislation**, and **policy** are often used interchangeably, but they each mean something slightly different. In this book, all three words appear depending on context.

Bill — A written proposal for a new law introduced in the General Assembly. If it passes both the House and Senate and is signed by the Governor, it becomes a law.

Legislation — The process of making laws, or the bills and laws being considered or passed by the General Assembly. When someone says "current legislation," they usually mean bills that are actively moving through that process.

Policy — The decisions and actions government takes to address specific issues in our communities. Policy can come from legislation, but it can also come from decisions made by government agencies and officials outside of the formal legislative process.

136th General Assembly — The current two-year session of Ohio's state legislature, running from 2025 to 2026.

Amendment — A formal change or addition proposed to a bill during the legislative process.

Bipartisan — Legislation that has the support of both Democratic and Republican lawmakers.

Chamber — A division of the General Assembly. Ohio has two chambers: the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate. A bill must pass both chambers before it can be sent to the Governor to be signed into law.

Co-Sponsor — A legislator who formally joins the primary sponsor in supporting a bill.

Committee — A smaller group of legislators assigned to review and make recommendations on specific bills.

Companion Bill — A bill that is introduced in one chamber of a legislature (like the House) that is almost identical to a bill introduced in the other chamber (like the Senate). The two bills move through the legislative process separately but are meant to support the each other.

Understanding the Language

Key Terms

Hearing — A formal committee meeting where a bill is discussed and testimony may be received.

House Bill (HB) — Legislation introduced by a member of the Ohio House of Representatives.

Introduced — The formal first step when a bill is officially filed and presented for consideration.

Passed — A bill that has received enough votes for approval in one or both chambers.

Referred to Committee — When a bill is assigned to a specific committee for review before a full chamber vote.

Senate Bill (SB) — Legislation introduced by a member of the Ohio Senate.

Session — The period of time during which the General Assembly meets to conduct legislative business.

Signed into Law — When the Governor officially approves a bill, making it law.

Sponsor — The primary legislator who introduces and champions a bill through the legislative process.

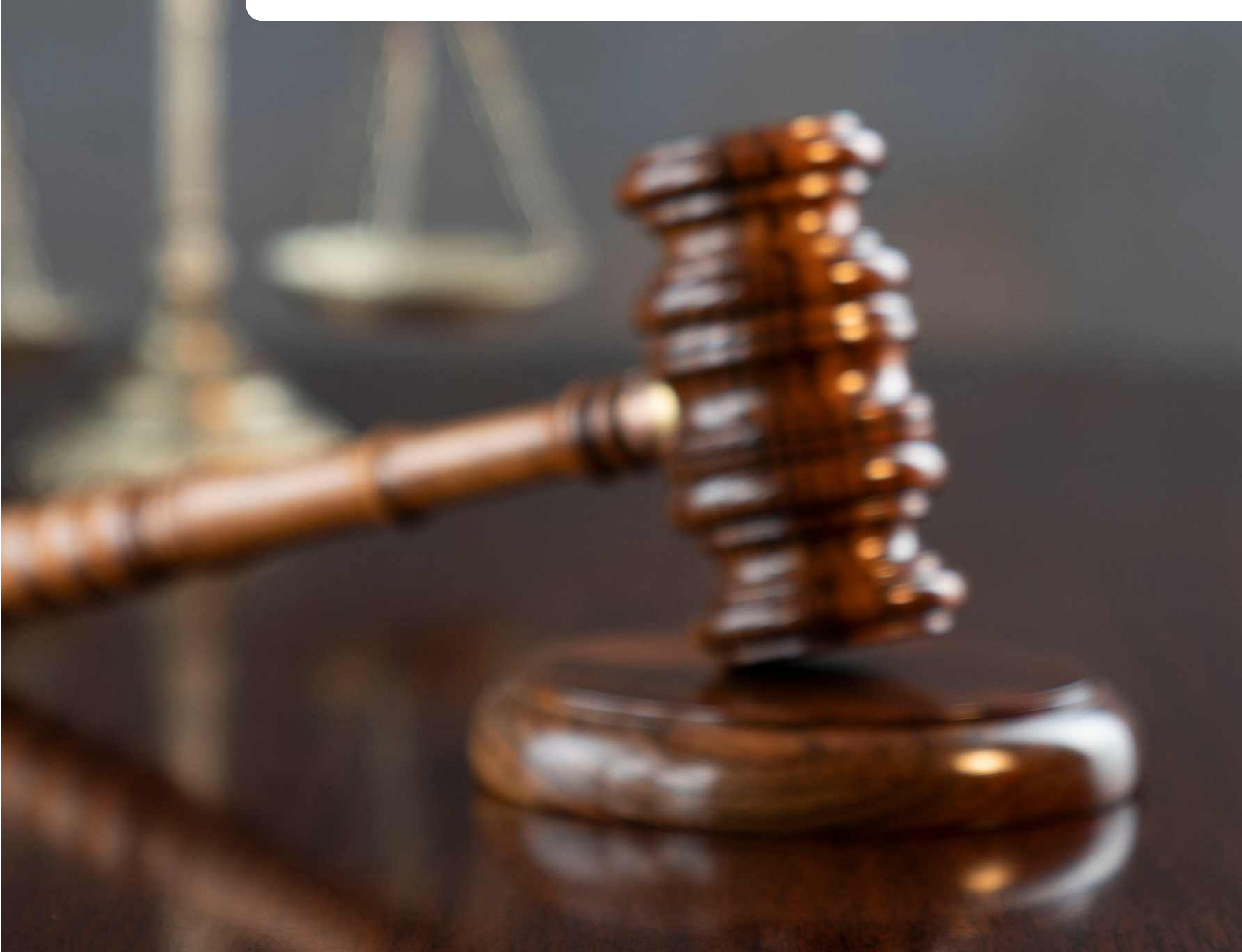
State Representative — An elected official who serves in the Ohio House of Representatives. Ohio has 99 state representatives, each representing a specific district. Representatives serve two-year terms.

State Senator — An elected official who serves in the Ohio Senate. Ohio has 33 state senators, each representing a larger district than a state representative. Senators serve four-year terms.

Together, the Ohio House of Representatives and the Ohio Senate make up the Ohio General Assembly, the state's lawmaking body. A bill must pass both chambers before it can be sent to the Governor to be signed into law.

Criminal Justice & Public Safety

Policies focused on **policing, sentencing, incarceration, and community safety**. This includes both accountability measures and harm reduction efforts, including hate crime protections and wrongful imprisonment reform. These policies reflect the connection between a fair and equitable justice system and the overall safety and wellbeing of families and communities.



Signed into law.

HB 29: Feminine hygiene for inmates

Sponsor: Humphrey, John

Purpose: HB 29 requires Ohio prisons and jails to provide free feminine hygiene products (like tampons and pads) to incarcerated women and ensure access to daily showers with hot water when menstruating.

