

Statehouse News

From the Office of Representative Allison Russo



A Note from Representative Russo

We are well into the fall here in the Statehouse. It's clear that we have a lot of work to do, especially about gun violence. Two months have passed since the shooting in Dayton, and we have yet to have a hearing on important gun safety legislation that expands background checks and reduces imminent danger. You have asked me and my colleagues to do something. I am committed to ensuring that any legislation I support on this issue contains the comprehensive reforms needed to keep our kids and communities safe. As always, I welcome your feedback and thoughts on this and many other important issues facing our State.

A handwritten signature of Allison Russo in black ink.

Look Back: September 2019

September in the Statehouse was busy! Rep. Russo gave sponsor testimony for H.B. 287, a bill she introduced with Rep. Perales (R-Beavercreek) to provide Medicaid waiver reciprocity for active duty family members with special needs who move to Ohio for assignment. If this important legislation passes, Ohio would join 33 other states in honoring these waivers and supporting military families.

Rep. Russo also spoke with the press about a bipartisan resolution to encourage equitable and diverse gender representation on the boards and in senior management of Ohio companies and institutions. A gender-diverse workforce brings significant business benefits, including greater innovation, higher employee retention and satisfaction, more business opportunities, and improved team decision making. It is important that we see those same benefits of diversity reflected in board rooms and executive management, and our state government plays an important role in elevating this issue.



When Rep. Russo wasn't attending committee hearings, providing sponsor testimony for her legislation, discussing the voter purge, or talking to the press about upcoming bills, she was hosting panelists for the Ohio Legislative Children's Caucus to share their knowledge and expertise on early childhood research. She also visited the

Indiana/Kentucky/Ohio Regional Council of Carpenters (IKORCC) Columbus Campus open house to see all the incredible work IKORCC is doing in our community to advance opportunity in the trades. She also got a chance to check out both Old Hilliardfest and the new Hilliard Food Pantry.



Commendations and Condolences from Rep. Allison Russo

Congratulations to **Officer Aaron Rife** on being presented with the 2019 Correction Officer of the Year Award! We thank him for his service to our community.

Congratulations to **Chris Taylor** on her retirement as the Director of the Upper Arlington Public Library. We thank her for her commitment to our community.

Congratulations to **Michelle Lombardi** on receiving the 2019 WOSU Outstanding Teacher Award! Thank you for your dedication to our community.

Condolences to the family of **Kurtis Tunnell** upon his death. We all mourn this tremendous loss to our community.

Issue Spotlight: Universal Background Checks and Red Flag Laws

Universal background checks and extreme-risk protection orders would prevent suicide and make us safer.

Gun violence is an epidemic in the United States. In 2017, the CDC reported that 39,773 people died from gun injuries—an average of 100 gun deaths per day. When analyzed at a state-by-state level, it becomes clear that the 10 states with the highest gun death rates have the weakest gun laws in the nation. Conversely, research shows that universal background checks and extreme-risk protection orders (or "red flag" laws) help make our homes, schools, and communities safer, and that there is a demonstrable reduction in gun violence deaths.

H.B. 316, or the "Extreme-Risk Protection Order Act", is a bill Rep. Russo introduced with Rep. Sweeney (D-Cleveland) to allow family members, household members, or law enforcement to file a court order temporarily preventing imminently dangerous or imminently distressed individuals from possessing firearms. A 2017 study done by the FBI shows that, in many instances of gun violence, there were clear warning signs that the shooter posed a serious risk of harming themselves and/or others with a firearm. According to the Suicide Prevention Center, firearms are the means of 50.6% of all suicides in the U.S. and the most common means of suicide deaths. Extreme-risk protection orders save lives by giving families, communities, and law enforcement time to quickly intervene before those warning signs escalate into tragedies, while also respecting the 2nd amendment and rights of due process. So far, 17 states across the country have extreme-risk protection order laws, including Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, and Illinois.

Currently, H.B. 316 has been referred to the Health Committee. While there is broad support from the public, no hearing has yet been scheduled by committee leadership.

Upcoming Events:

- Leadership UA Candidate's Night
October 10, 6-9pm; Municipal Services Center
- UACA Golden Bear Scare
October 15, 6:30pm—October 18, 9pm; Smith Nature Park
- Hilliard State of the Schools Address
October 24, 7- 8pm; Heritage Golf Club
- UA Prescription Drug Take Back Day
October 26, 10am-2pm; Municipal Services Center
- Hilliard Prescription Drug Take Back Day
October 26, 10am-2pm, Hilliard Division of Police

"Statehouse at Home"

Come and meet with Rep. Russo to discuss the issues facing our community. Any and all constituents are welcome to attend.

Hilliard Office Hours

- October 17, 4:30-6pm; Hilliard Library, Room 2A
- November 14, 4:30- 6pm; Whetstone Library, Meeting Room
- December 12, 4:30-6pm; Upper Arlington Library, Meeting Room A

Legislative Agenda:

- Introduced HB 243, "Madeline's Law' Requiring Insurance Coverage of Child Hearing Aids" with Rep. Casey Weinstein (D-Hudson)
- Introduced HB 287 "Reciprocity for Military Family Member Earned Priority for Medicaid HCBS Waivers" with Rep. Rick Perales (R-Beavercreek)
- Introduced HB 316 "Extreme Risk Protection Orders" with Rep. Bride Rose Sweeney (D-Cleveland)
- Introducing the "Mental Health Parity Act" with Rep. Phil Plummer (R-Dayton)
- Introducing the "Calling on the Federal Government to Allow Striking Workers to Apply for SNAP Benefits Resolution" with Rep. Lisa Sobecki (D-Toledo)
- Co-sponsoring HB 317 "Universal Background Checks for Firearms" with Reps. Phil Robinson (D-Solon) and Adam Miller (D-Columbus)
- Co-sponsoring HB 305 "Fair School Funding Act" with Reps. John Patterson (D-Jefferson) and Robert Cupp (R-Lima)
- Cosponsoring "Gender Diversity and Equity in Corporate Leadership Resolution" with Reps. Sara Carruthers (R-Hamilton) and Thomas West (D-Canton)