



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,

It is often said that "knowledge is power." That belief fuels our work in the General Assembly to ensure a quality education for all of Ohio's children.

Governor Ted Strickland has taken that ideal several steps further. He just wrapped up a series of 12 "Conversations on Education" forums, crisscrossing the state to hear ideas about how to reform our schools to teach kids and prepare them to become future leaders. These forums serve as prelude to the Governor's planned unveiling of his education reform proposal in 2009. He is focusing on how best to reform our schools, then on how to properly pay for that system.

I am confident that Governor Strickland will present a common-sense plan that addresses many of the challenges Ohio has faced in the past several years. I share his view of education as a K-16 commitment, encouraging students to earn college degrees and linking education to economic prosperity. That simple yet innovative approach will serve Ohio well in this endeavor.

This work will build on several accomplishments we have realized during the 127th General Assembly, including:

- An unprecedented two-year freeze on college tuition
- New investment in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education
- Tax relief for every senior homeowner in Ohio through the Homestead Exemption
- Expanded access to affordable health care for children
- First-of-its-kind state support for breast and cervical cancer screenings for women
- A next-generation energy plan that prevents utilities from collecting "excessive earnings" while investing in advanced and renewable energy
- A \$1.57 billion economic stimulus package that promises to create some 57,000 jobs
- Much-needed regulation of the payday lending industry

There is much more to be done, but we can be proud of the partnerships we have built with the Strickland administration to improve the quality of life for citizens in every corner of Ohio.

If I can help you in any way, don't hesitate to call, e-mail or write to my office.

Sincerely,

Kenny Yuko
State Representative

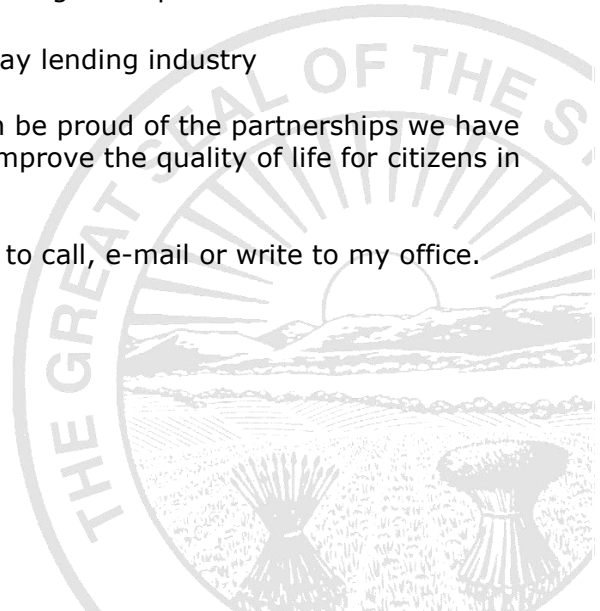
CONTACT

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 Representative Yuko

"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



"Rebuilding Together" brings volunteers together to rehab houses for low income homeowners. From left: Stephanie Thomas, Rep. Kenny Yuko, Pam Yuko, Mrs. Shirley Napier, Councilman Polensek, and other corporate volunteers.

Special Events and Speaker Requests

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.

Struggling School District Awarded State Grant

Richmond Heights Schools Receive Help for Special Education Funding

The men and women who work so hard to educate our children in our public school districts face challenges in the classroom everyday. The greater challenge, though, may lie in paying for the resources and services needed to educate children effectively.

Richmond Heights' school district faces such a challenge. Its bottom line, as is true for any other district, is affected by continued rising costs and the edict to do more with less. A new state grant, however, will help with short-term finances.

The state has awarded the Richmond Heights school district \$110,000 in catastrophic aid, based on the number of special education students the district serves. District Treasurer Brenda Brack told the Sun Messenger newspaper that this was the first time the district applied for this funding, and she expects to apply again in the future because of rising special education costs.

This short-term infusion of cash helps the district maintain a small surplus of funds in its account, a needed cushion during tough economic times. The trouble, though, is not over.

The Richmond Heights Board of Education recently voted to cut six teaching positions, including elementary art and physical education programs, as well as secondary math and social studies teachers. It is a painful reality in the struggle to balance budgets.

Two measures could soon offer some relief. The district is renegotiating with teachers and staff on a new contract that keeps salaries unchanged. Voters will also consider a 5.9-mill levy on the August ballot, a measure residents will hopefully pass for the good of the district's children. It is a small investment today for the future leaders of our communities, and I encourage you to learn about the levy and the good it will bring to the Richmond Heights school district.

“Playground of Possibilities” Set for Construction

Project Promises Hope, Fun for Children of All Abilities

A playground usually signifies simply a diversion for children. In South Euclid, however, a new playground signifies hope and freedom for an entire community.

