



A legislative update from
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Dear Neighbor,

The pace is picking up here in Columbus as we are diving head first into the budgeting season! This is an incredibly important process in which we outline our priorities as a state for the upcoming biennium. As a sitting member of the Finance Committee which reviews the budget I will be working directly on this piece of legislation to ensure that we are making great use of our public dollars.

There are a few other exciting things that I want everyone to look out for in coming weeks and months. On March 29th we honor Tuskegee Airmen Day- which was codified into Ohio law as a result of the bill put forward by Representative Terrence Upchurch and myself. The Tuskegee Airmen were the first African Americans to serve our country as pilots. Their efforts were crucial during WW2, and they helped pave the way for many black pilots and members of our armed forces.

Also sometime in the coming months the Paul Laurence Dunbar License plate will become available at the BMV! This was another effort that I took up in the last General Assembly to honor one of the greatest poets in American history. Proceeds for this license plate will benefit the Paul Laurence Dunbar House, with more details coming shortly as to what the license plate will look like and the date in which it will be available.

As always it is my great honor to serve you! Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, comments, or concerns.

Sincerely,

Willis E. Blackshear Jr.



Rep. Blackshear delivered a commendation to Ms. Josie Bedell, celebrating her 90th birthday!



Rep. Blackshear met the local Beautillion group at the Statehouse alongside Mayor Mims and other leaders in government.



State Budgeting Season

Budgeting season is officially in full swing! This is an incredibly important period of time in which legislators work to craft a bill that allocates funding to state agencies to support programs and key functions. By the end of June Governor DeWine will sign into law the operating budget for the next 2 years.



Budgeting Basics: Must Know Facts

- The State Budget is passed once every 2 years
- Budgets operate on fiscal years– for Ohio the Fiscal Years begin on July 1st of each year and end on June 30th
- Funds are allocated through “line items” to different state agencies. Visit www.ohio.gov to view a complete list of state agencies and learn more about their operations
- The State runs a balanced budget with revenues just exceeding expenditures
- Ohio’s largest revenue categories are sales tax and income tax
- Ohio’s largest expense categories are Medicaid and Primary & Secondary Education



HB 38: The Student Mental Health Act

NEW BILL ALERT

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH ACT

Allows up to three mental health days as excused absences from school

State Representative Willis E. Blackshear Jr.

State Representative Jessica E. Miranda

Rep. Blackshear recently introduced HB 38: “The Student Mental Health Act” alongside Rep. Miranda. This important piece of legislation would allow school districts to give students up to 3 days of excused absences from school to address their mental health.

Additionally it allows school districts to provide resources to students experiencing mental health concerns. HB 38 was referred to the House Primary & Secondary Education committee where it awaits a first hearing.

For more information on HB 38 visit <https://www.ohiohouse.gov/legislation/135/hb38>