



A Legislative Report from Rep. Barbara Boyd

9th District of Ohio • Cleveland Heights, East Cleveland, University Heights and Parts of Cleveland



Barbara Boyd
State Representative

Dear Constituents,

These are busy days at the Statehouse in Columbus, full of hearings and meetings on legislation being considered. Understanding all the issues is important so I can best represent you and your family.

This session our top priorities are working to create jobs now, investing in education to create jobs for tomorrow, restoring fiscal responsibility and government accountability, and protecting middle-class Ohioans during a tough national economy.

The legislature has put a renewal and expansion of the Ohio Third Frontier Program on the May statewide ballot, where you will have the opportunity to vote to continue this successful job-generating program. It has already created over 40,000 new jobs in Ohio, produced a 10 to 1 return on investment for taxpayers and it is spurring growth in new and emerging industries like biomedical equipment, alternative energy and advanced materials. Despite the recession, Third Frontier has given Ohio the ability to increase employment in technology industries by 4%, creating nearly 20,000 jobs since 2004 in this field alone.

We are also moving to expand the Ohio Venture Capital Authority, which will create jobs by helping to increase private investment in Ohio companies.

Education reform was a top priority last year and we were able to improve the school funding formula that will ensure that students will have the tools and resources they need to be successful. This year, the Ohio School Funding Advisory Council we created has begun to provide guidance and constructive support for improving Ohio's education system.

The Budget Planning Commission we created will soon begin identifying ways to align the state's expenses and revenues so we can continue to provide a balanced budget. We are also working on some very significant reforms to improve the responsiveness of Ohio's elected leaders, including redistricting and comprehensive changes to Ohio's elections laws.

These are just some of the issues I am working on in the Ohio House. I always welcome your thoughts, concerns and questions. Please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Barbara Boyd
State Representative

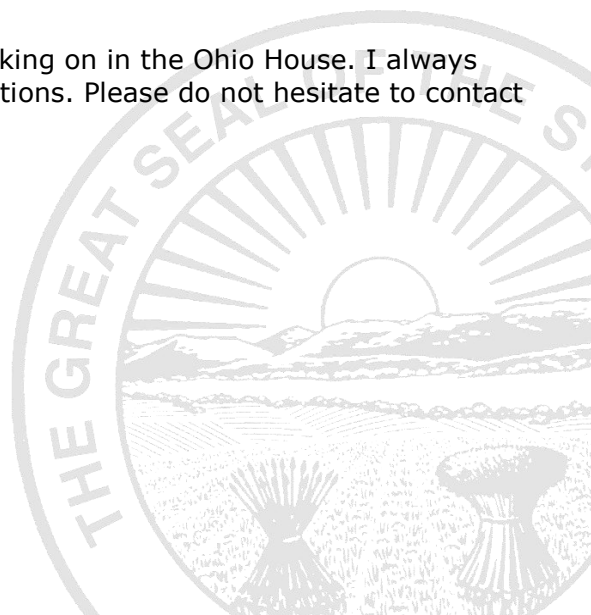
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Ohio Website Helps You Make Informed Healthcare Decisions

Ohio Department of Health Launches Website to Compare Hospital Performance

Finding the best hospital in your area is as easy as the click of a mouse. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has launched a website comparing Ohio hospitals based on several performance measures to help consumers make more informed healthcare decisions.



You can search hospitals by county or zip code, and check results for the care of children and/or adults.

In addition to providing consumers with the information to make well-informed decisions, the comparison gives Ohio hospitals the data to help improve their own quality of care.

Ohio Hospital Compare can be found on the ODH home page at www.odh.ohio.gov. This interactive site allows Ohioans to evaluate hospitals in each of the state's 88 counties on over 100 performance measures. Areas that consumers can compare include:

- Heart Attack Care
- Heart Failure Care
- Surgical Care
- Patient Care
- Pregnancy and Delivery Care

The comprehensive website is the first in the nation to offer a side-by-side comparison of hospitals.

