



From the Desk of



Rep. Kenny Yuko

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Committees

Commerce and Labor

Criminal Justice

Local & Municipal Govern-
ment and Urban Revitaliza-
tion

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Dear Neighbor,

The fall break has finally passed and members of the Ohio House of Representatives will soon be returning to Columbus for the final meetings of the 126th General Assembly.

I'm proud of my service in Columbus. As the end of the year draws closer, I wanted to review for you some important pieces of legislation I supported during the past year. Inside you will find highlights of some of our legislative successes.

You will also find information on a statewide effort to help Ohioans quit smoking.

Many homes in Ohio contain lead-based paint and pose a threat of infecting children with lead poisoning. Learn more about the problem and how it is being addressed by the legislature inside.

I've also offered some thoughts on a recent Ohio Supreme Court ruling upholding the constitutionality of Ohio's charter schools. We must do more to hold these schools accountable. As long as charter schools are receiving public money, the state has an interest in ensuring the quality of education they offer.

My work in Columbus starts with you. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or comments about any state matters that concern you.

Sincerely,

Kenny Yuko
State Representative





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

Legislative Perspective

Each year, the House of Representatives considers an enormous amount of legislation, and it can be difficult for citizens to keep up. Here are some pieces of legislation that were enacted this year with my support.

Senate Bill 185 addresses deceptive lending practices such as artificially inflating a home's appraisal value so the borrower takes on more debt than the home is worth. Another tactic targeted by this bill: hiding costs such as insurance and taxes from consumers.

Ohioans who believe they have been wrongly convicted of a crime will have a chance to prove their innocence through DNA testing. **Senate Bill 262** permanently allows certain state prisoners to seek DNA testing that might prove their innocence. Some 307 prisoners have sought testing through earlier temporary programs.

House Bill 245 devotes \$1 million to help gas stations add E85 pumps and tanks and to help bulk ethanol terminals expand. Ethanol is a clean-burning fuel that may reduce America's dependence on foreign oil.

House Bill 461 increases the sentence for aggravated vehicular homicide to a mandatory term 10 to 15 years in prison if the offender has three or more convictions for operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated within the previous six years, or two or more prior felony convictions.

The following bills were recently introduced for consideration:

House Bill 652 would give county auditors the authority to test fuel quality levels at local gas stations. The bill is intended to protect consumers from isolated cases of misconduct by station owners. Ohio is now one of just four states where gasoline is not inspected for quality. Nearly six billion gallons of gasoline are sold each year in Ohio – virtually all of it untested at the local level.

House Bill 660 would require each service plaza along the 241-mile Ohio Turnpike to include at least one pump offering E85, the environmentally-friendly, ethanol-based fuel.

Health Update:

Quitting smoking is no easy feat, and it can be easier with the help of expensive nicotine patches. The Ohio Tobacco Prevention Foundations (OFTP) realizes the difficulty of affording these beneficial health tools and is now offering low-income smokers patches at a reduced price. They invested \$3 million in nicotine patch outreach and continue to have statewide success.

The foundation currently provides free telephone counseling, 800-QUIT-NOW, along with four weeks of nicotine patches at a cost of \$25. Smokers save \$75 by enrolling in this program. 42 percent of smokers who couple the telephone counseling with the patches successfully quit smoking, according to research done by the foundation. Only 26 percent of just-callers succeed in quitting.

One million Ohioans are believed to qualify for the program.

Employers want insurers to cover the cost of patches, too. In addition to missing three days a year more than non-smokers, smokers on average incur \$3,400 more each year in medical expenses, according to insurance-industry statistics.

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State Representative Kenny Yuko and Michael J. Fox attend an event in Columbus regarding stem cell research.



Lead Paint Legislation

Every child deserves a safe and healthy place to live. Homes should be a safe-haven, not an incubator for deadly poisons. Unfortunately, many homes in Ohio contain lead-based paint and pose threat of infecting children with lead poisoning. Residents in E. Cleveland, Lancaster, Toledo and Akron are tired of the infectious paint, and are calling paint manufacturers to clean up their products.

Representative Mike Foley, D-Cleveland, recently announced HB 673—legislation that will allocate \$25 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for lead hazard control. Representative Foley and fourteen co-sponsors of the bill want to establish the grant to help qualified homeowners with removal costs.



The high cost of paint removal is often not an option for working families. This legislation will provide aide to these working families to remove the lead-based paint and live in a safe home again.

According to the Ohio Department of Health, 268 Hamilton County children were diagnosed with having elevated levels of lead in their blood in 2005. Lead poisoning in children can stunt mental and physical growth and lead to behavioral problems later in life. Adults also can experience negative health consequences such as nerve damage, irritability and high blood pressure. In fact, children and adults with high blood pressure are the most vulnerable to the effects of lead.

The federal government banned lead paint in 1978, but it can still be found in older buildings.

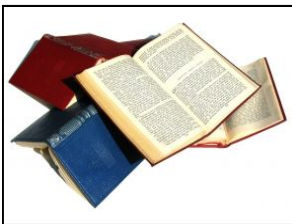
Ohio's charter school update

The Ohio Supreme Court recently ruled that publicly funded, privately operated charters schools are constitutional.

In a narrowly divided opinion, the court upheld the state Legislature's ability to create and to give money to common institutions of learning, even if they are not all the same.

Officially called "community schools" in Ohio, charter schools receive public dollars previously reserved for traditional public school districts. This often leads struggling local school districts to pass the costs of education on to their residents, putting an unfair burden on taxpayers. This year alone, Ohio will pay an estimated \$471 million to support nearly 69,000 charter school students.

Currently, public schools and privately-operated, publicly-funded charter schools are held to different standards of accountability. Charter schools are exempt from releasing the results of their test scores for the first two years they are in existence, allowing struggling students to fall through the cracks. The current system is also lax on penalizing those charter schools who have consistently underperformed.



Across the state, many charter schools, especially in Ohio's urban areas, are performing at levels far below the vast majority of public schools. They were created to address shortcomings in the traditional public school system. Ohio must improve the accountability process for failing charter schools, which have been virtually unsupervised for nearly their entire existence. Here are some bills that have been introduced to address the problems of charter schools and their lack of accountability to the state:

HB 295 - Makes the reporting criteria and penalties for charter schools more stringent so a true and accurate assessment of the schools and their students can be made by the public and regulatory agencies.

HB 335 - Changes the definition of a "challenged school district" so charter schools are not placed in districts where the students are making significant improvements in public schools. This measure is also sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Teresa Fedor.

HB 572 - Ends the special treatment currently being given to failing charter schools by requiring the public release of test results for schools less than three years old. Current regulations allow these failing test results to go unreported. The bill also goes one step further by mandating that any charter school tested at levels of "academic watch" or "academic emergency" for two consecutive testing years be denied funding if their results do not clear these two lowest performance categories in the following year's test.

HB 573 - Prohibits a public school district board member from serving as a board member or employee of a charter school that is not sponsored by a public school district. This dual role creates an obvious conflict of interest for the board member, and thus wants to prevent the opportunity for such a conflict to exist.

The bill also prohibits a public school district board member from serving as an employee or board member of an organization that manages the daily operations of a community school under contract with the school's governing authority (namely, a management company). This additional conflict of interest has the potential to be the most destructive, as the board member would personally profit from the removal of students from a public school district.

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



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