

March Newsletter Order Form

Page 1 of 3

MEMBER: _____

DATE SUBMITTED: ____/____/2011

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 March edition focuses on the need for transparency and accountability in government.

Please check one:

- I have read this page, and will include it without changes.
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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:

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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.

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Ohio Fights Human Trafficking

Crowing movement offers helping hand to human trafficking victims

Although officially abolished in the United States in 1808, human trafficking has grown...



- Other Anti-human trafficking organizations include: The Central Ohio Human & Justice Coalition, Ohio International and Family Counsel, The Collaborative Initiative to End Human Trafficking, Not for Sale Campaign, Head & Soul Movement, Second Chance Tables, The League Against Human Trafficking Coalition

Human Trafficking

NEW!

Topic/Contents: This article features efforts by the legislature to stop human trafficking and help the victims return to society.

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State Help Available For Decisions on Long Term Care

State Help Available For Decisions on Long Term Care

The ombudsman can help with admission and placement in care...



- Ohio Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, Ohio Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, Ohio Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

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.

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Ohio House Honors Fallen Soldiers

Lawmakers Award 190 Citizens the 23rd 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...

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

In 2009, looking for a way to honor this great sacrifice, the Ohio General Assembly passed a bill to establish the Ohio Medal of Distinction...

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 Medal of Distinction features a gold star emblem from the United States 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 served their country. The gold star and emblem are made of metal...

The Ohio Medal of Distinction is a symbol of honor and sacrifice. It is a testament to the courage and dedication of Ohio's fallen heroes.

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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Film Tax Credit Brings Movie Makers, Jobs to Ohio

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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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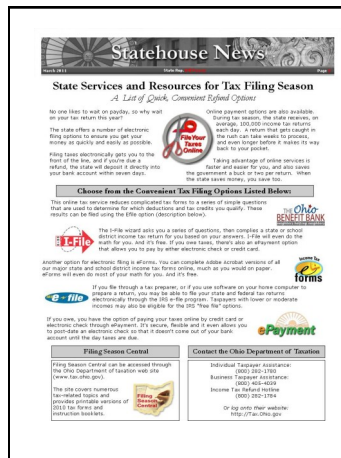


PIPP Plus

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

Please check one:

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Tax Time NEW!

Topic/Contents: This article offers tips on tax preparation and electronic filing for constituents.

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) _____

I do not wish to participate this month.

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



A Legislative Report from Rep. Bill Passer

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



Bill Passer
State Representative

Dear Constituents,

You sent me to the Statehouse to represent you, and that is an assignment I take very seriously. There is a phrase we use in these halls, "The People's Business," that reflects our responsibility to act on your behalf when it comes to matters of state government.

But it is still "your business." You haven't, nor should you, give me free reign to do whatever I want. I still answer to you, the constituents. That is why it is so important that you be able to know what is going on with your state government. Your government has a responsibility to conduct business out in the open, and not cloaked in secrecy. That is the only way you can know how your tax dollars being spent, and whether those dollars are going to programs that work or not.

Words like transparency and accountability are not just slogans or ideas that are trotted out when we want to sound like we support good government. Transparency and accountability are the foundations of our democratic system, and are what separates our system from that of dictatorships of the world.

Transparency gives you the right to know what your government is doing with your money. Accountability gives you the right to say no when you don't like what your government is doing.

Officials should not be allowed to just say, "trust me," and keep you in the dark. As Thomas Jefferson said, "Information is the currency of democracy."

It is often difficult to maintain sunshine and openness in government. Entrenched interests often prefer to operate in the shadows and avoid scrutiny for their actions. But I vow to continue representing your interests, and to maintain your right to know what your government is doing.

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

In November 2009, 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**

Ohio Fights Human Trafficking

Growing movement offers helping-hand to human trafficking victims

Although officially abolished in the United States in 1865, slavery continues today as an illegal enterprise that grosses huge annual profits, second only to the drug trade.

According to the Ohio Trafficking in Persons Study Commission (OTPSC), the United States is the second largest destination country for trafficked persons, and is a large contributor to the world-wide demand that keeps slavery networks busy and the traffickers rich.

Ohio has been identified in numerous human trafficking studies as a problem area in the U.S. because of its proximity to the Canadian border and an advanced highway system. Toledo has been recognized by the FBI as an significant "origin city," meaning pimps are known to recruit from Toledo and move victims to other states for sexual exploitation.