The state will update the website every 6 months to ensure the information used to make the comparisons is current. The Hospital Measures Advisory Council, the group created to select appropriate performance measures, will update their performance categories periodically.

House Leads Fight Against Foreclosures

Legislation Helps Homeowners Get the Help They Need

The Ohio House has taken great strides this past year to reconcile the foreclosure crisis and to secure that homeowners can get the assistance they need.

HB 323 was recently passed out of the House's Housing and Urban Revitalization Committee and addresses the procedures governing residential mortgage foreclosure actions. Homeowners would be able to request a hearing within 60 days to determine if a foreclosed property was filed in good judgment, and properties foreclosed due to delinquent taxes that are forfeited to banks are free of taxes garnered after the decision made by courts.

This bill places limits on vacant properties in neighborhoods and the negative effect the vacant homes may have in the community. It also limits bank walk-aways from the vacant houses and toxic titles.

For future resources from the Housing and Urban Development Department in the Cleveland/Cuyahoga area, contact the Home Repair Resource Center at 216-381-6100 or the NID-HCA VALENTINE Center at 216-932-6624.



Childhood Obesity a Serious Health Problem in Ohio

Two Bills in the Ohio House Would Promote Healthier Lifestyles for Kids

It's not your imagination. Kids these days do weigh more, and obesity in young people has become a serious problem.

Around 30 percent of Ohio's children are obese, which increases the likelihood of Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and other health problems. Ohio is one of the worst ranking states in school nutrition according to the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

Two bills are being considered in the Ohio House to deal with this significant health issue.

The Healthy Choices for Healthy Children legislation (HB 373) includes school-based initiatives that will increase physical activity, raise the bar for physical education and improve the nutritional value of foods offered during the regular and expanded school day.

The Problem is Getting Worse

- Childhood obesity has tripled in the past generation
- Most overweight adolescents have at least one cardiovascular risk factor (high cholesterol, diabetes or high blood pressure)
- Most overweight young people become overweight adults
- The percentage of people more than 100 pounds overweight has quadrupled from one in 200 to one in 50 between 1986 and 2000.
- Obese patients spend 36% more on health care services and 77% more on medications

Source: Ohio State Medical Association

The bill also provides for Body Mass Index (BMI) screenings upon school entry and in 3rd, 5th and 9th grades. Schools would teach parents about their child's BMI and the health risks associated the results.

The goal is to get parents and kids thinking about making healthy lifestyle choices. The tools in this bill will help parents identify and deal with problems before serious health issues come up. The earlier young people start healthy habits, the better for their health and less expensive it will be for everyone in the long run.

A second bill (HB 60) requires snacks sold in public school vending machines to meet certain nutritional standards.

The bill would limit drinks to milk, water and juice products, with some alternative beverages such as low calorie sodas permitted at the high school level. It also limits the fat, sugar, sodium and caloric content in snacks.

The standards in House Bill 60 are based on guidelines set forth by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, the American Heart Association, as well as many businesses, including Pepsi and Mars.

Medical experts say childhood obesity is one of the biggest public health issues confronting Ohio. By taking the steps outlined in these two bills, plus a greater awareness of the need for kids to be more active and eat better, we can prevent today's young people from being the first generation of Ohioans to have shorter lives than their parents.



1 in 3 Ohio children are overweight/obese

Ohio is the 15th fattest state for children

American Heart Association/American Stroke Association



1 in 5 Families Qualify For a Federal Tax Credit

How to See If You Are Eligible to Receive a Larger Tax Refund

No one likes paying taxes, but it's even worse to miss out on a tax refund that you could be getting. These refunds are especially important during challenging economic times when every penny counts.

As this year's tax season approaches, we want to make sure you have all the information you need to claim the largest possible refund.

