

February Newsletter

Order Form

DEADLINE Jan 5

Page 1 of 3

MEMBER: _____

DATE SUBMITTED: ____/____/2010

SUBMITTED BY: (Please Initial/Sign Here)

RECEIVED BY: _____

- Please check one:*
- 1. **NO CHANGES:** I have read the entire newsletter, and request that no changes be made. I have designated the pages I want included.
 - 2. **REQUEST CHANGES:** I have read the entire newsletter, and request that the following changes be made before it is sent back for final approval.

YOUR NEWSLETTER CAN HAVE UP TO 6 PAGES

Please draw an X through any article you do not wish to include in your newsletter



Page 1: Constituent Letter

NEW!

Topic/Contents: The cover letter changes monthly. The January edition focuses on moving Ohio forward.

Please check one:

- I have read this page, and will include it without changes.
- I have read this page, and request changes. Please review the attached page and make the requested revisions before uploading my document for ordering.
- I have read this page, and will substitute my own page in its place (see attached).



State / Representative Contact Info

Topic/Contents: 1/2 of the page includes contact information for state agencies, the second half contains contact information for the State Representative.

Please check one:

- I have read this page, and will include it without changes.
- I have read this page, and request changes. Please review the attached page and make the requested revisions before uploading my document for ordering.
- I have read this page, and will substitute my own page in its place (see attached).



Veterans Bonuses

Topic/Contents: The Ohio House led the way toward providing bonuses for veterans serving in the Persian Gulf and Afghanistan. Those bonuses are now available, with details in this article.

Please check one:

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Land Banks & Ohio Statehouse 150th Anniversary

Topic/Contents: The top half of this page highlights the success of land banks in curbing the devastating effects of the foreclosure crisis in Ohio. The bottom half is on the 150th anniversary of the Ohio Statehouse.

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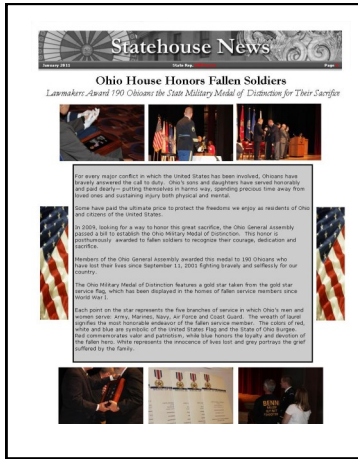


Long Term Care Ombudsman

Topic/Contents: The state can help if your parents or grandparents need long term care. This article explains the state long term care ombudsman program.

Please check one:

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Ohio Medal of Distinction

Topic/Contents: A recent joint session of the Legislature honored Ohio service men and women killed in action by presenting the Ohio Medal of Distinction. This page includes photos and information from that session.

Please check one:

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- I have read this page, and request changes. Please review the attached page and make the requested revisions before uploading my document for ordering.
- I have read this page, and will substitute my own page in its place (see attached).



State Film Tax Credit

Topic/Contents: Just over a year ago, the House approved a tax credit to encourage film makers to choose Ohio. It's working.

Please check one:

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- I have read this page, and will substitute my own page in its place (see attached).



PIPP Plus

Topic/Contents: Ohio's new program to help people keep up with their winter utility bills.

Please check one:

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- I have read this page, and will substitute my own page in its place (see attached).



Town Halls/Unemployment Help Website

Topic/Contents: Two 1/2 page articles, the top half explains why State Reps. work so hard to be in touch with constituents. The bottom half features a new ODJFS website to help the unemployed.

Please check one:

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Constituent Survey

Note: The Survey counts as 2 pages of your total of six newsletter pages.

Please check one:

- I have read the constituent survey, and will include it without changes.
- I have read the constituent survey and would like to submit one or more substitute questions. Please review the attached page and make the requested revisions before returning it to for final approval.

E Newsletter article selection

I would like the following articles included in my e-newsletter this month (please list) You do not have to pick the same articles chosen for the print newsletter. Please indicate if you want an online survey and/or "Spotlight."

