



A Legislative Report from **Rep. Kenny Yuko**

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



Kenny Yuko
State Representative

Dear Constituents,

The sweeping energy policy recently passed through the Ohio General Assembly is extremely complex and technical. The focus for us, however, was very simple: you.

Your bills. Your future.

My colleagues and I in the Ohio House of Representatives stood strong to forge an energy agreement that protects consumers, jobs and the environment. This legislation:

- Protects consumers from electric rate spikes
- Prevents sticker shock for businesses looking to invest in Ohio
- Positions Ohio to retain and create thousands of jobs
- Provides a predictable, affordable, reliable power supply
- Promotes renewable and advanced energy to protect the environment, diversify the power grid and encourage development of "green" industries

The ratemaking portion of Substitute Senate Bill 221 was the single most important part of the negotiations on this policy. We worked hard to protect families and businesses from rate shock by prohibiting utilities from collecting "excessive earnings." When deregulated utilities started operating in other states, bills spiked (72% in Maryland, 55% in Illinois). We could not let those kinds of market forces dictate what people paid to flip a switch in Ohio and were able to secure this "excessive earnings" standard.

This legislation constitutes a big victory for ratepayers, for jobs retention and creation, and for the environment. It sets the stage for a bright future in Ohio, and I am proud of the work we did to accomplish that.

If you have any further questions or comments on this or any other issue, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Kenny Yuko
State Representative

CONTACT

Columbus Office

7th District
77 South High Street
11th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Phone: (614) 466-8012
Toll-free: (800) 282-0253
Fax: (614) 719-0007

Or E-mail At:
district07@ohr.state.oh.us



Contacting Your State Legislator

"As your representative in the Statehouse, part of my job is to stand up for your interests. Whether this is done with a vote on an important piece of legislation or with a phone call to an agency or department on your behalf, I am your voice in the state capital.

For lawmakers, it is very important to know the opinions of constituents regarding pressing matters that come before the legislature. It does not matter how many town hall meetings are attended or how many local newspapers are read, it would be impossible to have all the information necessary to make good decisions without regular citizen input!"

—State Rep. Kenny Yuko

To contact your legislator's office, there are several options for you to choose from.

Via Telephone (Columbus Office)

This is the office at the Statehouse. All legislative staff in the General Assembly are equipped to deal with almost any issue, or can find the best person to help you if you have a problem needing attention. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday thru Friday, and the office is closed on Saturday and Sunday. The best way to contact this office is via phone:

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.

Office staff checks this e-mail account daily to make sure they are staying in touch with the constituents of the 7th district. On occasion, you may receive a response from a legislative staff member if a simple answer or solution is included in your initial opinion letter or request for assistance.

Via Postal Mail

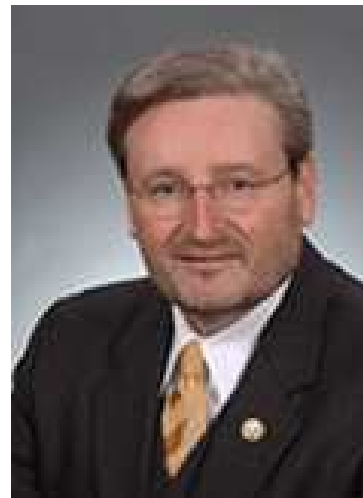
Don't have a computer? No problem! The old-fashioned methods of communication will still work, and postal mail is checked several times each week. This method is also the best way to get forms or other similar paperwork to the office for review.

***Note:** If sending important documents, please only send a copy! The U.S. Postal Service cannot 100 percent guarantee delivery to the office, so it is important that you not send your only copy!

To contact the office via postal mail, please use the following address:

Columbus Office

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



Special Events and Speaker Requests

All offices receive invitations to events in both Columbus and the district nearly every day of the week. Do you think your meeting attendees would like to discuss issues and legislative matters with one of their state elected officials? Send us an invitation!

