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Dear Neighbor,

This month we have seen protests across Ohio and our nation over the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery among others. The protests expressing outrage are not only understandable, but are appropriate. I support Ohioans' ability to exercise their First Amendment rights and to organize demonstrations. We have a responsibility to stand up and declare that we will not tolerate injustice of any form.

It is now more important than ever to discuss the issues that stem from systemic racism and take steps to eradicate this societal ill. In the Ohio Senate, I have been working with my colleagues to address disparities in healthcare, education, and housing that exist between minority and non-minority populations. This past week, I introduced three pieces of legislation that would reduce maternal mortality during childbirth and advocate for more equitable healthcare during pregnancies. We have a lot of work ahead of us to ensure that Ohioans live in an equitable society, but as a public servant it is my job to address these issues and develop remedies and solutions.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to my office if you have ideas or need help accessing state resources. I'm available at Kunze@OhioSenate.gov or by phone at (614) 466-5981.

Be Well and God Bless.

Stephanie Kunze



The COVID-19 pandemic shut down schools across Ohio and has caused uncertainty for students, parents, and teachers about the upcoming school year. The Senate is working with schools and students to assure that every school district will be well prepared for the 2020-2021 school year. Earlier this month, the Senate passed HB 164 to further give Ohio's schools additional flexibility as they plan for a new school year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This legislation is aimed at providing flexibility to school districts to adapt for the well-being and education of students at all levels. Special education providers and licensed school psychologists can serve children using tele-health and electronic communication methods. Teachers will not have to use student academic growth in their evaluations, bringing freedom to lesson plans. \$24 million in funding has been allocated from the Federal CARES Act to aid budget shortfalls.

Communication between the legislature, parents, students, and our school's leaders brought about these necessary changes. Innovation has always been an attribute that school districts have provided for its students. HB 164 provides flexibility to allow our schools to innovate in creative ways, bringing a tailored education to each and every student.

Read more about HB 164 below:

[Learn More](#)



CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Ohio's Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission was established to honor the 100 year anniversary of the Women's Suffrage movement. The 19th amendment was a grand milestone that transformed voting rights. Like many events planned for 2020, the Commission's plans to honor the women who paved the way for voting equality have been disrupted. As Co-Chair of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, I joined my colleague Senator Sandra Williams to discuss a plan to extend this Commission into 2021. I look forward to continuing the great work this Commission has done to honor these brave women.

Read more about SB 318 here:

[Learn More](#)



REDUCING MATERNAL MORTALITY

This month, I provided sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 326. This bill would specify that the Pregnancy Associated Mortality Review Board meet more frequently, expand the Board's duties associated with its mission to reduce the incidence of pregnancy-associated deaths in Ohio, require more frequent reports, and designate May as Maternal Mortality Awareness Month. The goal of the Pregnancy Associated Mortality Review Board is to work to ensure that women receive the best possible care during their childbirth. With increased reporting, the General Assembly can get a better view of data that can show what needs to be done to address maternal deaths in Ohio.

Read more about SB 326 here:

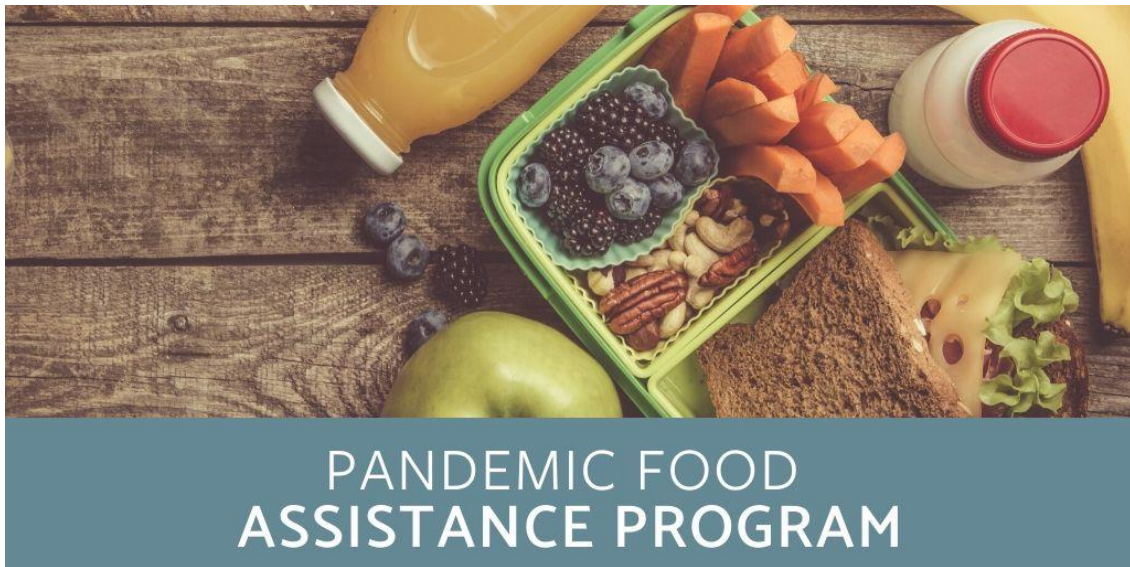
[Learn More](#)