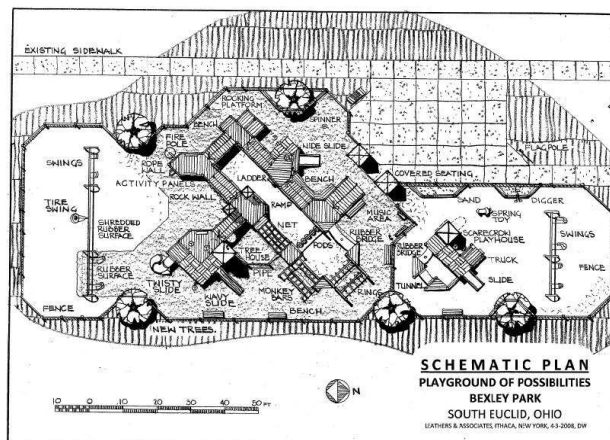
The city of South Euclid has teamed up with Leathers and Associates to build a “Playground of Possibilities.” Mayor Georgine Welo describes the project as “a community-built, barrier-free playground where children of all abilities and disabilities can play and learn together.”

The park, conceived by a member of the Mayor's Recreation Advisory Committee, was designed to meet the wants and needs of children from the South Euclid-Lyndhurst Elementary schools (Adrian, Rowland, Sunview) and St. Gregory the Great School who were surveyed to solicit their ideas. The park includes equipment that will provide sensory, physical and creative development challenges for children of all physical abilities. In fact, a majority of the play activities will be accessible to every child, regardless of their stage of development.

Construction is set for late September at South Euclid's

Bexley Park with the help of community members who have volunteered their labor, money, tools and hearts. This project is open for all of northeast Ohio to share.

South Euclid is still working on raising \$200,000 in funding and gathering volunteers for the project. For more information, contact Councilwoman Diane Fistek (216-381-5789 or dmfistek@ameritech.net) or log onto www.cityofsoutheuclid.com.



Rendering Courtesy: Leathers and Associates

Honoring Ohio's Brave Military

Legislation Recognizes Sacrifices of Active Troops, Veterans and Families



Visitors to the Statehouse view the Lima Company Memorial. The portrait shows Lance Corporal Timothy M. Bell, Jr., West Chesterfield, Ohio; Sergeant Justin F. Hoffman, Delaware, Ohio; Lance Corporal Nicholas William B. Bloem, Belgrade, Montana.

Photo Credit: Steve Harrison/ Ohio Department of Development

In a hallway on the House side of the Ohio Statehouse stands an emotional display to commemorate valor and patriotism. It includes life-sized portraits of 22 Marines and a Navy corpsman who served with Ohio-based Lima Company. They served our nation in Iraq and died on those battlefields. Artist Anita Miller captures their youth and their bravery as single candles burn before each man's picture, a tribute to their service and a memorial to their loss.

Our troops and veterans honor us everyday with their service, whether in warzones or in areas that require their attention. The least we can do is honor them at home with legislation that protects their and their families' interests. The Ohio General Assembly has teamed with Governor Ted Strickland to help military members and their families live better lives.

Governor Strickland recently signed an executive order establishing *The Ohio GI Promise*. This program makes any veteran an "honorary Ohioan" and grants them in-state tuition rates at Ohio's colleges and universities, even if they do not live in Ohio. This is expected to draw more of our dedicated, skilled veterans to Ohio to learn and, hopefully, to enhance our workforce. Ohio becomes a national leader in serving our military members with the same honor those members have exhibited in battle.

In August, Ohio opened its new, Cabinet-level Department of Veteran Services, created through legislation passed by the General Assembly. This department, headed by Bill Hartnett, will be a one-

stop shop for veterans to find services to help them and their families.

Another new law protects the rights and finances of our veterans. House Bill 372 included provisions championed in separate legislation by State Representative Peter Ujvagi (D-Toledo) and former State Representative William J. Healy II (D-Canton). Those provisions:

- Exempt military retirement pay from the personal income tax
- Prohibit discrimination in housing, workplace (hiring/firing, promotion), health care, etc. because of military status
- Exempt from probate fees the estates of military members who died while serving in a combat zone

We passed legislation to rename roads for fallen servicemembers, and to create new license plates. One of those new plates is the "Gold Star Family" license plate, available now to any immediate family member of a serviceman or woman who died in a combat zone. This "moving memorial" honors the families who have sacrificed of themselves to send their loved ones into dangerous areas.

There is still much to do to support our veterans and their families. One measure pending in the General Assembly calls for bonuses to be paid to military members upon their return from service. The bonuses, up to \$1,000, would be available to veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the Persian Gulf War. The proposal also includes a \$5,000 payment to the family of a servicemember killed in action.

Ohio has a long-standing tradition of providing these bonuses to our brave men and women. We have awarded them to veterans of the Civil War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War and Vietnam. I believe we must continue that tradition and recommit ourselves – as we have throughout this General Assembly – to provide all the support we can to our servicemembers and their families.