Though all requests cannot be granted due to scheduling conflicts, lawmakers are able to attend many different events in their districts throughout the year.

When sending the invitation to your event or special gathering, please send all key information via any of the methods described on this page at least (2) weeks in advance. That way, there will be adequate time for the office to prepare for your event, and there will be a greater likelihood that there will not be another event conflicting with the time that your group meets.

Brunner, Legislature Work Toward Fair Elections

Goals Include Saving Money, Easing Confusion, Improving Processes

The Ohio House of Representatives is working with Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner to ensure your vote counts fairly and accurately every time you cast a ballot.

The House State Government and Elections Committee recently passed a resolution sponsored by State Representatives Dan Stewart (D-Columbus) and Jon Peterson (R-Delaware) to require anyone wishing to place an issue on a ballot to file petitions 125 days before the election. The current cut-off is 90 days.

This legislation comes after the Secretary of State's office spent approximately \$300,000 for last November's election advertising Issue One – an issue over rules governing adult businesses – which was rendered invalid by a lack of acceptable signatures.

The goal is to create a more transparent ballot petition process, save hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars and ease voter confusion. If passed by the House and Senate, the resolution would appear on this November's ballot for voters to decide whether it becomes law.

Work on elections issues stretches beyond the legislative arena. Secretary of State Brunner continues to partner with the governor's office, the legislature, the Ohio Association of Elections Officials and the County Commissioners' Association of Ohio in her quest to ensure that Ohio's elections are free, fair, open and honest.

Secretary Brunner's office continues to pursue recommendations made after a \$1.9 million, federally-funded study found that all of Ohio's voting systems had critical flaws, including security flaws in the electronic touch-screen voting machines used in more than 50 counties in Ohio. The most significant recommendation was to transition to optical-scan paper ballots for the November general election. Secretary Brunner continues to discuss the recommendations with the governor, legislative leaders and other interested parties.

In other areas, Secretary Brunner's office is working to open voting to all Ohioans and to improve voting for the many Ohio voters who are stationed overseas with the U.S. military.

Secretary Brunner created the Voting Rights Institute (VRI), which seeks to involve citizens and those associated with voter protection and advocacy groups to work toward proposing reforms to improve elections. The institute is assisted by a 40-member, all-volunteer advisory council made up of representatives ranging from voting rights advocates to government and political parties.

Representatives of the VRI played a key role during the March 2008 primary election, fielding hundreds of phone calls throughout the day from voters sharing their experiences. The phone support helped the Secretary of State's office respond quickly and efficiently to help solve several election-related situations.

Ohio is also partnering with the Overseas Vote Foundation (OVF), a national non-partisan, non-profit organization that seeks to facilitate and increase participation in federal elections by overseas and military voters and their dependents.

Ohio is one of three states initially selected to participate in OVF's efforts to provide overseas military voters improved online voter registration.

Secretary Brunner's office also continues to honor our men and women in uniform by retooling the "Vote in Honor of a Veteran" program. Voters can honor the veteran of their choice by providing a testimonial to the courage demonstrated through that veteran's military service. Details of this program are available online at www.sos.state.oh.us.

Program participants receive a lapel pin with the distinctive "Vote in Honor of a Veteran" logo to wear, especially on Election Day. The testimonials will be housed on the Secretary of State's website, honoring those who have fought to defend that most basic of freedoms: the right to vote.



State Improves Access to Health Care Coverage

Expansion of Ohio's Medicaid Programs Helps Thousands of Adults & Children

More of Ohio's uninsured children, young adults, pregnant women and workers with disabilities have access to affordable health care this year thanks to the current state budget.

The 2008-2009 budget authorized several expansions of Ohio's Medicaid program. Two of those expansions—for pregnant women and for youth aging out of the foster system—took effect January 1. A third expansion, a Medicaid buy-in program for workers with disabilities, began April 1. Another buy-in program allows certain families with uninsured children to purchase state-funded health care coverage. The Children's Buy-In Program also began in April.