Impact: This bill helps meet a basic health need. Without these products, people can face discomfort, health problems, and embarrassment. This is especially important for Black Ohioans because Black women are [overrepresented in prisons and jails](#). By guaranteeing free access, this bill can improve health and hygiene, reduce stress and shame, make prison conditions fairer and more humane.

In progress.

HB 31 — Parole Board Recordings

Sponsor: Humphrey, Stewart

Purpose: Requires the Ohio Parole Board to record its hearings and deliberations and make those recordings available. The goal is to improve transparency and accountability in parole decisions.

Impact: Parole decisions can shape how long someone stays in prison, but the process is often hard to see or understand. This bill makes the system more open so people can better understand how decisions are made. By requiring recordings, this bill can help build trust in the system, make it easier to review decisions, and ensure people are treated more fairly. More transparency can also help identify bias, discrimination, or inconsistency in how parole decisions are made.

HB 177: Sentencing Commission Revisions

Sponsor: Williams, Tims

Purpose: HB 177 allows someone to request a new trial or court review if new evidence is discovered after their conviction that could have changed the outcome of the case. It creates a clearer process for courts to consider new evidence.

Impact: This bill gives people a second chance if important evidence was not available during their original trial. It helps make sure that convictions are based on complete and accurate information. The data shows that [Black individuals make up a disproportionate share of wrongful convictions](#), especially in serious cases. By allowing courts to review new evidence, this bill can help correct past mistakes, reduce wrongful incarceration, and improve trust in the justice system.

HB 211: Caretaker status in sentencing

Sponsors: Humphrey, Williams

Purpose: Allows courts to consider whether someone is a primary caregiver (caretaker), such as a parent of a young child, when deciding on a sentence. It gives judges more flexibility to look at family impact when making decisions about a person's sentence.

Impact: When a parent or caregiver is sent to jail or prison, it can affect children's housing, school, and overall stability. This bill allows courts to take that into account and, in some cases, choose a sentence that keeps families more stable. This matters for Black Ohioans because Black children are [more likely to have a parent who has been incarcerated](#), due to broader disparities in the criminal legal system. Research shows that [children with incarcerated parents are more likely to face emotional stress, economic hardship, and disruptions at home and school](#). By allowing courts to consider caretaker status, this bill can help reduce harm to families and support better outcomes for children.



HB 110: Increase the penalty for repeat voyeurism

Sponsor: Thomas, Williams

Purpose: HB 110 updates Ohio's laws on voyeurism, indecent exposure, and related offenses by expanding definitions (like "private areas") and increasing penalties in some cases. It also creates new offenses tied to exposing others, especially minors, to sexualized performances.

Impact: This bill aims to strengthen privacy and reduce harmful sexual exposure, especially for children. This matters for Black communities, who face [higher rates of sexual violence](#) compared to some other groups in the U.S. At the same time, this matters for Black Ohioans because Black people are already overrepresented in the criminal legal system, so broader criminal laws can sometimes lead to more unequal enforcement. Overall, the bill could improve privacy protections, but how it is enforced will shape whether it increases fairness or adds to existing disparities.

HB 306: Hate Crime Act

Sponsor: Jarrells, Williams

Purpose: HB 306 creates stronger penalties for crimes motivated by bias or hate, such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. It allows courts to consider whether a crime was driven by bias when deciding charges and sentencing.

Impact: Hate crimes can cause harm not just to individuals, but to entire communities. This bill aims to better recognize and respond to those harms. Black Ohioans are more [frequently targeted in hate crimes](#). Ohio data shows that race is the most common reason for reported hate crimes, with Black individuals often the primary targets. By strengthening penalties, this bill can help signal that hate-based violence is taken seriously, improve reporting, and support safer communities. *This legislation is a direct result of advocacy by the Ohio Legislative Black Caucus Foundation.*



HB 359: Regards emergency Joshua Alert system for certain missing kids

Sponsor: Thomas, Gross

Purpose: Creates a “Joshua Alert” system in Ohio to quickly notify the public when a person with a developmental disability or special needs goes missing. It is similar to an Amber Alert but designed for autistic or developmentally disabled children.

Impact: When someone with developmental disabilities goes missing, they may face higher risks and need faster help. This bill aims to improve response time and increase the chances of safely locating them. Improving alert systems can help ensure that all missing persons—especially those who are more vulnerable—receive timely attention.

HB 542: Require all inmate pregnancy outcomes be reported to DRC

Sponsors: Upchurch, Williams

Purpose: Requires Ohio prisons and jails to collect and report data on pregnant inmates, including outcomes like births, miscarriages, and medical care. The goal is to better understand and improve care for pregnant people who are incarcerated.

Impact: Pregnant people in custody often face gaps in care, and there has been limited statewide data on their health outcomes. This bill helps bring more transparency, so the state can track what is happening and improve care. Black women are overrepresented in incarceration and face [higher risks of poor maternal health outcomes](#). Poor maternal health outcomes include pregnancy complications and the death of the mother. By collecting better data, this bill can help Ohio improve care in correctional settings and support safer pregnancies and births for a population that is often overlooked.



HB 565: Grand jury privacy

Sponsor: Jarrells, Odioso

Purpose: HB 565 updates Ohio law to strengthen privacy protections for grand jury proceedings, including limits on how information and identities from those proceedings can be shared. Grand juries decide whether there is enough evidence to bring criminal charges in court cases.

Impact: Strengthens privacy protections for grand jurors and witnesses, helping ensure individuals can participate in the judicial process without fear of retaliation, intimidation, or public exposure. This is particularly significant for Black Ohioans, who have historically faced disproportionate risks when engaging with the criminal justice system as jurors and witnesses.

SB 124: Assault of transit workers penalties

Sponsor: Craig, Patton

Purpose: SB 124 increases penalties for assaulting public transit workers, such as bus drivers and rail operators. The goal is to improve safety for workers who provide essential transportation services.

Impact: Transit workers often interact with the public in high-stress situations and can face safety risks on the job. Stronger penalties are meant to stop violence and protect workers. This matters for Black Ohioans because Black workers are well-represented in public transit jobs. At the same time, enforcement of assault laws can also impact riders. Black individuals are more likely to be unfairly incarcerated, so stricter penalties may have unequal effects depending on how laws are applied. By increasing protections for workers, this bill can improve safety, but it also highlights the need for fair enforcement.

SB 270: Regards commitment of delinquent children to Youth Services

Sponsor: Hicks-Hudson, Manning

Purpose: Updates Ohio law on how courts can commit (place) youth in state custody after they are found delinquent. The bill limits when young people can be sent to the Department of Youth Services (DYS), including preventing most children under 14 and some first-time, low-level nonviolent offenders from being committed there. It also gives judges more flexibility in certain gun-related cases and clarifies how commitment decisions are made.