I was also fortunate enough to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 327 and 328. Senate Bill 327, also titled the "Save Our Mother's Act", will require the director of health to adopt rules establishing requirements for hospitals and freestanding birthing centers to conduct annual continuing education for employees and contractors who routinely care for pregnant and postpartum women. This will go towards addressing the fact that 57% of pregnancy associated deaths in Ohio between 2008 and 2016 were classified as preventable.

Senate Bill 328 would allow Medicaid to cover doula services for Medicaid recipients. Studies have shown that doula services result in more positive birth outcomes in terms of maternal health. By allowing the most vulnerable in our state to receive doula services, we can further strive to lower both our infant and maternal mortality rates.

Click the links to read more about [SB 327](#) and [SB 328](#).



A new federally-funded program called Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) is now available to help families afford healthy food for their children.

P-EBT is additional money for families to buy food due to COVID-19 related school closures. Families with children who receive free or reduced-price school meals under the National School Lunch Program will receive P-EBT funds.

You will receive P-EBT funds if your child(ren):

- Receive free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program OR
- Attend a school where every student gets free meals

The P-EBT Program will bring more than \$254 million into Ohio's economy, supporting our grocery stores and farmers markets, local economies, and communities. An estimated 850,000 children in grades K-12 across Ohio will receive these funds.

For more information please visit the link below or call 1-866-244-0071.

[Learn More](#)



AIDING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD RESTAURANTS AND BARS

We as a community must come together to support local businesses who experienced closures. Many local restaurants and bars are reopened and have altered their seating, policies and protocols to protect their patrons and employees. I was happy to do my part in distributing hand sanitizer to local restaurant and bar owners.

Thank you to JobsOhio, Ohio Restaurant Association and Ohio Liquor for their continuing work to support local businesses.



HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED YOUR JOB?

The federally passed CARES Act created the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program to provide additional assistance to those unemployed due to COVID-19 that would otherwise not be eligible. By expanding the population of individuals eligible for benefits, Ohio's Department of Jobs and Family Services is working to distribute benefits to get assistance to those in need. The expanded population includes self-employed workers, 1099 tax filers and part-time workers. As a reminder: payments are backdated to the date individuals

first became unemployed.

For additional information, visit the Unemployment Office's Coronavirus and Unemployment Insurance Benefits Resource Hub below:

[Learn More](#)

In the News

FOX 28 Columbus: [Black-owned restaurant donates 800 meals to Central Ohio healthcare workers](#)

10TV (WBNS): [Hilliard school district creates task force to address racial inclusivity](#)

ThisWeek (Upper Arlington News): [Opening of Upper Arlington pools makes big splash for residents](#)

ThisWeek (Grove City): [Grove City graduate Chase Antle eager to chase dream with Phillies](#)

Please feel free to contact me. My office can help:

- ★ Assist in dealing with state agencies.
- ★ Research information on bills and committees.
- ★ Share your opinions on pending legislation or your ideas for new legislation.
- ★ Honor outstanding accomplishments and milestones.
- ★ Request a meeting at the Statehouse or in the district.
- ★ Schedule a tour of the Ohio Statehouse.



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Senator Stephanie Kunze represents the 16th Ohio Senate District, which encompasses a portion of Franklin county. Learn more at www.OhioSenate.gov/Kunze.