



# A Legislative Report from Rep. Kenny Yuko

7th District of Ohio • Cities of Euclid and South Euclid, Richmond Heights and Collinwood



Kenny Yuko  
State Representative

## Dear Constituents,

Hope is the anthem of 2009 and Americans are ready to join the chorus. Clevelanders in particular have been hard-hit by the recent economy, with layoffs and foreclosures sweeping the city. We are ready for change! Fortunately, with our new president-elect, and the newly won Democratic majority in the Ohio House, change is imminent. In these upcoming months let's raise our voices in support of progress and continue to sing a hopeful refrain.

As we begin the 128th General Assembly with a new House majority and a new Speaker in Armond Budish, we move forward with a renewed sense of purpose and responsibility to act with your best interests in mind.

Our purpose — to protect Ohio and provide opportunities for meaningful employment, quality education and affordable health care — is simple, but the answers are not. This responsibility comes in the midst of an historic national recession that has affected every corner of Ohio. Governor Ted Strickland has warned all of us about what could happen if we are forced to find solutions for a \$7 billion budget deficit.

I recognize the tough work ahead in the Ohio House of Representatives. Fortunately, we have a partner in Governor Strickland and strong leadership in our Caucus that will work to find solutions that protect our core priorities as well as we possibly can.

Our priorities are your priorities — the issues families across Ohio face every day. They include:

- Spurring job creation and economic opportunity
- Expanding access to affordable health care
- Reforming the primary/secondary education system, including how to finance it
- Investing in the industries and energy infrastructure that encourages the development of the jobs of the future
- Making higher education more accessible and affordable

Governor Strickland will lay out a clear plan and clear goals in his State of the State address. We must stand together — all of us — to meet the expectations you set for us to help you and your families live better lives.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, comments or suggestions you may have. My door is always open.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Kenny Yuko.

Kenny Yuko  
State Representative

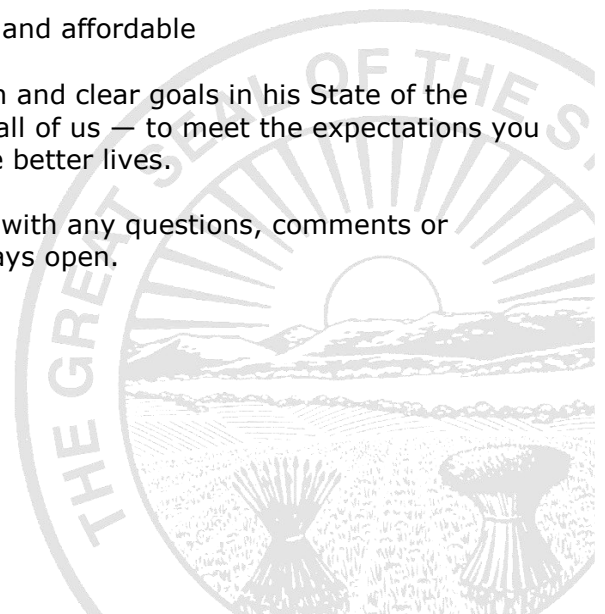
## CONTACT

### Columbus Office

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## Countdown Underway to Digital Television

*Your TV Set Could be Obsolete Soon*

On February 17, 2009, all full-power broadcast TV stations in the U.S. will stop broadcasting on analog airwaves and start broadcasting only in digital.

**The good news:** Digital broadcasting will allow stations to offer a better picture, better sound and more channels.

**The bad news:** If you watch TV on a conventional set with an antenna, your set will go dark soon unless you take action.

**What you can do:** Between now and the end of March 2009, you are eligible to request up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, to be used toward the purchase of up to two digital-to-analog converter boxes. You can get more information at [www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov).

If you have a newly-built TV or subscribe to a cable or satellite service, you should not be affected. Contact your provider to be sure.



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## How To Contact Representative Kenny Yuko

You have several options if you would like to contact Representative Kenny Yuko. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions and will do everything we can to help you. We also welcome invitations to speak to your group or organization.



### Via Telephone (Columbus Office)

*Direct Phone:* (614) 466-8012

*Toll-Free Messaging System:*  
(800) 282-0253

*Direct Fax:* (614) 719-0007



### Via Electronic Mail (E-Mail)

*To contact the office via e-mail, please use the following address:*  
[district07@ohr.state.oh.us](mailto:district07@ohr.state.oh.us).



### Via Postal Mail (Columbus Office)

Hon. Kenny Yuko  
State Representative, 7th District  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 South High Street, 11th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

## Voters Approve New Funding for Popular Program

*“Clean Ohio” Investment in Brownfields, Conservation Part of Economic Stimulus Plan*

One of Ohio’s great strengths is its natural beauty, with acres of farms, forests and parks. That beauty is increasingly threatened by urban sprawl and pollution.

Ohio voters started a renaissance of development and environmental protection in 2000 when they approved the “Clean Ohio” program. That ballot measure allocated \$400 million, promising brownfield redevelopment, nature conservation, farmland preservation and the creation of recreational trails.