Impact: Decisions about placing youth in custody can shape their future, including education, mental health, and long-term involvement in the justice system. This bill helps define when and how those placements happen. This matters for Black Ohioans because Black youth are [more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system](#). Research shows that Black youth are more likely to face harsher outcomes at multiple stages of the system, including detention and commitment. By clarifying commitment rules, this bill could help create more consistent decisions across races.

Economic Mobility, Workforce & Taxation



Policies on **expanding access to jobs, building skills, and removing barriers to employment and career advancement.** This includes efforts addressing fair wages, job training, workforce entry and reentry, and pathways to long-term financial stability and upward economic mobility. These policies reflect the connection between economic opportunity and the overall strength of families and communities.



In progress.

HB 100: Retailer grant program

Sponsor: Rogers, Santucci

Purpose: Creates a short-term grant program for retailers that sell donated goods. The funding can be used to support job training and job placement services, often for individuals facing barriers to employment.

Impact: This bill focuses on connecting people to jobs through organizations that already provide training and support. These programs often serve individuals who have difficulty finding stable employment, including people with disabilities, prior justice involvement, or limited work experience. Because of this, expanding access to job training and placement services can help improve employment outcomes in communities that have been historically left out of economic growth (like Black communities). If targeted well, this program could support workforce entry, build skills, and increase income stability. Its impact will depend on whether funding reaches the communities and organizations serving those most in need.

HB 134: Home kitchen registration

Sponsor: Humphrey, Gross

Purpose: Creates a system for people to register their home kitchens to legally prepare and sell certain homemade foods. This includes a new “microenterprise home kitchen” category with basic requirements like registration, food safety training, and inspections.

Impact: This bill makes it easier for people to start small food businesses from home without needing a full commercial kitchen. It lowers barriers to entry and creates a more flexible path to earning income. Starting a business often requires upfront money, licenses, and space—things that are not equally accessible. Black entrepreneurs are less likely to have access to capital and traditional business opportunities, which can make it harder to get started. If implemented well, it could support small business growth and local food access.

HB 180: Worker protections (election officials)

Sponsor: Rogers, Klopfestein

Purpose: HB 180 makes it so that employers cannot punish employees for missing work to serve or train as a poll worker, but employees must give reasonable notice before taking time off for those duties.

Impact: This bill makes it easier for people to help run elections without worrying about losing their job. Election workers are needed to keep polling places open and organized. Because Black workers are more likely to be in hourly jobs with less flexibility, taking time off can be harder. By protecting workers from penalties, this bill can make it easier for more Black Ohioans to serve as election officials.

HB 216: Hand Up ACT Program

Sponsors: Williams, Jarrells

Purpose: To create a three-year pilot program (A HAND UP program) that helps people transition into the workforce when they no longer qualify for public assistance benefits. The program includes giving participants a stipend to pay for health insurance premiums, financial literacy education, and a mentor.

Impact: This program helps people stay in the workforce by covering real-life costs, including health expenses, and teaching financial literacy. Without that support, even people who have jobs can struggle to keep them. Black workers in Ohio are more likely to face unstable employment and income gaps, which can make it harder to stay consistently employed. By pairing work with support, this program can make it easier to keep a job, increase income stability, and reduce reliance on short-term assistance. Over time, that can help more families move toward financial security.

HB 225: Subminimum wage phase-out

Sponsor: Jarrells, Young

Purpose: Also called the “Ohio Employment First and Greater Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act,” this bill phases out the use of subminimum wages for workers with disabilities. Under current law, some employers can legally pay less than the minimum wage. The bill also encourages nonprofits to hire individuals with disabilities by creating a tax credit.

Impact: This bill aims to ensure that workers with disabilities are paid fairly for their labor. Paying less than minimum wage can limit independence and make it harder to meet basic needs, especially for Black Ohioans who already face more barriers to work and socioeconomic disadvantages.

HB 255: Create Ohio Sports Commission

Sponsors: Williams, Jarrells

Purpose: HB 255 creates the Ohio Sports Commission, which includes a 17-member board of commissioners tasked with attracting, promoting, and developing national and international sports in the state.

Impact: HB 255 is designed to improve quality of life in Ohio, Ohio’s image, and economy, increasing tourism and generating revenue for local businesses.

HB 444: Tax deductions for religious organizations

Sponsors: Williams, Jarrells

Purpose: HB 444 Creates or expands a state tax deduction for charitable donations to religious organizations, such as churches and faith-based groups. The goal is to encourage giving and support community-based services.

Impact: Faith-based organizations often play a major role in providing food, housing help, and social services, especially in underserved communities. This tax incentive could increase donations and expand those services. In many Black communities, churches are a key source of [social support, health outreach, and economic assistance](#). At the same time, tax deductions tend to benefit higher-income households more, which could limit how evenly the benefits are shared.

HB 701: Juvenile Certificate of Qualification for Employment (CQE)

Sponsor: Williams, Humphrey

Purpose: HB 701 expands access to Certificates of Qualification for Employment (CQEs) for young people in the juvenile system. A CQE is a court document that helps someone with a record to get a job by removing certain legal barriers. This bill allows some youth, such as 17-year-olds who were found delinquent, to apply for and receive a CQE through juvenile court.

Impact: Similar to the impact of HB 268 (see Page 16). CQEs may have an especially important impact on younger people during a critical developmental period. Earlier access to employment qualifications can support stable workforce entry and reduce barriers to long-term economic mobility.

SB 79: Regulation on pricing algorithms

Sponsor: Blackshear, Jr., Blessing

Purpose: Regulates the use of pricing algorithms, which are computer systems that help set prices for goods or services. The bill aims to prevent unfair practices, such as coordinated price increases or hidden price-setting that harms consumers.

Impact: Pricing algorithms are used in areas like housing, travel, and retail. While they can improve efficiency, they can also lead to higher prices if not properly regulated. Rising costs hit some households harder than others.

Black households are more likely to have lower average wealth and income, which makes sudden price increases more difficult to absorb.

By setting rules for how pricing algorithms can be used, this bill may help prevent unfair price hikes and improve transparency. This can support more stable and predictable costs for consumers, especially those with less financial cushion. The impact will depend on how the rules are enforced and whether they effectively limit harmful pricing practices.

SB 331: Gratuity for public hospitality workers

Sponsor: Blackshear, Jr., Wilson

Purpose: SB 331 allows for public hospitality employees to accept gratuity, or a tip, for their services. Public hospitality employees include workers at publicly owned recreation camps and pools, golf courses or hotels, theaters, retail or food establishment in a publicly owned facility, and more.

Impact: SB 331 would allow public hospitality workers to accept tips, potentially increasing their earnings, especially for lower-wage employees in roles like food service, recreation, and customer service. This could help improve worker satisfaction and retention in publicly operated facilities.

Education



Policies focused on **K-12 and higher education, including school safety, curriculum, scholarships, and anti-discrimination protections including the CROWN Act.** This includes efforts addressing equal access, student wellbeing, and learning environments that reflect and support all students. These policies reflect the connection between educational opportunity and the long-term strength of families and communities.