- 1) Cover letter
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

- Include the online survey:
 - o Question numbers to include: _____
 - o I will provide my own questions.
- Include the Spotlight feature:
 - o Black History Month
 - o I will provide my own spotlight.

I do not wish to participate this month.



A Legislative Report from Rep. Bill Passer

Representing All Districts of Ohio • Parts of the Great State of Ohio

Dear Constituents,

These are challenging yet exciting times for Ohio. As we begin the 129th General Assembly, we move forward with a strengthened sense of purpose and responsibility to act with your best interests in mind.

My goals have not changed. I will continue to work tirelessly to grow our economy so Ohioans can get back to work in meaningful jobs. Education must be strengthened so all of our young people can access the opportunities they deserve. Our most vulnerable citizens must be protected as we work to keep Ohio moving forward.

Ohio's budget situation makes our task more difficult but not impossible. Over the next few months, my colleagues and I will be doing everything possible to develop a budget for the state of Ohio that is balanced, fair and compassionate. It needs to be a budget that acknowledges tough economic times while remaining sensible and sensitive to the needs of all Ohioans.

This recession has been hard on Ohio's working families. Our economy is beginning to turn the corner, but full recovery is not yet ours. As we look for ways to tighten government spending even further, we must also look for ways to balance the budget without doing economic harm to our citizens.

We will continue to focus on doing everything possible to help the economic recovery take hold in our state. With this recovery comes the opportunity for an even more prosperous Ohio.

In the previous General Assembly, we set the stage for job growth by encouraging the development of exciting high-tech innovations and new industries such as green energy. These are steps that will help make Ohio again the leader in the global marketplace while building upon our strong manufacturing base. We need to continue this momentum.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions, comments or suggestions you may have. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Bill Passer
State Representative

CONTACT

Columbus Office
00th District
77 South High Street
00th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Phone: (614) 000-0000
Toll-free: (800) 282-0253
Fax: (614) 719-0000

Or E-mail At:
district00@ohr.state.oh.us



Contacting Representative **Bill Passer**

You have several options if you would like to contact Representative **Passer**. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions and will do everything we can to help you. We also welcome invitations to speak to your group or organization.



Via Telephone (Columbus Office)

Direct Phone: (614) 000-0000

Toll-Free Messaging System:
(800) 282-0253

Direct Fax: (614) 719-0000

Via Electronic Mail (E-Mail)

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

district00@ohr.state.oh.us

Via Postal Mail (Columbus Office)

Hon. Bill Passer
State Representative, 00th District
Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street, 00th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215



Important State Contact Information

Ohio House of Representatives

www.house.state.oh.us

Legislative Information 800-282-0253

Insurance, Department of

<http://ohioinsurance.gov/>

Consumer Hotline 800-686-1526

Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program
800-686-1578

Jobs and Family Services, Department of

<http://jfs.ohio.gov/>

Veteran Services Division 800-253-4060

Unemployment Compensation Hotline 877-644-6562

Motor Vehicles, Bureau of

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

General Information 800-589-TAGS

Public Safety, Department of

<http://publicsafety.ohio.gov/>

Highway Patrol 877-7-PATROL

State Highway Patrol DUI Hotline 800-GRAB-DUI

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

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

General Information 800-686-PUCO

Taxation, Department of

<http://tax.ohio.gov/>

Form Requests 800-282-1782

Individual Taxpayer Assistance 800-282-1780

Aging, Department of

<http://aging.ohio.gov/home/>

Golden Buckeye Card 866-301-6446

Ombudsman/Elder Rights Unit 800-282-1206



**Save these numbers for
future reference!**

Bonus Available for Veterans of Recent Wars

Those who served during the Iraq, Afghanistan and Persian Gulf Conflicts eligible

Last November, voters overwhelmingly approved the Ohio Veterans Bonus. Veterans who served during the Iraq, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf conflicts may be eligible to receive a bonus from the state of Ohio.