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable federal tax credit that allows Ohioans earning lower or moderate wages to receive a larger tax refund. At present, 800,000 Ohio families qualify for this program. That means that one in five Ohio families are eligible to receive these tax credits. However, research indicates that as many as 20 percent of these families do not take advantage of the credit because they either don't know about it or don't know how to access it.



Ohio Treasurer Kevin L. Boyce and Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray co-chair the Ohio Commission on EITC. The goal is to share information about the federal tax credit and connect Ohioans to tax preparers who can assure that every Ohioan who qualifies for the EITC receives it.

The amount of money you can get back through the EITC is based on your annual taxable income and the number of children in your family. To determine your eligibility for the tax credit, visit

www.ohiotreasurer.org and click on "Earned Income Tax Credit" under the "For You" tab.

Should you require help in filling out your EITC forms, you can contact a volunteer income tax assistance (VITA) program near you. With VITA, certified volunteers prepare returns at no cost to tax payers of low to moderate income. To find a VITA site near you, call the IRS at 1-800-906-9887.

Renew Your Ohio Drivers License on Time

New Ohio License Plates Now Available

The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles now charges a late fee of \$20 for all drivers license and vehicle registration renewals if you are more than seven days beyond the expiration date. Avoid the fine by renewing on time!

Meanwhile, perhaps you've seen the new "Beautiful Ohio" license plate now available. It is being sold by the BMV in addition to Ohio's standard issue "Sunburst" red, white and blue plate.

The plates cost \$7.50, in addition to other applicable fees that apply when purchasing new or replacement plates.

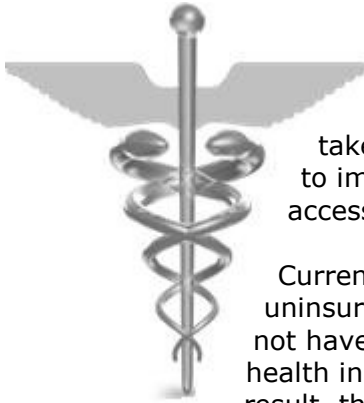
The release of the Beautiful Ohio plate is not a mandatory replacement for Ohio BMV customers. It is an option for those with current registrations to replace their current plates with the Beautiful Ohio design, while new registrations will have the option of choosing the state's standard "Sunburst" design or the Beautiful Ohio design.



The new Beautiful Ohio license plate--right

Improving Access to Healthcare

Ohio Aims for Adequate Healthcare Coverage



Although federal health-care reform has grabbed the headlines, you may not know that we have taken actions at the state level to improve healthcare access and affordability.

Currently, 1.3 million Ohioans are uninsured and many of them do not have access to affordable health insurance coverage. As a result, they do not get the care they need to maintain healthy and productive lives, and the insured end up paying more to cover the costs of caring for the uninsured.

The current state budget includes innovative policies that will provide access to affordable private health insurance coverage for 109,000 Ohioans. This will also lower taxes, improve the quality of the health care system through means such as health information technology and improve transparency for insurance rates.

Here are some of the ways these reforms will improve the lives and health care of citizens of our state.

Expands Coverage for Dependents

21,000 more young adults will have access to health-care effective July 1, 2010

- Expands dependent child coverage up to age 28 providing Ohioans with the opportunity to purchase coverage for their children who are just starting out.
- Reduces taxes by extending the state tax deduction for employer-sponsored coverage to all family and dependent coverage, making this coverage more affordable.

Improves Open Enrollment for Individuals

52,000 more Ohioans now have access to affordable individual healthcare options

- Open enrollment rates will decrease, making coverage more affordable for individuals and families. When fully implemented in 2013, open enrollment

rates are expected to decrease by 50% to 70%.