In progress.

HB 3: School Bus Safety Act

Sponsors: Thomas, Willis

Purpose: HB 3, the “School Bus Safety Act,” designates August as “School Bus Safety Awareness Month” and creates a School Bus Safety Fund. The fund is made up of fines from drivers who fail to stop for school buses and is used to support school bus safety efforts.

Impact: Raising awareness can help reduce dangerous driving around school buses, while the fund provides resources to improve bus safety over time. School buses are widely used across Ohio, including in communities where families rely on them as a main form of transportation. Safer bus systems help ensure students from all backgrounds can get to school safely and consistently.

HB 25: Foster-to-College program

Sponsor: Jarrells, Ray

Purpose: HB 25 expands and strengthens Ohio’s Foster-to-College Scholarship Program, which helps students who have been in foster care go to college or with job training. The bill builds upon a program funded in a previous legislative session by adding clearer structure and support services, like guidance and coordination from foster care liaisons and regional navigators, to help students succeed.

Impact: Ohio has some of the worst outcomes for youth in foster care in the country, and [less than 3% of Ohio’s foster care youth who age out of the system finish college](#). Black youth are also overrepresented in the foster care system, so programs like the Foster-to-College Scholarship Program can have large impact in these communities. Over time, the program could lead to better job opportunities, higher income, and more stable futures for Ohio’s Black youth in the foster system. ***HB 25 has a Companion Bill, SB 13, sponsored by Reynolds.***

HB 415: CROWN Act in schools

Sponsor: Brent, Callender

Purpose: HB 415 bans schools from discriminating against individuals based on their hair texture and protective hair styles, such as braids, locs, twists, and afros.

Impact: Research shows that Black students are more likely to face discipline related to their hair and/or appearance, which can have profound psychological effects on students, and lead to missed class and unequal treatment. [A 2022 report by the ACLU](#) found that 25% of Black students reported being penalized for their hair, compared to only 5% of white students. By setting clear protections against this specific discrimination for the first time in Ohio's history, the CROWN Act can reduce discipline based on racial discrimination. As a result, students may have higher attendance, engagement, and an overall more positive school experience.

HB 511: Campus safety grants

Sponsor: Jarrells, Pizzulli

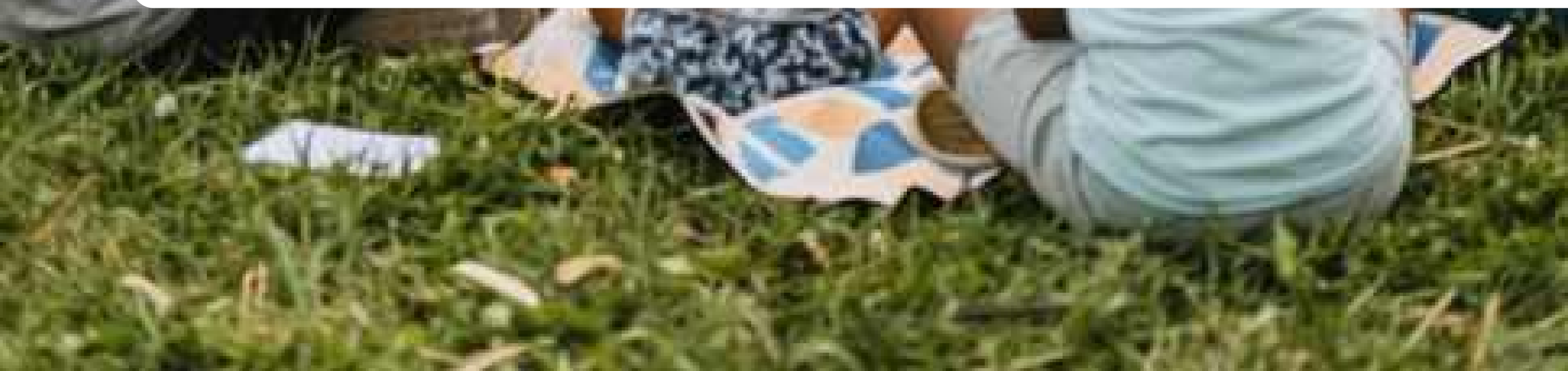
Purpose: HB 511 increases funding for the Student Safety Grant Program through June 30, 2027. This funding helps Ohio colleges implement new security measures to keep students and staff safe. It can be used for physical security upgrades, technology improvements, safety assessments, and more.

Impact: Feeling safe on campus is important for students to focus on school and stay enrolled. Campus safety concerns are not experienced the same way by all students. [Black students often report lower feelings of safety and belonging on campus](#), which can affect their college experience. By supporting safety improvements and prevention efforts, this bill can help create a more secure and supportive campus environment, especially for Black Ohioans attending college. To do so, it is important that the schools receiving funds use it in ways that are truly dedicated to protecting their students.

Family, Children & Human Services



Policies focused on **the wellbeing of individuals and families, including children, older adults, and those requiring additional support.** This includes efforts addressing child care, child welfare services, nutrition assistance, and services for people with disabilities. These policies reflect the connection between strong family support systems and the issues Ohioans face every day.



Signed into law .

SB 39: Veteran's Poster

Sponsor: Craig, Johnson

Purpose: SB 39 requires the Director of Commerce to work with the Director of Veteran's affairs to create a poster about veterans' benefits and services. The poster must include information about the Department of Veterans Services' programs, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs crisis hotline, substance abuse and mental health treatment programs, workforce training resources, tax benefits and exemptions, and more. Employers can request the poster and display it at their workplaces.

Impact: SB 39 makes it easier for veterans, especially Black veterans in Ohio, to learn about and access the benefits they've earned. [Ohio has the 6th highest veteran population](#) out of all states. Black veterans in Ohio are more likely to face barriers like lower access to healthcare, higher unemployment, and less connection to veteran support systems. A visible, easy-to-understand poster can help bridge that gap. It could also help reduce stigma around asking for help, especially for mental health. However, the impact depends on whether employers choose to display the posters and whether the information is clear and easy to act on.

In progress.

HB 60: Campaign fund use for childcare

Sponsors: Humphrey, Williams

Purpose: HB 60 allows candidates, or people running in state elections, to use campaign money to pay for childcare.

Impact: Running for office takes a lot of time, and people with kids often have to pay for childcare while they campaign. HB 60 makes it easier for parents to run for office and helps candidates who don't have extra income or family support. By helping parents, HB 60 could allow for more candidates to run for office and make elected officials more representative of everyday families, including Black families.



SB 58: Expanding Grandparent POAs

Sponsors: Humphrey, Williams

Purpose: SB 58 expands eligibility for a grandparent POA or caretaker authorization affidavit to include an adult who is not a relative but has a relationship or bond with the child or the child's family. A POA is a legal document that allows a parent to give another adult temporary authority to make decisions about a child's education, healthcare, and daily needs.