To be eligible for the bonus, veterans must have served in the U.S. armed forces on active duty anywhere in the world, for purposes other than training, between August 2, 1990 and March 3, 1991 or any time since October 7, 2001.

It's easy to apply. Veterans can simply visit www.veteransbonus.ohio.gov or call 1-877-OHIO-VET. They will need their Department of Defense form 214 or other proof of honorable, active duty service, plus documents such as an Ohio driver license or tax returns that prove they are an Ohio resident now and were an Ohio resident at the start of their active duty service.

Eligible veterans may receive \$100 for each month spent on active duty service in the following locations or theaters during these dates: Persian Gulf between August 2, 1990 and March 3, 1991; Afghanistan since October 7, 2001; or Iraq since March 19, 2003. The maximum benefit for in-theater service is \$1,000.

Eligible veterans serving on active duty (except active duty for training only) anywhere else during the above specified dates may receive \$50 a month up to a total benefit of \$500.

Veterans may receive a combined, maximum benefit of \$1,500 for theater and non-theater service during the specified dates.

Eligible veterans who are medically discharged or medically retired from service due to combat-related disabilities sustained during Persian Gulf, Afghanistan or Iraq service are entitled to \$1,000. These veterans may also receive \$50 a month for their non-theater service up to a total of \$500.

Families of deceased veterans may be eligible for \$5,000 if the veteran lost his or her life as a result of injuries or illness sustained in Persian Gulf, Afghanistan or Iraq service. These families may also receive the bonus the veteran had earned per month, up to a maximum total benefit of \$6,500.

Families of veterans whose death was not a result of injuries or illness sustained in Persian Gulf, Afghanistan or Iraq service may receive the bonus the veterans had earned per month, up to a total maximum benefit of \$1,500.

Eligible veterans or families of eligible veterans who were classified by the Department of Defense as a prisoner of war or missing in action may receive a bonus payment of \$5,000.

Apply for your Ohio Veterans Bonus

www.veteransbonus.ohio.gov

- **Complete the on-line application form**

(The application will take approximately 20 minutes. You will need your DD-214 and/or other documentation showing your service dates. If you leave the website before your application is completed, it will not be saved.)

- **If you have questions or need help, call 1-877-OHIO-VET**

Land Banks Help Communities Deal with Foreclosure

House leads the way in expanding this valuable tool in more Ohio counties

Local governments are beginning to use a successful and powerful tool to address the foreclosure problem. The Ohio House and Senate approved bipartisan legislation to allow more areas to set up County Land Reutilization Corporations, known as Land Banks. The Governor signed the bill, and it is helping communities.

The law that began as House Bill 313 promotes the economic development and revitalization of Ohio communities. Land banks are a tool used by cities and counties to combat the negative impacts of vacant or abandoned properties in neighborhoods. Those empty homes can create health and safety concerns, a decrease in surrounding property values, and hurt economic development in the area.

A land bank provides a way to acquire those vacant properties, rather than let them sit empty and abandoned. Then the home can be salvaged or demolished. If the property is demolished, the land

can be reclaimed for future redevelopment.

As the economy and housing market improve, that property can be sold to new owners for new uses. The money from that sale can go to pay delinquent taxes and allow the land bank to recoup its investment.

The legislature originally allowed only Cuyahoga County to set up a land bank as a pilot program. But their experience has been so successful that the Ohio House initiated the effort to expand the reach of the idea. Cuyahoga County is on track to acquire 700 properties by the end of the year that would otherwise have been nothing but a burden on the community.

While Ohioans need more help dealing with the foreclosure crisis, land banks have proven to be a successful tool in protecting our communities from the negative impacts of the problem.

Ohio Statehouse Celebrates 150 Years in 2011

Sesquicentennial celebration to include events, re-enactments and exhibits

After 22 years of construction, the Ohio Statehouse was completed in 1861 at the beginning of the American Civil War. One hundred and fifty years later, the Ohio Statehouse continues to serve as the heart of Ohio democracy.