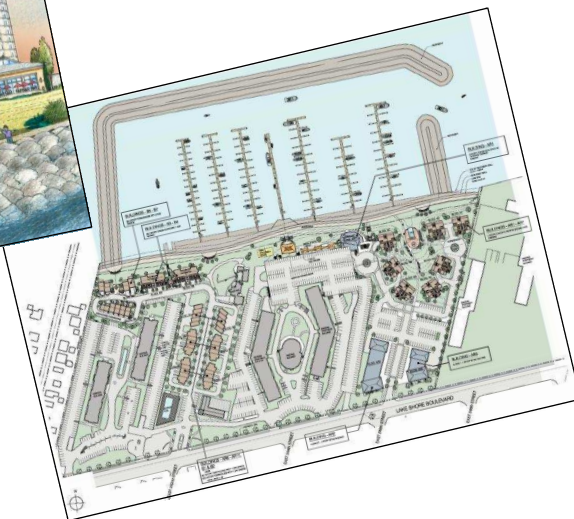


Capital Budget Provides Money for Local Projects

7th District Receives Support for Improvements to Communities



Renderings Courtesy:
URS Corporation



Harbor Town Project \$500,000

The project at the Euclid Lakefront Marina will be the only local refuge and safe harbor to boaters between Cleveland and Mentor. The state funding will help pay for a breakwater to protect the \$180-million investment in the mixed-use Harbor Town Project to generate economic development along the Lake Erie shoreline in the greater Cleveland area.

Euclid Beach Fishing Pier \$100,000

The remains of this fishing pier — a major attraction in the heyday of the Euclid Beach Amusement Park — are housed within Euclid Beach State Park. The state support including in the Capital Appropriations Bill will be invested in the rebuilding of the pier to draw visitors to the park and the adjoining commercial district. A rendering of the conceptual design is *shown at right*.



Every two years, the Ohio General Assembly enacts a Capital Appropriations Budget, providing money for brick-and-mortar projects around the state. These dollars ensure that important local projects can move forward.

The money can be used in a number of ways, including construction or renovation projects. The money is also used to pay for land and certain kinds of equipment.

This year's Capital Appropriations Bill (HB562) provides \$1.3 billion for projects across the state.

Communities engage in a competitive process to convince lawmakers and Ohio officials that their projects are worthy of receiving state dollars.

Our success in this Capital Bill is the result of hard work and planning. Lieutenant Governor Lee Fisher, Ohio Department of Natural Resources director Sean Logan and John Haseley, Governor Strickland's Chief of Staff, all visited these sites in August and agreed that state funding was necessary. Their support was invaluable in this process.

The Governor signed the bill into law on June 24.

State Receives \$2 Million for Youth Anti-Drug Programs

32 Ohio Counties to Get Help Promoting Drug-Free, Healthy Lives

Ohio's efforts to keep young people from using drugs recently received more than \$2 million in federal funds for local programs. The funding targets youth who aren't getting help now, or those who need extra resources. Organizers will pay special attention to at-risk young people such as preschoolers, those in juvenile detention facilities, runaways or homeless young people, dropouts, and those who are pregnant or parenting.

The money will support 60 community-based programs in 32 counties, significantly more than last year. The goal is promote a healthy lifestyle free from drug and alcohol abuse.

Alcohol and other drug addiction remains one of the nation's most serious and costly public health issues. According to the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services, more than 11,000 young people

received publicly-funded alcohol and other drug addiction treatment services last year in Ohio. The most commonly abused drugs were marijuana and alcohol. Prescription drugs are also a significant problem among young people.

"Research has shown that if we can help youth resist alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, they are likely to never use these substances as adults," said Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Director Cornelius Dawson. "By investing in this federal grant money in localized planning and programming, we are working to achieve our vision of an addiction-free Ohio that promotes health, safety and economic opportunity."

You can get more information by visiting the ODADAS website at www.odadas.ohio.gov.

Ohio Wins National Award for Promoting Business

Area Development Magazine Cites Ohio for Attracting, Supporting Companies and Jobs

A national trade publication says Ohio is one of the best states in the nation for attracting new business and supporting companies that create jobs. *Area Development Magazine* recently gave Ohio its Silver Shovel award for states with populations of more than 10 million people.

The annual award recognizes state economic development agencies that do an excellent job creating jobs through innovative policies, infrastructure improvements, processes and promotions that attract new employers, and investments in expanded facilities. Both Ohio and Pennsylvania were winners in the large population group. The winners were announced in *Area Development Magazine's* June/July edition.



The Silver Shovel Award was recently presented to Ohio in recognition of the state's work to attract new business and support job creation

"Ohio's economy packs a punch"

— Silver Shovel Award from *Area Development Magazine*