These expansions are making a real difference in the lives of Ohioans who desperately need the help.

More than 20,000 Ohioans could benefit, including:

- More than 3,000 pregnant women
- As many as 1,200 young adults exiting foster care
- 5,000 children with special health needs
- 5,400 workers with disabilities.

Previously, the income eligibility limit for pregnant women to enroll in Medicaid was 150 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL). Now, the income limit is 200 percent of the FPL. Once eligible, pregnant women can receive up to 60 days of postpartum care at no cost. In addition, babies born to participating mothers automatically qualify for Medicaid during their first year of life.

Prior to January 1, Medicaid coverage for many young people in foster care stopped on their 18th birthdays. Now, they receive Medicaid health care coverage until they turn 21. Coverage also may be available to former foster children younger than 21 who are already living on their own.

The Medicaid buy-in program for workers with disabilities is available to part-time and full-time workers ages 16 to 64 whose income is at or below 250 percent of the FPL, after a \$20,000 income disregard. Currently, employment earnings can disqualify people with disabilities from receiving Medicaid. This presents a challenge since this group

may need health care services and support that may not typically be covered by commercial insurance plans. Under the new system, workers with disabilities will be able to find and keep jobs without risk of losing their Medicaid benefits. Those with incomes greater than 150 percent of the FPL will be required to pay monthly premiums, based on their income, family size and other factors.

The Children's Buy-In Program allows working families who have uninsured children with special health needs or high monthly premiums to purchase state-funded health care coverage. These families must earn more than 300 percent of the FPL, and their children must have been uninsured for six months prior to enrolling. Participating families are required to pay monthly premiums for each child enrolled. Premium amounts are calculated based on the respective income levels of each family.

The state still is waiting for federal approval of a requested expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Federal regulators denied Ohio's request to expand Medicaid coverage to children in families earning up to 300 percent of the FPL. In response, Ohio has appealed the decision and submitted a request to cover families earning up to 250 percent of the FPL. A decision could come this summer. If approved, as many as 10,000 low-income uninsured children could begin receiving health care coverage.

For more information on any of these programs, call the Medicaid Consumer Hotline at 1-800-324-8680.



New State Campaign Designed to “Save the Dream”

Goal: Help Stem Dangerous Tide of Foreclosures

The American dream of home ownership has turned nightmarish for far too many of our neighbors. The Mortgage Bankers Association found that in the fourth quarter of 2007, Ohio had 3.88 percent of all loans in foreclosures – tops in the nation. The situations in Ohio’s six biggest cities (Cleveland, Akron, Dayton, Toledo, Columbus and Cincinnati) serve as microcosms for the foreclosure crisis: RealtyTrac reports that all of them ranked in the top 33 nationally in the number of foreclosures in 2007.

This poisonous trend is devaluing communities, stressing our economy and depressing our residents. The Strickland administration is pursuing aggressive policies to make lenders part of the solution and give homeowners a fighting chance to stay in their homes.

Governor Strickland also created the *Ohio Foreclosure Prevention Task Force* to address the problem and recommend a course of action. The Task Force, which included State Representative Steve Driehaus (D-Cincinnati), focused its guidance on intervention, prevention and creating new options.

Some of those recommendations are encompassed in a new program through the Ohio Department of Commerce. “Save the Dream” is a foreclosure prevention public awareness campaign that uses a multimedia platform to deliver help and hope to homeowners desperate for both.

This program is designed to support the Task Force’s top recommendation: a public awareness campaign and borrower outreach events to bring struggling homeowners out of the shadows and encourage them to contact their mortgage provider at the first sign of danger. That communication is crucial if a homeowner has trouble making payments or faces a pricey reset in an adjustable rate mortgage.



“Save the Dream” has three major components:

- TV and radio ads to inform the public about the resources available to them
- A telephone hotline (**888-404-4674**) located at the Ohio Department of Development that can direct callers to assistance
- A website (www.savethedream.ohio.gov) rich with information about the foreclosure process and the action homeowners can take.