Extension of COBRA Benefits

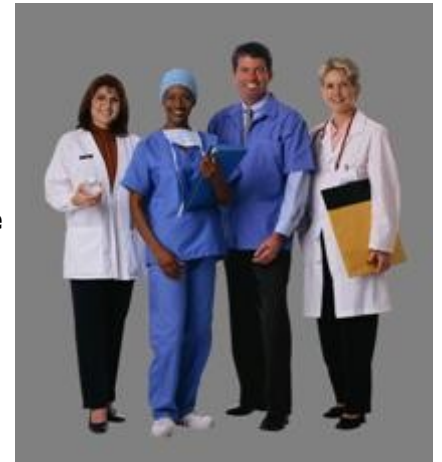
- Extends state continuation coverage (Ohio's "mini-COBRA" program) from 6 to 12 months in permanent law so that employees of small businesses who lose their jobs can maintain health insurance coverage for themselves and their families.

Funding for Health Information Technology

- Improves our health care system by funding health information technology and other healthcare quality improvement initiatives that will reduce the cost and improve the quality of the healthcare system.

Holding Insurance Companies Accountable

- Allows the Ohio Insurance Department to order independent review of health claim denials.



Improves Affordable Options for Ohioans

37,000 more Ohioans have more access at lower cost

- Requires employers to offer uninsured employees the opportunity to purchase coverage with pre-tax dollars through Section 125 cafeteria plans, saving up to 40% off the cost of coverage for the employees and their families by reducing the income taxes they pay, with only a very minimal cost to employers to set up tax accounting mechanisms.

For more information on how access to health insurance in Ohio has been improved, please visit:

<http://www.insurance.ohio.gov>

Third Frontier a Good Investment for Ohio

Independent research confirms jobs, businesses created



The numbers are in, and the Third Frontier Program (3F) has proven to be a winning investment for the state.

Voters will have a chance to expand and renew funding for this excellent job-creating program on the May statewide ballot.

Ohio's future economic prosperity depends on our ability to shift from traditional manufacturing industries to the high-growth, technology-intensive industries of tomorrow. 3F not only accelerates our economic transition, it also creates good-paying jobs for Ohioans.

History of Support

3F began in 2002 with bipartisan support and voter approval. It is a 10 year, \$1.6 billion bond program. 3F supports technology companies that diversify and grow Ohio's knowledge-based economy.

It was founded on the commitment to shape the future economy of the state through a variety of technology-based programs.

How does it work?

The program funds five key technological areas, including: Advanced and Alternative Energy, Biomedical, Advanced Materials, Instruments - Controls - Electronics, and Advanced Propulsion.

In these areas, 3F drives the growth of existing and emerging industry by:

- Increasing high-quality, marketable research

- Making funding more accessible and available to create, expand, and attract technology-based companies
- Supporting small businesses in their earliest stages to develop new products
- Helping existing companies become more productive by addressing their technical issues
- Creating high-paying jobs in technology

Promise Kept

In its seventh year, 3F is living up to its commitment, delivering measurable results.

According to an independent evaluation conducted by Stanford Research Institute (SRI) International, 3F created 41,300 jobs over the past seven years with over \$2.4 billion in employee wages and benefits.

Despite the recession, 3F has given Ohio the ability to increase employment in technology industries by 4%, creating nearly 20,000 jobs since 2004 in this field alone.

The report also showed that taxpayers were seeing more than a 10 to one return on their investment. That means from 2003 to 2008, an investment of \$681 million of state expenditures resulted in over \$6.6 billion of statewide economic impact.

3F is an innovative, forward-thinking program that is transforming the way Ohio conducts business in the 21st century. For more information about 3F and the projects it supports, log on to www.thirdfrontier.com.

Third Frontier by the Numbers

\$681
MILLION
INVESTED
through Third Frontier
from 2003-2008

6.6
BILLION
RETURNED
to Ohio's economy
in research, sales
and construction

41,300
JOBS CREATED
high-tech jobs are
growing while
others have
declined

500
NEW OHIO
COMPANIES
created,
attracted,
and capitalized

3,000
INTERNSHIPS
awarded to Ohio
students with
nearly 700
companies