



Rep. Yuko celebrates his sponsor testimony on House Bills 379 and 434 with (from left) House Democratic Caucus staffers Abby Gilbert, Amy Cooper and Tamiyka Koger; his wife, Pam; and Legislative Aide, Kelley Robinson.

State Representative  
**Kenny Yuko**  
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# A Legislative Report from Rep. Kenny Yuko

Representing the 7th District of Ohio • Cities of Euclid and South Euclid and Parts of Cleveland



Kenny Yuko  
State Representative



**Dear Neighbors,**

The arrival of a new year brings with it an opportunity for renewal and building for the future.

After hundreds of thousands of lost jobs and wages that have fallen below the national average, Ohio's families find themselves on an economic treadmill – working longer hours, taking home less money and spending less time with their families.

Government has a vital role to play in helping its citizens get ahead. State government should spend our tax dollars as wisely and carefully as Ohio's families do. That's not partisan politics, it's just common sense.

In the forthcoming year, the House of Representatives will be wrestling with several important public policy questions and addressing proposals to produce savings or create more accountability in health care, energy costs, job creation and education.

Furthermore, we are building a comprehensive plan to address corruption in Columbus and restore public trust in government. Our state deserves a government as honest as the people who live here.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have questions or comments about any state matters that concern you.

Sincerely,

**Kenny Yuko**  
State Representative

## CONTACT

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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.



## Ohio heat assistance programs

Despite best efforts to curb heating costs, some Ohioans find it difficult to pay ever-increasing utility bills. There is help for those who need it.

You may be able to cut your heating costs by participating in Ohio's **Gas Choice Program**. Contact the Consumers' Council toll-free at 1-877-742-5622 or visit [www.pickocc.org](http://www.pickocc.org) for more information.

Last year, more than 257,000 lower-income Ohio households relied on help from **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)**, to assist them in paying heating bills through the winter. Contact the state HEAP office toll-free number: 1-800-282-0880, or download an application at [www.odod.state.oh.us](http://www.odod.state.oh.us).

A **Percentage of Income Plan** allows you, if qualified, to make gas and electric payments based on a percentage of household income.

The former Ohio Energy Credit Program (OEC) now provides a one-time cash payment or credit to qualified elderly or disabled individuals.

The **Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP)** helps low-income homeowners and renters reduce energy consumption while increasing the comfort of their homes. For details, visit [www.eere.energy.gov/weatherization](http://www.eere.energy.gov/weatherization). For assistance in the state of Ohio, call 1-866-728-6749.

## Best Rx available to Ohioans



There is a tremendous amount of money available to help Ohioans afford the ever-rising cost of prescription drugs.

Best Rx is a drug discount card program designed specifically for Ohioans without prescription drug insurance. In 2005, the program enabled its 65,000 participants to save an average of one-third the cost for each prescription. (One Ohioan alone saved \$7,200 in 2005!)

Unfortunately, few Ohioans know this no-strings-attached program exists. It is estimated that 500,000 Ohioans are eligible to receive prescription drug benefits under Best Rx – meaning only 12% of those qualified take advantage of the savings.

If you are over the age of sixty, or if your annual income is less than about \$24,000 for a single person or \$48,400 for a family of four (two and a half times the federal poverty level), you are eligible to be a Best Rx card carrier, and I urge you to apply.

With the cost of prescription drugs continuing to rise, Best Rx can help low-income Ohioans, their families, and those over sixty keep their needed medications accessible and affordable.

For more information on Best Rx or for an application, write, call, or visit their website, and as always please do not hesitate to contact my office should you have any questions.