The hotline is staffed by professionals who ask callers a series of questions to determine the best course of assistance. If callers require legal help, the Ohio Attorney General’s office will forward them to participating agencies through a first-of-its-kind state program that provides pro bono attorneys to eligible homeowners and encourages mediation to resolve disputes.

The new website features easy links to local, state and federal resources, including HUD-approved counseling services. It gives a quick tutorial on the steps of the process, the language used and the timeline in which action must be taken. It also provides a checklist of topics to discuss in a call to a mortgage servicer in order to find amiable solutions to payment problems.

Protecting homeowners and saving their dreams must remain a top priority for the state. The longer this lingers, the more depressed home values, neighborhoods and residents will become. The goal of the “Save the Dream” campaign is to help homeowners keep the roofs over their heads, and I have confidence that it can.



SAVE THE
dream
OHIO'S FORECLOSURE
PREVENTION EFFORT

State Offers Help Managing Your Personal Finances

Website Offers Tips, Strategies to Make Money Planning Easier

Managing your personal finances can be stressful and confusing. Ohio Treasurer Richard Cordray has created an online resource to help you set and meet financial goals for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Your Money NOW is a new personal finance website that can be tailored to your specific needs.

For instance, too many children leave high school with no knowledge of real-world issues such as credit card debt and managing student loans.

This program provides easily accessible videos, simulations and games to teach students of all ages about complex money issues. There is also a "teachers' page" with a variety of resources from lesson planning to lists of possible guest lecturers.

On the other side of the spectrum, senior citizens and veterans are frequently victims of identity theft and other forms of consumer fraud. *Your Money NOW* devotes web pages to both groups with warning signs of unscrupulous activities and specific actions you can take to avoid scams.

Your Money NOW also regularly updates its small business page with useful articles on topics such as year-end tax planning tips, and how to sign onto the Agricultural Linked Deposit program to get lower interest on small business loans.

This resource is invaluable for every Ohioan. I encourage you to check out this new website at www.yourmoneynowonline.org to see how it can help you keep track of your hard-earned money.

STEM Awards Given to 21 Ohio Colleges & Universities

Grants Designed to Develop Talent for Ohio's Future

The Ohio Research Scholars program was born in our current biennial budget with two purposes: to lure world-class scholars to Ohio to help develop high-tech jobs for the future, and to provide for more expertise in the STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) for research and development.

The Ohio House of Representatives bolstered support for that program recently by passing House Bill 381, which re-appropriates money so that the program's funding totals \$150 million, three times the initial appropriation. It also permits private colleges and universities to apply for the programs, an important aspect of making this brand of education accessible and affordable for all.

This adds to more good news recently that 21 Ohio colleges and universities (listed to the right) will share \$22.7 million in "Choose Ohio First Scholarships" for grants to more than 2,000 Ohio resident STEM students. This demonstrates that Ohio is committed to sharing the wealth and making opportunity available for students in all corners of our state.

Proposals are currently being considered for a another round of funding.

<u>Institution</u>	<u># Students</u>	<u>Amount</u>
University of Akron	366	\$5,044,700
Bowling Green State	18	\$235,000
Baldwin Wallace College	64	\$939,382
Cleveland State University	92	\$1,071,600
Case Western Reserve	154	\$1,894,100
Central State University	228	\$3,144,448
University of Cincinnati	245	\$3,529,000
Kent State University	72	\$846,000
Miami University	18	\$239,700
The Ohio State University	53	\$700,000
Ohio University	54	\$705,000
Shawnee State University	22	\$300,000
University of Toledo	32	\$370,800
Ursuline College	26	\$294,000
Wittenberg University	25	\$338,400
Wright State University	18	\$235,000
Youngstown State Univ.	72	\$270,000
Columbus State C.C.	7	\$25,500
Cuyahoga Comm. College	72	\$270,000
Lorain Co. Comm. College	234	\$835,006
Stark State College	218	\$808,912