It worked.

Abandoned sites found new life and new purpose. Natural areas that could have succumbed to development were preserved. Jobs and opportunity were created.

This past November, voters approved the continuation of the “Clean Ohio” program prescribed in our \$1.57 billion economic stimulus package, the largest jobs package in recent Ohio history. That package called for \$400 million for “Clean Ohio,” \$200 million each for brownfield redevelopment and conservation.

Brownfield areas – abandoned commercial sites that have been polluted and usually would be extremely costly to restore – dot many of our urban centers. The new funds can be used to rid these sites of contaminants. Brownfield redevelopment encourages urban revitalization while deterring further urban sprawl and cutting long-term infrastructure costs.

Since the original measure passed in 2000, Ohio has:

- Leveraged approximately \$2.6 billion in public and private investments;
- Secured 15,000 permanent jobs; and
- Created 100,000 short-term construction jobs.

Conservation includes the preservation of green space, farmland and recreational trails. Not only does this work benefit Ohio’s environment, but it also bolsters the state’s long-term economic viability.

Since the year 2000, “Clean Ohio” has:

- Conserved more than 26,000 acres of wildlife habitat;
- Preserved approximately 20,000 acres of farmland; and
- Created 216 miles of recreational trails.

This \$200 million in new funding will be targeted to improving water quality, supporting fish and wildlife, and helping subsidize farmers who would be tempted to sell their land to high-paying developers.

The “Clean Ohio” program is the ultimate win-win for Ohio. It allows the state to issue responsible, targeted bonds, so taxes do not go up. Local governments, public agencies, and non-profits are all eligible to apply for funding. The end result is a state with breathtaking green space, invigorated urban centers and a robust economy.



**Midland Steel Products** operated a facility on Madison Avenue from 1923 until the plant’s closing in 2003. The City of Cleveland incorporated the site into its Land Redevelopment Program to address the need for open industrial land available for new development, and received \$750,000 in Clean Ohio money. The City intends to use the property for a new eco-industrial park.

## Wind Energy Could Boost Ohio's Economy

*Renewable Sources Expected to Provide Clean Power, Thousands of New Jobs*

The Department of Energy reports the United States consumes **more than 20 million barrels** of petroleum products each day. That single statistic highlights our dependence on foreign energy and our urgent need to develop new sources here at home. State and local government are working together to investigate renewable energy as a viable alternative, and wind energy might be the first frontier.

The State of Ohio is currently supporting the development of wind farms through various programs and legislation. The Ohio Department of Development has issued 63 grants worth more than \$7 million for wind energy activities since 2004 through the Advanced Energy Fund. This fund uses money collected from electric distribution rates to support programs that encourage energy efficiency and advanced energy projects in residential, commercial and industrial settings. The Department of Development has also dedicated \$5 million for the Ohio Wind Production and Manufacturing Incentive Program.

Senate Bill 221, passed by the Ohio Legislature and signed by the Governor last year, created a new energy policy that protects consumers, jobs and the environment. The legislation included renewable energy standards that may be fulfilled at least partially through the use of wind energy. The law says that by 2025, at least 12.5% of the total electricity sold by each distribution utility in Ohio must be from renewable energy sources.

Wind energy means more than a renewable source of power. It can also be a source of jobs. Governor Ted Strickland recently said that Ohio is in position to create 80,000 "green" jobs by 2013.

Ohio already leads the way in developing renewable energy. According to the *Conway New Plant Report*, which tracks facility development nationwide, renewable energy companies committed to 350 new facilities in Ohio between 2005 and 2007. That's more than any other state.

The Ohio Business Development Coalition says the state has one of the highest wind volumes east of the Mississippi, and it is encouraging renewable energy

companies to take advantage of Ohio's long history as a manufacturing powerhouse.

Thanks to efforts by the Ohio Legislature and the Strickland Administration to promote wind power and other renewable sources, the state's energy future is both bright and green.



### **The Power of Wind**

Wind power has the potential to drive energy and economic development for decades. A study by Environment Ohio found wind energy would:

- Provide 3,100 permanent jobs in Ohio
- Increase the gross state product by \$8.2 billion
- Create \$3.7 billion in increased wages to Ohio workers
- Prevent 170 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from being emitted into our atmosphere

## “Save the Dream” Helping Ohioans Avoid Foreclosure

*Program Has Helped Thousands with Assistance and Advice*

The nationwide housing crisis continues to threaten the dream of home ownership for Ohioans. The Associated Press recently reported that “Weak sales, sinking home values, tighter home-loan lending practices and a slowing U.S. economy hamstrung by high fuel prices have left some homeowners with few options to avoid foreclosure. Many can’t find buyers or owe more than their home is worth and can’t refinance into an affordable loan.”