Impact: This bill makes it easier for trusted adults to step in and care for a child when a parent is unable to do so. Without legal authority, caregivers may have trouble enrolling a child in school or consenting to medical care. This bill helps make sure that children receive consistent support and avoid disruptions in their daily lives. [Children who are Black are more likely to be raised by nonrelatives](#), so this bill will especially help this population. Legally recognizing the people taking care of so many children helps Ohio's laws better reflect how care already happens in many communities, including Black families.

SB 174: Child custody and parenting plans

Sponsor: Hicks-Hudson, Gavarone

Purpose: SB 174 provides major updates to the Ohio law on parenting rights. It takes away the traditional custody concepts of shared parenting, sole custody, and split custody. Courts are to create a parenting plan for every custody case that focuses on the child's best interest, rather than focus on parental status (including finances or gender). The child's best interest includes maintaining meaningful relationships with both parents whenever possible. Courts can now also consider past behavior of the parent, including history of abuse or domestic violence.

Impact: SB 174 is a 400-page bill that modernizes Ohio's child custody law. The bill is 25 years in the making, and [is based on updated child development research](#). Family court decisions do not affect all groups equally. [Black families are more likely to receive unfair custody decisions because of racial bias](#). SB 174 helps ensure court decisions are made without racial or gender bias and prioritize the child.



SB 315: Cybersecurity for SNAP

Sponsors: Craig, Schaffer

Purpose: SB 315 requires Ohio to upgrade SNAP cards to secure, chip-enabled cards to prevent fraud and theft. SNAP cards are like debit cards used by people with low incomes to pay for food, and they are easier for people to hack compared to more secure cards that are chip-enabled. “Chip-enabled” means the card has a small computer chip built into it that must be inserted or tapped, and it is much harder to copy or hack.

Impact: [About one-third of Black households in Ohio use SNAP.](#) When benefits are stolen, the impact is immediate: families can suddenly lose the money they depend on for groceries. This bill helps protect grocery money that many Black families rely on, making it less likely that their benefits are lost to fraud.


SB 319: Long-term care resident protections

Sponsor: Hicks-Hudson, Wilson

Purpose: SB 319 gives county departments of job and family services the power to investigate reports that an adult living in a long-term care facility, like a nursing home, is being exploited or abused by someone who is an employee at the facility. If the investigation proves there is exploitation, the county department has to provide protective services to that person.

Impact: [Older Black adults are more likely to face neglect, underreporting of abuse, and racism in long-term care settings.](#) This bill helps address the harm to this community and the broader population of adults in long-term care, while highlighting the need for continued policy attention to ensure quality care for older Black adults.

Housing & Community Stability



Policies focused on **safe, affordable, and stable housing, including efforts addressing eviction prevention, homelessness, housing quality, pathways to homeownership, and investment in well-connected neighborhoods.** This includes measures that support access to community resources and stable living conditions. These policies reflect the connection between stable housing and the overall wellbeing of families and community.

In progress.

HB 215: Property tax levy timing

Sponsors: Jarrells, Stephens

Purpose: Prevents most voter-approved property tax levies from taking effect in the same year they are passed. Instead, new levies would begin the following tax year, giving homeowners more time to plan for the increase. Property tax levies fund local services like schools, public safety, and community programs.

Impact: Delaying when new property taxes take effect can make tax increases more predictable for homeowners, which is especially helpful for households with tighter budgets. At the same time, the delay could slow funding for local services, meaning communities may wait longer to receive resources for schools and public safety in the short term.

SB 22: Tax credit for certain homeowners & renters

Sponsor: Craig, Blessing

Purpose: Creates a refundable income tax credit (or rebate) for homeowners and renters whose property taxes or rent exceed 5% of their income. In other words, it limits how much of someone's income goes toward housing costs. Because the credit is refundable, people can get money back even if they owe little or no taxes.

Impact: This bill targets people whose housing costs take up a large share of their income. When property taxes or rent rise too high, it can strain household budgets and increase the risk of financial instability. This can make housing more affordable and help prevent people from being priced out of their homes. [Black Ohioans are more likely to have lower incomes and higher housing cost burdens](#), which means they are more likely to qualify for and benefit from this type of relief.

SB 42: Residential stability zones

Sponsors: Reynolds, Craig

Purpose: SB 42 allows local governments to create residential stability zones where homeowners can qualify for a partial property tax exemption. If homeowners have owned a home for 1+ years and have an income of 80% or less than the area's median income, they may qualify to pay less property tax on their home.

Impact: Housing costs are rising, which can push people out of their neighborhoods. This bill gives cities more flexibility to respond and help residents stay in place by lowering their property taxes. Black households are [more likely to rent and face housing instability](#), which can increase the risk of being pushed out when rents rise. This bill can reduce displacement and support more stable living conditions. The impact will depend on how cities use these tools and whether they reach the communities most at risk.

SB 83: Eviction/building code changes

Sponsor: Reynolds, Craig

Purpose: SB 83 creates new protections for people facing eviction. It provides legal counsel for low-income tenants and requires that tenants are given notice that they qualify for free legal representation. Tenants qualify if they make up to 300% of the federal poverty line. SB 83 also clarifies rules around building inspections, making sure that building inspection requests are completed within 30 days.

Impact: This bill can shape how fair and accessible the process is for tenants. Housing instability is not evenly distributed. [Black renters are more likely to face eviction](#) and spend a higher share of their income on housing, which increases risk during legal disputes. By providing legal counsel and clear notice, this bill can reduce wrongful evictions, improve outcomes in court, and help more families stay housed. The building inspection rules also help ensure that unsafe housing conditions are addressed, which can improve living conditions for tenants.

SB 145: Rename Department of Development

Sponsors: Reynolds, Craig

Purpose: SB 145 renames the Department of Development as the Department of Housing and Development. It requires the Department to create an Ohio housing dashboard, which will include home prices, rental rates, and more. The Department will also create a housing toolkit for local governments, expand the Welcome Home Ohio (WHO) program to include more homeowners to be eligible for grants or tax credits, make several more changes to prioritize housing.

Impact: This bill shifts the state's focus to treat housing as a central part of economic development. Access to affordable housing is not equal. Black Ohioans are more likely to face housing instability and higher rent burdens, which makes housing policy especially important. By strengthening the state's role in housing planning and support, this bill can help increase housing availability and improve access over time. Its impact will depend on how effectively these new tools are used and whether they reach communities with the greatest need.

SB 255: Mortgage/property tax assistance

Sponsor: Craig, Reynolds

Purpose: SB 255 creates the Save the Dream Ohio and the Save the Dream Ohio Utility Assistance Plus programs. These two programs provide funding to people who apply and qualify. The funding can be used for mortgage, property tax, and utility bill assistance.

