



A legislative update from STATE REP. SEDRICK DENSON HOUSE DISTRICT 33

(614) 466-1308 | rep33@ohiohouse.gov @SedrickDenson @Sedrick.Denson



Dear Neighbor,

May is **Mental Health Awareness Month**. After a tumultuous past few years where we have all struggled to cope with the pandemic, mental health care is more important than ever. House Democrats are focused on enacting legislation that ensures that every Ohioan, no matter their background, is able to access quality mental health care.

- Some of our bills focused on mental health include:
- **HB 602—To ensure mental health access for all those who voluntarily seek help;**
 - **HB 363—To provide mental health services in the event of a pandemic, natural disaster, or other emergency;**
 - **HB 41—To create additional safety and security measures for mental health professionals;**
 - **HB 453—To create the “Recovery is Beautiful” license plate, to support individuals recovering from mental health or substance abuse issues;**
 - **HB 591—To designate the last week in February as “Eating Disorders Awareness Week.”**

Democrats are working for you, and working for Ohio. During this Mental Health Awareness Month, be sure to take care of yourself and your loved ones.

Jobs and Family Services:
www.jfs.ohio.gov
Veteran Services 888-296-7541
Unemployment 877-644-6562

Taxation:
www.tax.ohio.gov
Form Requests 800-282-1782
Tax Assistance 800-282-1780

Aging:
www.aging.ohio.gov
Golden Card 866-301-6446
Elder Rights Unit 800-282-1206

Bureau of Motor Vehicles:
www.bmv.ohio.gov
General Information 800-589-TAGS

Public Safety:
www.publicsafety.ohio.gov
Highway Patrol 877-7-PATROL
DUI Hotline 800-GRAB-DUI

The Ohio Commission on Minority Health announces the availability of RFP for Minority Health Month 2023. The RFP outlining grant requirements will be available on website www.mih.ohio.gov on June 13th, 2022

Sincerely,

District 33 Spotlight



April 20th, 2022 was Cannabis Lobby Day. State Representative Sedrick Denson discussed his bill, HB 210. HB 210 will remove all civil and criminal penalties for the possession, use, and personal cultivation of small amounts of marijuana. The bill would allow adults 21 and older to possess up to 200 grams of marijuana and cultivate up to 12 marijuana plants for personal use. Further, HB 210 will reclassify the statutory language in Ohio code to list cannabis instead of marijuana. Rep Denson is currently working on fiscal provisions of the bill, in which there has been a concern about the 10% excise tax, conviction expungement, social equity provisions, possession limit, home cultivation, and employer/employee protection. State Representative Sedrick Denson calls for a continuance of united advocacy from industry leaders.

Representative Denson was also featured on [News 5 Cleveland](#) for his new bill, HB 514. Sedrick Denson, a Democrat from Cincinnati, have proposed the Graduating and Retaining Ohio's Workforce Act (GROW). **The bill would help in four main ways:**

1. If a student graduating college takes a job in Ohio rather than out-of-state, they will get 100% refundable state income tax payment for up to three years.
2. There will now be 100 scholarships of \$25,000 available for out-of-state students enrolling to any of Ohio's four-year programs, if they are in the top 5% of their high school graduating class and pursuing a degree within a STEM field. In addition, the scholarship will be a forgivable loan if they remain in Ohio after graduation.
3. Ohio employers will earn a refundable credit of 30% of paid wages for students who did internships, apprenticeships and co-ops.
4. Students who completed their associate degree and want to get a bachelor's can get another grant.

Democrats condemn introduction of 'Don't Say Gay' bill

Democrats condemned the recent introduction of [House Bill \(HB\) 616](#), the Ohio Republican version of Florida's 'Don't Say Gay' law. Under HB 616, schools could not "teach, use, or provide any curriculum or instructional materials on sexual orientation or gender identity" in kindergarten through third grade. Additionally, older students could not be taught "any curriculum or instructional materials on sexual orientation or gender identity in any manner that is not age-appropriate or developmentally appropriate for students in accordance with state standards."

HB 616 is simply the latest draconian censorship bill introduced this General Assembly by House Republicans. Republicans also sponsored HB 327, which would make "failing to fairly present both sides of a political or ideological belief or position" conduct unbecoming of an Ohio educator, prompting [widespread alarm](#) from teachers and concerned parents. HB 327 has received five hearings in the House State and Local Government committee, and was nearing a committee vote until the Republican bill sponsor [made inaccurate and anti-Semitic comments about the Holocaust](#) during an interview.



While Republicans continue [their attacks on LGBTQ+ Ohioans](#), Democrats are calling for action on the [Ohio Fairness Act](#), bipartisan legislation that would protect LGBTQ+ Ohioans from discrimination in employment, housing and accommodations. The Ohio Fairness Act was introduced in March 2021, but has yet to receive a single hearing.

Redistricting Update

The fight for fair maps is not over.

In April, the Ohio Supreme Court struck down the state legislative maps adopted by the Redistricting Commission for the fourth time. In the latest round of maps, a majority of Republican commissioners chose to abandon the bipartisan, transparent, independent map-drawing process ordered by the Ohio Supreme Court, instead forcing another vote on a last-minute secret gerrymandered plan.

The Redistricting Commission now must redraw the state legislative maps by May 6.

The fight for fair, constitutional maps is not over—for 2022 or the rest of the decade. We have a constitutional obligation to produce fair state legislative maps for this upcoming fall election, and Democrats won't stop fighting until we get this done.



Democrats commit to investing in students, educators

This May, Democrats are recognizing and celebrating our educators in Teacher Appreciation Week and Bus Drivers Appreciation Day.

House Democrats thank all our educators and school staff who work hard each and every day to ensure our children and students are receiving the best education and care possible.

Democrats know that better lives and brighter futures starts in the classroom. That's why we support legislation to guarantee every Ohioan, no matter where they live, has a quality education. Democrats delivered a major win for education by passing the Fair School Funding Plan in the 2022-2023 state budget. The Fair School Funding Plan invests in students and ensures that schools get the funds they need to succeed.

Democrats also supported bipartisan legislation to reform the state report card system. The reformed system makes improvements in accurately and equitably rating our schools, and will better reflect the hard work of our educators. We have also introduced several other bills to better support our students and educators, including:



- HB 333—To create a specialized school counselor job description;
- HB 353—The Testing Your Faith Act, to guarantee students of higher education have absences for religious obligations;
- HB 619—To allow school districts to permit student mental health days.

Thank you, teachers, administrators, and staff, for all you do!



Jewish American Heritage Month

May is Jewish American Heritage Month, a time to pay tribute to the generations of Jewish Americans who helped form the fabric of American history, culture and society.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, [anti-Semitic incidents in Ohio rose to a 40-year high in 2020](#), with a 72 percent increase in events from the year before.

HB 341 would create the Bureau of Hate Crimes to conduct independent investigations for hate crimes when sufficient cause exists.



Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

This Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, House Democrats are celebrating the vibrant and diverse traditions and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

As hate crimes against Asian Americans are on the rise, we also reaffirm our commitment to stopping Asian hate and ensuring all Ohioans can live with safety and security in their communities.

Democrats have introduced legislation to create the Ohio Asian-American and Pacific Islander Affairs Commission and the Office of Asian-American and Pacific Islander Affairs to address the injustices of the past and understand the unique difficulties in addressing the population of the Asian American and Pacific Islander population in Ohio.

Office of State Rep. Sedrick Denson
 (614) 466-1308 | rep33@ohiohouse.gov
 77 S. High St., Columbus, OH 43215