SAVE THE  
*dream*  
OHIO'S FORECLOSURE  
PREVENTION EFFORT

A model program for Ohio courts to use mediation in home foreclosure cases has trained more than 250 court personnel from 50 of Ohio’s 88 counties.

According to RealtyTrac, Ohio's foreclosure rate recently ranked 7th in the nation, with one in every 440 households reporting a filing.

While still a dangerous situation, this new ranking actually represents an improvement fueled by Ohio’s “Save the Dream” program.

“Save the Dream” is Ohio’s anti-foreclosure effort, designed to offer information and assistance to help you keep your home.

Since the campaign was launched last March, more than **5,600 Ohioans** have received housing counseling and/or legal assistance through “Save the Dream.” There have been more than **26,000 visitors** to the program’s website (<http://www.savethedream.ohio.gov/>) and more than **12,000 calls** to the hotline (888-404-4674).

Thousands of homeowners have attended borrower outreach days around the state. These events give homeowners the opportunity to meet one-on-one with their mortgage servicers to discuss the possibility of a “work out resolution” and attend workshops on foreclosure prevention topics.

More than 1,300 Ohio attorneys have volunteered to provide legal assistance free of charge to people in danger of losing their homes. The Columbus Bar Association recently honored the initiative with its “Outstanding Pro Bono Project” Award.

The Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Housing Finance Agency have distributed more than \$5 million in grants to housing counseling agencies. They have also offered \$1 million in grants and \$3.1 million in deferred loans for homeowners through the Ohio Home Rescue Program.

To supplement these programs, Ohio received \$258.1 million in Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds from HUD. Of this amount, \$116.8 million was awarded directly to the state for distribution to neighborhoods in need, especially to restore or demolish abandoned homes.

Legislation is also in the works to protect renters when their landlords go into foreclosure. The Ohio Renter’s Protection Act sponsored by State Reps. Ted Celeste (D-Columbus) and Mike Foley (D-Cleveland) would require landlords to notify tenants and allow renters to stay under a month-to-month lease once the property is sold. It may join “Save the Dream” as one more protection for people during this crisis.

### Keys to Save Your Dream of Home Ownership

- Act now; don't ignore the problem!
- Contact your mortgage servicer as soon as you realize you have a problem.
- Open and respond to all mail from your servicer.
- Contact a HUD-approved housing counselor.
- Stay in your home to make sure you qualify for assistance.
- Understand Ohio’s foreclosure process, options and alternatives.
- Beware of scams.
- Do not sign any document that you don't understand.



### Did you know?

*Fifty percent* of foreclosures can be prevented by calling your mortgage company and asking to speak to someone in the **Loss Mitigation Department.**

## Secretary of State Holds Bipartisan Elections Summit

*Workshop Starts Comprehensive, Deliberative Review Designed to Protect Voters' Rights*



A recent postmortem on the 2008 presidential election is the beginning of a deliberative, bipartisan, and comprehensive review of Ohio's election laws, the state's chief elections officer says.

"We know this is just a start, and that if we work together, we can make it

better," Ohio Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner said Dec. 2 at the Ohio Elections Summit.

Secretary Brunner convened the summit to review the November general election — viewed by many observers as among the most efficient and problem-free elections in recent memory in the Buckeye State — to examine what went right and what improvements can be made.

More than 250 people attended the summit held at the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus to hear panels on everything from provisional voting to voting security and technology issues.

Secretary Brunner credited Ohio's local elections officials for being open to her ideas for a smoother election. That included the use of backup paper ballots in counties using electronic touch-screen machines in case of either machine failure or a request from a voter for a paper ballot.

"Ohio has been willing to try new things," Secretary Brunner said.

Among the Secretary of State's observations from the recent election:

- Long lines at polling locations were not an issue on Election Day. The average wait time to vote around the state was about an hour.
- There were no last-minute court challenges to keep polling locations open beyond 7:30 p.m.

- Cuyahoga County, the site of problems in past elections, ran a successful election. After the election, Secretary Brunner released the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections from administrative oversight.

Among the issues the Secretary of State said Ohio would have to confront in coming elections was making the state's voter identification laws more understandable.

"These are issues we'll keep working on," she said.

Secretary Brunner praised elections officials for their work before and during the election to ensure that all legitimate voters could cast a fair ballot.

"Our elections officials made this election run smoothly," she said.

A longer summit is planned for early February. Following that summit, a report on potential improvements to Ohio's elections system is to be given to Governor Ted Strickland and state lawmakers for their consideration.

**Voter Turnout From November 2008 Election**

County	Total Voters	Voter Turnout	% Turnout
Butler	261,359	174,058	66.60%
Cuyahoga	1,111,492	672,497	60.50%
Franklin	846,343	564,971	66.75%
Hamilton	605,634	428,264	70.71%
Lorain	204,400	148,218	72.51%
Lucas	317,036	221,905	69.99%
Mahoning	178,270	128,914	72.31%
Montgomery	390,103	280,746	71.97%
Stark	270,805	189,796	70.09%
Summit	379,939	280,726	73.89%