Impact: This bill provides direct financial support to help people stay in their homes and avoid loss of utilities. Black homeowners are more likely to face financial strain and have less wealth to fall back on, which increases the risk of losing housing during financial hardship. Programs like this can help reduce that risk and support long-term housing stability. The bill also builds on a previous "Save the Dream" program that helped tens of thousands of Ohio households, suggesting it could have a broad impact if implemented effectively.


SB 275: Partial property tax deferral

Sponsors: Craig, Reynolds

Purpose: Allows certain homeowners in Ohio, specifically older adults and low-income homeowners who meet make a certain income, to defer, or delay, paying a portion of their property taxes instead of paying the full amount right away.

Impact: This bill helps reduce immediate financial pressure by letting homeowners delay part of their tax payments. This can make it easier for people to stay in their homes during periods of rising costs. At the same time, deferred taxes still need to be paid later, which means this is temporary relief, not a permanent tax reduction. The long-term impact depends on how homeowners manage those delayed costs.

Infrastructure, Transportation & Environment



Policies **focused on building and maintaining essential systems and infrastructure, including roads, public transit, water systems, and energy.** This includes efforts addressing environmental concerns such as air and water quality, pollution reduction, and access to green spaces and parks. These policies reflect the connection between safe, reliable infrastructure needed in Ohio.

In progress.

HB 284: U.S. steel requirement

Sponsors: White, Hiner

Purpose: HB 284 requires that iron and steel used in projects funded by the state, like buildings, roads, and water systems, be made in the United States instead of imported from other countries.

Impact: HB 284 could support U.S. manufacturing jobs, including some in Ohio, but it may also raise the cost of infrastructure projects.

HB 307: Lead service line replacement

Sponsor: Jarrells, Robb Blasdel

Purpose: HB 307 aims to remove all lead water pipes in Ohio within 15 years by requiring public water systems to identify and replace them. The goal is to reduce lead exposure in drinking water, protect public health, especially children, and ensure the costs of replacement are shared in a way that is manageable for communities. For example, an owner of a public water system will help pay for the line of a customer who has a lower income.

Impact: Lead water pipes are more common in communities that have faced long-term underinvestment, including Black communities. Because of this, these communities are more likely to be exposed to harmful lead in drinking water. It is especially dangerous for children because it can damage the brain and nervous system, leading to learning problems, lower IQ, and behavior issues. Replacing all lead service lines can help reduce these health risks and improve access to safe drinking water, especially for children and families who have been most affected.

SB 97: Funeral procession traffic law

Sponsors: Craig, Wilson

Purpose: SB 97 doubles fines for failing to yield to a funeral procession. For example, fines increase from \$150 for a first-time offender to \$300. Drivers must yield the right of way to every car of a funeral procession.

Impact: This bill has the potential to protect funeral processions, but it must be enforced fairly among Ohioans who violate the law.

Public Health & Healthcare



Policies focused on **health access, insurance coverage, disease prevention, and reducing health disparities**. This includes efforts addressing prostate cancer screenings, insulin cost caps, overdose reversal drugs, and orthotic and prosthetic coverage. These policies reflect the connection between equitable healthcare access and the overall wellbeing of families and communities.

Signed into law.

HB 4: Stillbirth Prevention Day

Sponsor: Thomas, Holmes

Purpose: HB 4 declares that September 19th is “Ohio Stillbirth Prevention Day.” Stillbirth is defined as losing a baby before birth. The goal is to raise awareness and encourage efforts to prevent stillbirth around the state.

Impact: Stillbirth is a serious issue that disproportionately affects Black women, [who are twice as likely to have a stillbirth than white women](#). Black women also have especially [high rates of stillbirths](#) in Ohio. Raising awareness around the issue can help promote better care during pregnancy and inspire more conversations between patients and doctors. ***HB 4 has a Companion Bill, SB 84, sponsored by Craig.***

HB 57: Overdose reversal drugs in schools

Sponsors: Jarrells, Williams

Purpose: HB 57 is intended to improve student safety by allowing schools to respond to overdoses by stocking and administering overdose-reversal medications like naloxone (Narcan) in emergency situations. It also establishes guidelines and protections for school personnel who respond to overdoses, ensuring faster and safer life-saving intervention.

Impact: HB 57 is a harm reduction policy that strengthens schools' ability to respond to opioid overdoses, reducing preventable deaths among youth. Overdose deaths have been rising among Black Ohioans, making access to overdose reversal medication in schools especially significant for Black youth and families.

SB 18: Cardiovascular Health Awareness Day

Sponsor: Reynolds, Craig

Purpose: SB 18 designates February 14 as “Cardiovascular Health Awareness Day” in Ohio. The goal is to help people understand heart disease, how to prevent it, and why early screening matters. Cardiovascular disease includes conditions like heart attacks and strokes, which affect the heart and blood vessels.

Impact: Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Ohio and across the U.S., but it does not affect everyone equally. Black communities face higher rates of heart disease, stroke, and related deaths, often due to barriers like limited access to care, higher rates of untreated conditions (like hypertension), and structural inequities. By increasing awareness, this bill can help encourage earlier screenings and preventive care, improve knowledge about risk factors like high blood pressure, and support community-based education efforts in higher-risk populations.

In progress.

HB 33: Prostate cancer screening coverage

Sponsor: Jarrells, Johnson

Purpose: HB 33 aims to require health insurance plans to cover preventive prostate cancer screenings for high-risk individuals without cost-sharing. The bill ensures screenings are provided according to established medical guidelines, removing financial barriers to early detection.

Impact: Prostate cancer disproportionately impacts Black men, who are about 70–80% more likely to be diagnosed and [twice as likely to die](#) from the disease compared to white men. Eliminating cost-sharing for screenings supports earlier detection in high-risk populations, which improves treatment outcomes and reduces preventable deaths.

HB 58: Recovery housing certificate program

Sponsor: Jarrells, Pizzulli

Purpose: HB 58 is intended to improve the quality of recovery housing, or sober living homes, by requiring recovery housing to go through a certification process led by the state. Providers would have to meet state standards, which would set new rules for how recovery houses operate, and establish inspections. HB 58 also creates the Ohio Recovery Housing Task Force.

Impact: [58% of Black Americans](#) do not receive the treatment they need for their mental health & substance use disorders. Black Americans [are also more likely to receive poor or unfair healthcare](#). By setting stricter standards of care in recovery housing, Black Ohioans could experience better treatment and have improved recovery outcomes. At the same time, if the new certification reduces the number of recovery housing, it could make it harder for people to find places to stay during recovery, which is something for the new Ohio Recovery Housing Task Force to keep in mind.

HB 271: Breast and cervical cancer screening

Sponsors: Williams, Schmidt

Purpose: HB 104 requires health insurance plans to pay for breast and cervical cancer follow-up care when a screening shows that a patient may have cancer. This includes paying for additional mammograms or MRIs.