Ohio's Best Rx  
P.O. Box 408  
Twinsburg, OH 44087-0408  
1-866-923-7879  
[www.ohiobestrx.org](http://www.ohiobestrx.org)

## Tip of the Month: Keep Your Energy Bill Out of Hot Water



Water heating can be expensive, but there are a number of ways to lower your costs. One way is to use less water. Repair leaky faucets immediately and use low-flow shower heads. (A family of four, each showering for five minutes a day, uses 700 gallons of water a week; you can cut that amount in half by using low-flow aerating showerheads.) Insulate your hot-water storage tank and pipes, and drain a quart of water from your water tank every three months to remove sediment that impedes heat transfer and lowers the efficiency of your heater (follow the manufacturer's instructions). Lower the thermostat on your water heater to 120 degrees; water heaters sometimes come from the factory with higher temperature settings than are necessary. When buying a new water heater, compare EnergyGuide labels to find an energy-efficient model.

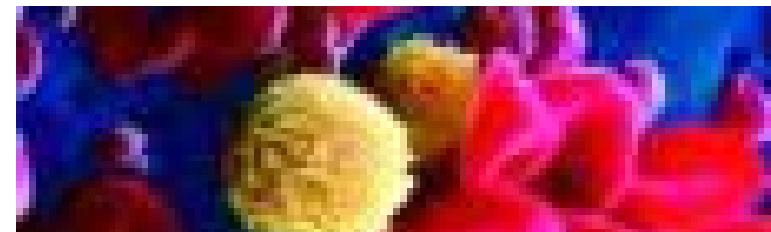
-Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Energy

## Legislative Update

I like to inform my constituents of important bills that have successfully passed a full vote or are still under consideration before the House of Representatives. Would you like to know more about bills currently before the legislature? A searchable Internet database from the Legislative Service Commission offers you an easy way to find out if the General Assembly is tackling an issue that you feel is important. You can also search by individual legislator to determine what issues are making waves around the state. Check it out at: [www.legislature.state.oh.us/search.cfm](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/search.cfm)



The Ohio House of Representatives recently voted to designate December 1 as "**Rosa Parks Day**" in the State of Ohio. The legislation, sponsored by Minority Leader Joyce Beatty, D-Columbus, passed without opposition 94-0. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, Ohio becomes the first state in the Union to permanently observe Rosa Parks' courageous refusal to give up her seat on a public bus during the era of Jim Crow laws.



**House Bill 434**— This proposal would ban human reproductive cloning while still protecting stem cell research that could one day yield cures to some of the world's most debilitating diseases. The bill, which I introduced, currently resides in the House Judiciary Committee. House Bill 434 as introduced would prohibit a person from knowingly engaging or assisting in the cloning of a human being. A violation of this prohibition is subject to a term of imprisonment not less than 10 years and a fine of not more than \$100,000. Stem cell research has the potential to provide thousands of Ohioans with a cure for diseases such as, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and muscular dystrophy. The goal is to keep hope alive for the hundreds of thousands of Ohioans now trying to cope with tragic medical conditions that could be treated one day through stem cell research. We can ban human cloning while still offering hope to sick Ohioans.



**House Bill 379** -- This legislation will designate the month of March as "**Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month**" in the state of Ohio. The legislation, sponsored by Representative Kenny Yuko, D-Richmond Heights, passed unanimously through the House State Government Committee this month. According to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, one out of every 1,000 Ohioans has been diagnosed with MS. This is one of the highest incidence rates of any disease, anywhere. Designating a month dedicated to informing Ohioans about MS will help bring attention to this disease and hopefully save thousands of people living with MS.



**House Bill 247** establishes a **renewable energy** requirement for each electric utility or electric services company that provides retail electric generation service in Ohio. The bill also creates the Ohio Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard and aims to increase to least 20 percent by 2021 the proportion of electricity sold to consumers in Ohio that is generated from renewable resources. Less than 1 percent of Ohio's electricity is produced from renewable resources such as solar, wind or biomass power. It is estimated that because of Ohio's rich bioenergy resources, such as trees, grasses and agricultural crops, renewable energy could supply 64 percent of residential electricity or power for 2,758,000 homes in Ohio. Solar and wind energy could produce upwards of 5 percent of electricity sold to Ohio consumers.