The Statehouse is considered to be one of the most significant architectural accomplishments of the early republic. Its Greek Revival Doric architectural details and proportions give the impression of permanence, elegance and grandeur deserved by the original State Legislature who passed a law on January 26, 1838 to build the new Statehouse. Restored to its 1861 appearance, the Ohio Statehouse maintains its historic character as it continues to function as the center of state government in Ohio.

The Ohio Statehouse will host a variety of special events, re-enactments and exhibits throughout 2011 to celebrate the sesquicentennial of Ohio's Capitol Building. The events will commemorate the lasting legacy and history of the Ohio Statehouse.



State Help Available For Decisions on Long Term Care

State Ombudsman can help with selections and information on your rights

Ohioans should expect excellence and choices in long-term care.

If you're like most Ohioans, at some point, you or a family member will need long-term care. In fact, seven out of 10 people over the age of 65 will require some long-term care services.

The good news is that long-term care is changing for the better and Ohio's state long-term care ombudsman is part of this positive movement. The state's long-term care ombudsman serves as the voice of Ohio consumers and advocates for quality care for individuals receiving home care, assisted living and nursing home care.

Ombudsmen are advocates who provide a voice to the needs and preferences of clients. Ombudsmen link residents with services or agencies, offer advice on selecting long-term care providers, inform consumers about their rights and provide information and assistance with benefits and insurance.

Ombudsmen do not "police" nursing homes and home health agencies. Instead, they work with providers, residents, their families and other representatives to resolve problems and concerns.

If you are in need of long-term care services, the state ombudsman suggests that you search for providers that advertise the types of services you are looking for. Ohio providers offer a large range of services from home-first programs to community living options.



There are many different approaches to care in the nursing home world – person-centered care, Eden, Green House, Small House. Lingo aside, what we're really talking about is creating a home full of choices wherever a consumer wants to live.

To find a provider that creates such an environment, expect excellence. Residents should be able to spend their day as they would have before they moved, by participating in activities such as gardening, reading, cooking or even bird watching.

Look for a provider that gives consumers meal choices and consistent assignment of staff. This allows staff to get to know the resident's likes and dislikes as well as form friendships. The provider should also engage those caretakers and the resident in care planning. The last thing you want when you visit a provider is to feel like you are visiting an institution.

Both the private sector and government organizations have joined together to help providers change the way they serve you by providing resources and education for nursing homes.

Many person-centered practices don't cost more; in fact, there is a business case for culture change, whether by making the home more attractive and increasing occupancy and revenue or by making operations more efficient and reducing staff turnover.

Who can call the Ombudsman Program?

Anyone may call the Ombudsman. There is no requirement to speak with another agency or the provider first.

How does the Ombudsman Program work for you?

The Ombudsman handles complaints about long-term care services and serves as a liaison voicing the needs and concerns of the consumer to providers of long-term care.

What should I do if I have a complaint?

First, you may wish to address your concern to the provider. If you are unable to solve the problem yourself, your regional ombudsman can help. Your call will be confidential, and they will not act without consulting you and involving you in the resolution process.

For more information:

Call **1-800-282-1206**

Ohio House Honors Fallen Soldiers

Lawmakers Award 190 Ohioans the State Military Medal of Distinction for Their Sacrifice



For every major conflict in which the United States has been involved, Ohioans have bravely answered the call to duty. Ohio's sons and daughters have served honorably and paid dearly— putting themselves in harms way, spending precious time away from loved ones and sustaining injury both physical and mental.

Some have paid the ultimate price to protect the freedoms we enjoy as residents of Ohio and citizens of the United States.

In 2008, looking for a way to honor this great sacrifice, the Ohio General Assembly passed a bill to establish the Ohio Military Medal of Distinction. This honor is posthumously awarded to fallen soldiers in recognition of their courage, dedication and sacrifice.

Members of the Ohio General Assembly awarded this medal to 190 Ohioans who have lost their lives since September 11, 2001 fighting bravely and selflessly for our country.