Impact: [Black women are more likely to be diagnosed with aggressive, or fast-spreading, forms of breast cancer](#), and face barriers to care in the first place. By making follow-up care free, HB 104 could increase follow-ups and lead to more successful treatment for Black Ohioans with breast or cervical cancer. For this bill to be successful, it is also important that patients are told about the new policy making follow-up care more affordable.

HB 311: EMS Week

Sponsor: White, with 50 cosponsors from both parties.

Purpose: Designates a specific week in Ohio as “Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week,” aligning with the national observance during the week that includes May 15 (typically the third week of May) to recognize EMS professionals. EMS professionals are first responders like paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) who provide urgent, life-saving care before patients reach the hospital.

Impact: This bill is mostly symbolic, but it can help with morale and hiring as many EMS teams as possible in Ohio and across the country are short-staffed. EMS workers are often the first point of care in underserved areas, including many Black communities where access to regular healthcare is more limited. Historically, EMS has been especially important in Black communities. In the late 1960s, [Freedom House Ambulance Service](#) in Philadelphia was the first modern EMS program in the U.S. It was staffed mostly by Black men and helped set national standards for emergency care, even while working in an underfunded system.

HB 388: GLP-1 coverage for state employees

Sponsors: Williams, Jarrells

Purpose: HB 388 is meant to help Ohio state employees, which includes teachers, elected officials, and government employees, afford certain weight-loss medications, called GLP-1 drugs. The bill requires the health benefits plan for state employees to cover some of the cost for these drugs when used to treat obesity.

Impact: HB 388 makes treatment for obesity more affordable for Ohio state employees. [Black Americans are more likely to be affected by obesity](#) due to systemic factors including limited access to nutritious food, making expanded coverage particularly relevant for Black state employees seeking improved health outcomes.

HB 543: Food desert elimination program

Sponsors: Upchurch, Williams

Purpose: HB 543 creates a food desert elimination grant program in Ohio. A **food desert** is a place where people don't have easy access to nutritious, affordable food, like fruits and vegetables. This program would provide money to improve Ohioans access to healthy, affordable food in areas where there are no nearby grocery stores and limited fresh food options.

Impact: Food deserts are more common in low-income communities and [Black communities](#), and they are growing across Ohio. Limited access to healthy food is linked to higher rates of obesity, Type 2 Diabetes, and heart disease. [Food deserts are also growing in Ohio](#). By investing in better food access, HB 543 could help improve diet, reduce chronic disease, and support overall health in Black communities, though the impact will depend on how funding is distributed and whether it reaches the neighborhoods with the greatest need.

HB 564: Orthotic/prosthetic coverage

Sponsor: Jarrells, Schmidt

Purpose: HB 564 requires health insurance plans in Ohio to cover orthotic and prosthetic devices, which includes artificial limbs, braces, or mobility supports. The goal is to make sure that people who need these devices can get them for a more affordable price.

Impact: HB 564 could improve access to prosthetic and orthotic devices for many Ohioans, including Black Ohioans [who are more likely to face barriers to affordable healthcare and medical equipment](#). Conditions that can lead to limb loss, like Type 2 Diabetes and heart disease, also affect Black communities more than others, increasing the need for these devices.

HB 566: Domestic violence training for healthcare providers

Sponsors: Jarrells, Williams

Purpose: HB 566, also called the “Break the Silence Act,” requires hospitals and urgent care centers to create clear rules for spotting and responding to cases of domestic violence. This includes training healthcare workers on the best ways to respond, and making a plan for how to support patients who are experiencing domestic violence.

Impact: Domestic violence is a major public health issue, and Ohio currently has no state protocol guiding how healthcare workers respond. According to the [Ohio Domestic Violence Network](#), 95% of ER medical staff asked about injuries while the abuser was present, and 89% asked about safety or mental health in front of the abuser. [Black women also experience higher rates of domestic violence](#), and are more likely to be seriously injured, and less likely to get help. The “Break the Silence Act” will improve early identification and response to domestic violence in healthcare settings.