There are approximately 6,000 youths at risk of being trafficked in Ohio. At-risk groups come from a variety of economic, ethnic and national backgrounds and include foreign-born, Ohio-born, domestic violence victims, runaways, and homeless youth from urban, rural and suburban areas, according to the OTPSC.

Most victims of slave trade are recruited for the purposes of commercial sex (46% according to the U.S. Justice Department) and cheap labor. They are often promised financial opportunity and success, or are coerced through threat of violence into following a trafficker's demands.



Awareness of this issue has steadily increased in recent years, thanks to the valiant efforts of organizations and advocacy groups committed to grassroots efforts and targeted campaigns to bring human trafficking to light.

In Ohio, a number of groups are working to help remove human trafficking victims from hostile environments and into safe houses, where shelter, education, and mental and physical treatment are available. The number of victims far exceeds available beds at shelters in Ohio.

Ohio recently joined 44 other states in recognizing human trafficking as a stand-alone offense. Senate Bill 235 was approved with bipartisan support in the legislature and signed into law by the governor.

New efforts focus on essential services to help victims re-enter society.

"The Safe Harbor Act" was recently introduced in the Ohio House of Representatives and seeks to change how child prostitution cases are handled in Ohio.

The bill would ensure that minor victims of human trafficking are offered the essential rehabilitative services they need for recovery, opposed to incarceration, as the current law provides.

The Safe Harbor Act" is the next in a series of steps to combat human trafficking and bring more justice and dignity to the victims of this crime.

Ohio Anti-human trafficking

GraceHaven

The Central Ohio Rescue & Restore Coalition

Doma International

End Slavery Cincinnati

The Collaborative Initiative to End Human Trafficking

Polaris Project

Not for Sale Campaign

Weed & Seed

The New Abolitionist Movement

Second Chance Toledo

The Lucas County Human Trafficking Coalition

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.

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.

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

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

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

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.

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.

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.



State Services and Resources for Tax Filing Season

A List of Quick, Convenient Refund Options

No one likes to wait on payday, so why wait on your tax return this year?

The state offers a number of electronic filing options to ensure you get your money as quickly and easily as possible.

Filing taxes electronically gets you to the front of the line, and if you're due a refund, the state will deposit it directly into your bank account within seven days.



Online payment options are also available. During tax season, the state receives, on average, 100,000 income tax returns each day. A return that gets caught in the rush can take weeks to process, and even longer before it makes its way back to your pocket.

Taking advantage of online services is faster and easier for you, and also saves the government a buck or two per return. When the state saves money, you save too.

Choose from the Convenient Tax Filing Options Listed Below:

This online tax service reduces complicated tax forms to a series of simple questions that are used to determine for which deductions and tax credits you qualify. These results can be filed using the Efile option (description below).



The I-File wizard asks you a series of questions, then compiles a state or school district income tax return for you based on your answers. I-File will even do the math for you. And it's free. If you owe taxes, there's also an ePayment option that allows you to pay by either electronic check or credit card.

Another option for electronic filing is eForms. You can complete Adobe Acrobat versions of all our major state and school district income tax forms online, much as you would on paper. eForms will even do most of your math for you. And it's free.



If you file through a tax preparer, or if you use software on your home computer to prepare a return, you may be able to file your state and federal tax returns electronically through the IRS e-file program. Taxpayers with lower or moderate incomes may also be eligible for the IRS "free file" options.

If you owe, you have the option of paying your taxes online by credit card or electronic check through ePayment. It's secure, flexible and it even allows you to post-date an electronic check so that it doesn't come out of your bank account until the day taxes are due.



Filing Season Central

Filing Season Central can be accessed through the Ohio Department of taxation web site (www.tax.ohio.gov).

The site covers numerous tax-related topics and provides printable versions of 2010 tax forms and instruction booklets.



Contact the Ohio Department of Taxation

Individual Taxpayer Assistance:
(800) 282-1780
Business Taxpayer Assistance:
(800) 405-4039
Income Tax Refund Hotline
(800) 282-1784

Or log onto their website:
<http://Tax.Ohio.gov>

Legislative Survey

REPRESENTATIVE **XXX XXXX**
MARCH 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

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