The Ohio Military Medal of Distinction features a gold star replicated from the gold star service flag, which has been displayed in the homes of fallen service members since World War I.

Each point on the star represents the five branches of service in which Ohio's men and women serve: Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. The wreath of laurel signifies the most honorable endeavor of the fallen service member. The colors of red, white and blue are symbolic of the United States Flag and the State of Ohio Burgee. Red commemorates valor and patriotism, while blue honors the loyalty and devotion of the fallen hero. White represents the innocence of lives lost and grey portrays the grief suffered by the family.



Film Tax Credit Brings Moviemakers, Jobs to Ohio

Credit brings millions of dollars to Ohio

An effort to encourage filmmakers to come to Ohio is paying off. First proposed by Democrats in the Ohio House, the Motion Picture Tax Credit offers incentives for producers to use Ohio workers and Ohio scenery in their movies.



The credit creates job opportunities for Ohioans, and generates revenue for the communities serving as film sets.

The first major film to utilize the Credit was the Twentieth Century Fox blockbuster "Unstoppable," starring Denzel Washington. A portion of the film was shot in the Ohio communities of Martins Ferry, Steubenville, and Bellaire.

The film, about an unmanned runaway train carrying toxic chemicals, was the first production to be awarded an Ohio Motion Picture Tax Credit, employing hundreds of Ohioans as part of the production crew and extras. Twentieth Century Fox extended the number of shooting days in Ohio due to the Motion Picture Tax Credit, worth up to \$3.8 million.

"We feel proud and honored to be the first film to qualify for the Ohio Tax Credit,"

said "Unstoppable" producer Eric McLeod. "With the outstanding local crew and overall community support, I can't think of a better place that could have made our production feel more at home."

"Unstoppable" spent roughly \$15 million in Ohio and employed more than 1,000 Ohio residents.

Three upcoming independent films from Nehst studios (Cleveland based company) were also approved for tax credits: "The Kid Who Only Hit Homers," which is based on a set of popular children's books; the horror sequel



"Strangeland 2;" and the Vivica Fox project "Cleopatra Smiles."

In all, 9 films awarded tax credits employed more than 3,785

people, and spent \$9.46 million in Ohio wages and estimated \$24.3 million to Ohio vendors and location fees.

To date, more than \$9 million in tax credits have been approved, with more than \$20 million still available for interested production companies in Fiscal Year 2011.

In order to be eligible for the tax credit, production companies must show reviewable progress to the Ohio Film Office within 90 days of receiving the notification letter. In addition, they will receive the tax credit only upon completion of production.

The Film Office takes, on average, 50 inquiries a week. These calls range from assistance in permitting to location scouting. Numerous location scouting trips have been logged and the state works closely with local governments to develop easy-to-use permitting programs.



Ohio Film Office

For more information, visit
www.ohiofilmoffice.com

Ohio Has New Program to Help With Utility Payments

PIPP Plus makes monthly bills more affordable

The state has a new plan to help you make your winter utility payments. It's called PIPP Plus (Percentage of Income Plan), and it will make monthly payments more affordable on a year-round basis and provide incentives to participants in the program for regular, timely payments.



PIPP PLUS

Under PIPP Plus, natural gas and electric customers will each pay \$10 or six percent of their gross monthly household income each month,

whichever is greater. Customers with all-electric homes will pay \$10 or 10 percent of their gross monthly household income.

PIPP Plus is available for customers of Ohio's regulated electric and natural gas providers whose gross yearly household income is at or below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines.

The program is run by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) and the Ohio Department of Development.

It allows eligible customers to make affordable payments toward their utility bills while reducing old debt by making timely monthly payments.

Customers must verify their income with their local community action agency annually, as well as agree to participate in energy efficiency programs. Customers enrolled in the current PIPP program will automatically be enrolled in PIPP Plus.

When PIPP Plus payments are made on-time and in full, the remainder of that month's bill is waived, and customers will also receive a 1/24 credit toward any old debt. If a customer makes 24 consecutive payments, all of the arrearages will be eliminated.