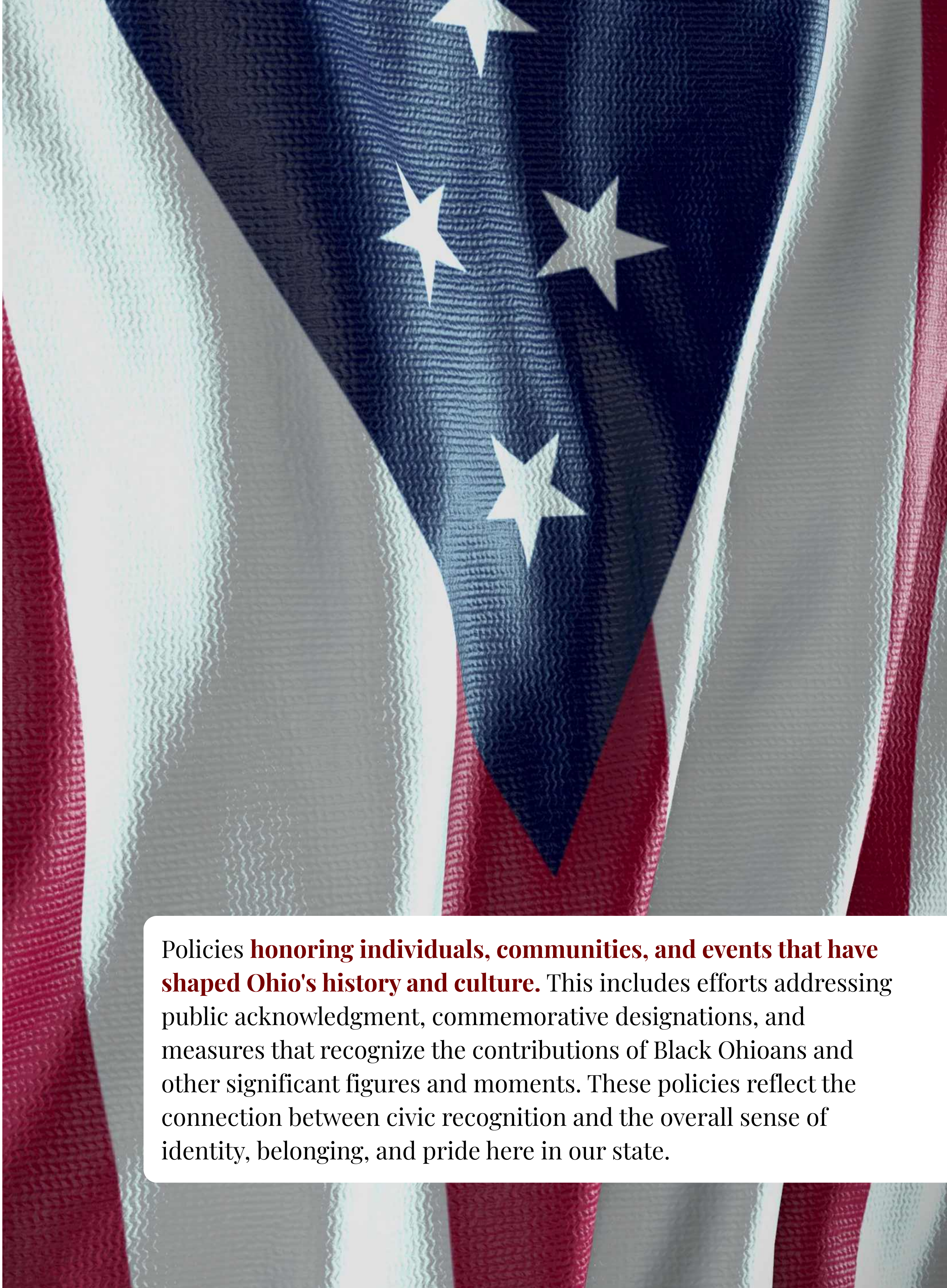
SB 267: Doula Awareness Week

Sponsors: Craig, Reynolds

Purpose: Designates the week including March 22 as “Ohio Doula Awareness Week” to raise awareness about doulas, trained professionals who provide physical, emotional, and informational support during pregnancy, childbirth, and after birth.

Impact: Doulas are linked to better birth outcomes, including fewer complications, fewer C-sections, and healthier births. They also help patients feel more supported during pregnancy and delivery. This is important for Black communities, where maternal mortality rates are high because of systemic inequities. [Modern doula care can trace its roots to the work of Black women, especially “granny midwives,”](#) who provided community-based birth support in the late 1800s through the early 1900s, when Black patients were not allowed to be treated in formal healthcare systems like hospitals.

Civic Recognition & Commemorative Measures

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of the American flag, focusing on the blue field with white stars and the red and white stripes. The flag is draped, creating soft folds and highlights that emphasize its texture. The top of the image is partially obscured by a dark red banner containing the title.

Policies **honoring individuals, communities, and events that have shaped Ohio's history and culture.** This includes efforts addressing public acknowledgment, commemorative designations, and measures that recognize the contributions of Black Ohioans and other significant figures and moments. These policies reflect the connection between civic recognition and the overall sense of identity, belonging, and pride here in our state.

Signed into law.

SB 17: 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day

Sponsor: Reynolds, Craig

Purpose: Designates March 9th as 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day in Ohio, honoring the only all-Black women's battalion to serve overseas during World War II.

Impact: Permanently establishes recognition of the contributions of Black women in the United States military. This designation ensures that the service and sacrifice of the 6888th Battalion is formally acknowledged and remembered across the state of Ohio. **Companion legislation to HB 204.**

In progress.

HB 35: Al Oliver Highway

Sponsor: Jarrells, Pizzulli

Purpose: Designates a portion of State Route 125 in Scioto County as the Al Oliver Highway, honoring the Ohio native and Major League Baseball player's athletic achievements and community contributions.

Impact: Honors an Ohio native whose career and character made a lasting mark on the state and the sport of baseball.

HB 166: Harriet Tubman Day

Sponsor: Lawson-Rowe, Williams

Purpose: Designates March 10th as Harriet Tubman Day in Ohio, honoring her legacy as an abolitionist, freedom fighter, and conductor of the Underground Railroad.

Impact: Affirms Ohio's commitment to recognizing Black historical figures whose courage shaped American history.



HB 204: 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day

Sponsor: White, Miller

Purpose: Designates March 9th as 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion Day, honoring the only all-Black women's battalion to serve overseas during World War II.

Impact: Brings greater public awareness to the contributions of Black women in the United States military. *Companion legislation to SB 17.*

HB 270: Superman State Superhero

Sponsor: Upchurch, Mathews

Purpose: Adopts Superman as the official superhero of Ohio, recognizing the character's cultural and historical connection to the state.

Impact: Celebrates Ohio's contribution to American popular culture and comic book history.

HB 311: EMS Week

Sponsor: White, Hoops

Purpose: Designates the third full week of May as EMS Week in Ohio, recognizing emergency medical service workers and first responders serving communities across the state.

Impact: Elevates public recognition of first responders whose work directly affects community health and safety outcomes.

HB 315: Sojourner Truth Day

Sponsor: Sims, Williams

Purpose: Designates May 29th as Sojourner Truth Day in Ohio, honoring her legacy as an abolitionist, women's rights activist, and powerful voice for justice and equality.

Impact: Affirms Ohio's recognition of Black women whose advocacy shaped the nation's history and values.

HB 451: CPL Lindsey William Mitchell Memorial Highway

Sponsor: Lawson-Rowe, LaRe

Purpose: Designates a portion of Interstate 70 in Franklin and Fairfield counties as the CPL Lindsey William Mitchell Memorial Highway, honoring a fallen soldier who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the country.

Impact: Ensures the memory of a fallen service member is permanently honored along Ohio's roadways.

SB 95: Chief of Police James G. Jackson Memorial Highway

Sponsor: Reynolds, Craig

Purpose: Designates a portion of I-71 in Columbus as the Chief of Police James G. Jackson Memorial Highway, honoring his service and dedication to public safety in the community.

Impact: Preserves the memory of a public servant whose leadership made a lasting impact on the communities he served.

SB 111: Henrietta Lacks Day

Sponsor: Craig, Johnson

Purpose: Designates October 4th as Henrietta Lacks Day in Ohio, honoring the Black woman whose cells were taken without consent and became one of the most important tools in modern medical research.

Impact: Raises public awareness about Henrietta Lacks' contribution to medicine while acknowledging the importance of medical ethics and informed consent.

SB 254: Deaf History Month

Sponsor: Craig, Wilson

Purpose: Changes the designation for Ohio Deaf History Month to the month of April, promoting awareness and recognition of the Deaf community's history and contributions across Ohio.

Impact: Strengthens Ohio's commitment to inclusion and civic recognition of the Deaf community.

Conclusion

Black Ohioans represent **13%** of the state's population, yet:

- **26% live below the poverty line** (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023)
- **19% are housing insecure** (*Ohio Housing Finance Agency, 2024*)
- **Unemployment rate young Black Ohioans ages 20-24 is 16.8%** double the state average (*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023*)
- **Median household income is \$43,800**, significantly below the state median (*U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023*)
- **189,000 Black Ohioans report experiencing racism in healthcare settings annually** (*Health Policy Institute of Ohio, 2024*)

These numbers are not just statistics. They represent real people, real families, and real communities across Ohio. The work of Black legislators in the 136th General Assembly is a direct response to these realities. **Policy is not abstract, it is the difference between struggle and stability, between barriers and opportunity.** The work documented in this book is to inform our community. OLBCF's goal is to **center Black lived experiences through data, research and policy statewide.**

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Finally, this book would not be possible without the ongoing support of the Black communities across Ohio that OLBCF is honored to serve.

STATE OF BLACK OHIO: VOTERS' VOICE SURVEY



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