

State of Ohio toll-free numbers and websites

Ohio House of Representatives

www.house.state.oh.us
Legislative Information 800-282-0253

Insurance, Department of

www.ins.state.oh.us
Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program
800-686-1578

Job and Family Services, Department of

www.state.oh.us/odjfs
Veteran Services Division 800-253-4060
Unemployment Compensation Hotline 877-644-6562

Motor Vehicles, Bureau of

www.state.oh.us/odps/division/bmv
General Information 800-589-TAGS

Public Safety, Department of

www.state.oh.us/odps
Highway Patrol 877-7-PATROL
Ohio Road Conditions 888-2OH-ROAD
State Highway Patrol DUI Hotline 800-GRAB-DUI

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

www.puc.state.oh.us
General Information 800-686-PUCO

Taxation, Department of

www.state.oh.us/tax
Form Requests 800-282-1782
Tax Questions 800-282-1780

Aging, Department of

www.state.oh.us/age
Golden Buckeye Card 800-422-1976
Ombudsman/Elder Rights Unit 800-282-1206

Attorney General

www.ag.state.oh.us
Consumer Protection 800-282-0515
Crime Victim Assistance 800-582-CVSS
Patient Abuse & Neglect Hotline 800-64-ABUSE

Consumers' Counsel, Office of the Ohio

www.state.oh.us/cons
Utility Consumer Complaints 877-742-5622

Development, Department of

www.odod.state.oh.us
General Information 800-848-1300
Business Advocacy 800-345-OHIO
Home Energy Assistance Hotline 800-282-0880
One Stop Business Permit Center 800-248-4040
Travel & Tourism 800-BUCKEYE

Education, Department of

www.ode.state.oh.us
Child Nutritional Services Information 800-808-MEAL
General Education Development 800-334-6679
Ohio Prevention Education Resources 800-788-7254

Environmental Protection Agency

www.epa.state.oh.us
E-Check Information 800-227-8378

State Representative
Kenny Yuko
Ohio House District 07
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111



A Legislative Report from REP. KENNY YUKO



Dear Constituents,

Summer is a great time to explore all that Ohio has to offer. From fishing in Lake Erie to taking in a professional baseball game or hiking in one of our 74 state parks, I encourage you to take advantage of our natural, historical and cultural resources.

We lawmakers have departed the Statehouse for a short break to spend more time in our districts with our families and the people we serve.

You are invited to get in touch with me during this time and pass along opinions about current legislation or other Ohio matters that concern you. I am hopeful this newsletter will help keep you updated on happenings at the Statehouse.

The newsletter includes an article detailing the growing controversies surrounding the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation. Please do not hesitate to contact me about this issue, as I understand this violation of public trust has raised concern in Ohio communities.

Also included in this newsletter is an article calling for greater access to public records. This issue is linked to the idea that we must do everything possible to restore citizens' faith in state government.

As always, I welcome your ideas, suggestions or comments .

Sincerely,

Kenny Yuko
State Representative

CONTACT

77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6111
(614) 466-8012
(800) 282-0253
district07@ohr.state.oh.us

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Please feel free to share your e-mail address with my office so we can keep you updated on what's new at the Statehouse.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Greater Access to Public Records Laws Needed

With each day revealing new allegations of misconduct and mismanagement at various levels of state government, the need for better access to public records has never been more apparent.

Accordingly, a bill that would strengthen Ohio's open-records law is being considered in the House Civil and Commercial Law Committee.

Among other things, House Bill 9 would authorize fines and statutory damages against offices that don't make records available, require public records training for elected officials and require all offices to review public records rules.

Last year, a statewide audit conducted by the Ohio Coalition for Open Government found that only 52 percent of its requests for public records were fulfilled promptly, in accordance with current law.

It is now time to enact meaningful legislation and to reform our open records law. This is an issue of accountability, and a stronger open-records law will help ensure that the state is being run openly and honestly.

In recent weeks, public records have become an important issue in the state. When newspapers and elected officials sued the BWC, asking the Supreme Court to order the state to disclose details of its rare-coin inventory as part of the "Coingate" investigation, the BWC resisted, claiming the records contained "trade secrets."

Public records belong to the people. We can no longer run from a more open and transparent government.

For more information on Ohio's Open Records Laws, the state auditor's "Open Government Resource Manual," and seminars regarding open records, see www.auditor.state.oh.us/LocalGovernment/YellowBook.

Tips on Public Records

- A "public record" is literally any file or document held by a public office, regardless of form (i.e. CD-ROM, paper, videotape). Anyone can request records and citizens have the right to receive them in a timely manner.
- An office can charge for copies of records, but no more than the cost of the duplication itself.
- Certain exceptions exist to protect personal and public security: medical records, adoption papers, and trade secrets are examples.
- When requesting records, it is not legally necessary to provide a name or reason for the request.

BWC UPDATE

Setting the record straight: Where Ohio tax dollars are going

It's become something of a national joke that the federal government is so mismanaged that it has paid \$600 for a toilet seat or \$400 for a hammer.

Sadly, it appears state government's dollars have been wasted in much the same way. According to a recent report in *The Columbus Dispatch*, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation has paid:

- \$24,258 for a \$1,197 surgical screw.
- \$23,859 for a \$2,022 bolt.
- \$158,290 for a \$22,500 electronic ear implant.



The list goes on and on. All told, the Bureau paid hospitals \$544 million more than their actual costs of treating injured workers over the past seven years — a far greater mark-up over actual costs than that paid by either private insurers or other government insurance programs.

This is just the latest disturbing news in this scandal some in the media are calling "Coingate."

We now know that for years, the Bureau had been allowing Tom Noe — a former member of the Ohio Board of Regents and Ohio Turnpike Commission — to invest \$50 million of injured workers' funds in rare coins. As much as \$13 million is now missing; the attorney general believes Noe pocketed millions in what he has described as a "Ponzi scheme."

Later, we learned that the bureau lost \$215 million through a series of extremely risky investments with a Bermuda-based hedge fund. Some top state officials knew about this loss for months, but only chose to tell the public hours before newspapers were prepared to expose the story.

It's clear that the public trust has been broken in a number of ways. I believe one of the best ways to start restoring the public's confidence would be through an investigation by a full, bipartisan oversight panel — co-chaired by a Democrat and a Republican, and armed with subpoena power. We must thoroughly look into what's gone wrong, make sure all who have done wrong are held accountable and develop a comprehensive set of reforms for preventing such a scandal in the future.

I'm also pleased to report that my colleague, Representative Barbara Sykes of Akron, has already put forward a proposal that would drastically reduce the shameful waste of money at the Bureau when it comes to medical expenses.

We are also discussing new ways to take money out of politics. The Bureau's decision to allow Tom Noe to invest state money in rare coins was accompanied by thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from Noe to political candidates all over state government.

Appearances matter — and the appearance here was of a pay-to-play system that helped a big contributor get special access to a state contract.

I doubt we yet know the full extent of what happened at the Bureau.

Still, I'm absolutely committed to doing what I can to make sure something like this never happens again.