Customers who fail to re-verify their income every 12 months risk being removed from the program.

PIPP Plus is designed to balance the hardships and concerns of those eligible for the program with that of all other ratepayers, many of whom are also struggling to make ends meet in this economy.

More State Help is Available

More information about PIPP Plus and other utility assistance programs may be found at www.winterheat.ohio.gov

You'll find important information about:

Winter Reconnect Order – This PUCO order helps customers, regardless of income, who have been disconnected or threatened with disconnection to keep their utility service turned on.

HEAP - This federally funded program helps eligible low-income Ohioans meet the costs of home heating with a one time payment.

Home Weatherization Assistance Program - Qualifying households can make their house winter-proof by adding insulation, heating equipment repairs etc.



Representative **XXXXX** Listens to Community Concerns

Town Hall Meetings, Office Hours Help State Lawmakers Stay Informed on Local Issues

The Ohio House of Representatives is the people's house and as your state Representative, my job is to serve you.

Our community is home to neighborhoods, schools, businesses and families like yours, each with their own unique needs and concerns. You can help give voice to these needs by participating in group forums such as Town Hall Meetings and Office Hours held by your elected officials.

These meetings help your state lawmakers to stay informed and up-to-date on local issues. They also foster bonds between community members and legislators, direct individuals to important state resources and open lines of communication within the community.

These meetings can generate ideas for legislation that can have a significant impact on our community. They can also help to connect you with state resources that can provide an extra boost during a difficult times and open doors to new opportunities.

I look forward to continuing to work with you, your friends and your neighbors to strengthen our neighborhoods and make our community a better place to live, work and play.



State Website Helps Out-of-Work Ohioans

State Agency Connects Unemployed Ohioans with Job, Education Opportunities

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has a Web site to help Ohioans in need.

The website, www.ohioheretohelp.com, connects out of work Ohioans with job and education opportunities as well as foreclosure prevention services and food assistance benefits.

Ohio Here to Help can quickly connect visitors to a wide range of information and resources – from both public and private entities – that can help them search for a job, find education and training

opportunities, and learn about other supports that can help them get through this difficult time.

Ohio Here to Help provides direct links to job openings via Ohio Means Jobs, as well as to training and education resources via the State of Ohio Library. It also provides information on such topics as money, food assistance, health care, housing, transportation, child care, veterans' services, legal services, clothing assistance, youth employment and much more.

Ohio

**Department of
Job and Family Services**

Legislative Survey

REPRESENTATIVE **XXX XXXX**
FEBRUARY 2011

Your views on issues facing state government are important to me. Please take the time to share your opinion on the following topics. I look forward to hearing from you!

1. Are there any areas of state spending that should be protected from budget cuts?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

If so, list them:

2. Do you support a statewide ban on texting while driving?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

3. Should Ohio abandon plans for a job-creating statewide passenger rail transportation system before studies on it are completed?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

4. Do you support state efforts against unscrupulous mortgage servicers who take advantage of Ohio homeowners?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

5. Should Ohio maintain a social service safety net to protect its most vulnerable citizens?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

6. Would you support eliminating the state income tax if it means cuts to vital public services such as police and fire protection and libraries?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

7. Do you support saving Ohio money by sending some non-violent offenders to community corrections facilities and programs instead of state prisons?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

8. Please list what you believe to be three of Ohio's biggest strengths:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Additional Comments:

Please fold and return this form to me at the address listed on the other side.

If you would like to receive my e-newsletter and other legislation information, please provide your email address:

Name _____

E Mail Address _____



TAPE HERE

**Thank you for completing this legislative survey.
Please don't hesitate to contact my office
with any issues or opinions you may have!**

FOLD UNDER AND SECURE WITH TAPE

(PLEASE FILL IN YOUR ADDRESS)

PLACE STAMP
HERE
POST OFFICE
WILL NOT
DELIVER
WITHOUT
PROPER
POSTAGE

Hon. Bill Passer
State Representative, 00th District
Ohio House of Representatives
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

FOLD UNDER