



**Business and
Professional
Women/OH**

LEGISLATIVE NEWS, TOPICS AND ACTION NEEDED

Our Mission: To achieve equity for all women in the workplace and to empower all women through advocacy, educations, and information. Established in 1920

Disclaimer: The information contained in the links below are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of BPW/Ohio. They are provided for your information to educate you about these pending legislative issues. If you would like to include links in future issues, please email to: BPW/Ohio LegChair@gmail.com. Include your name and local organization's name.

JULY 2026 LEGILATIVE NEWSLETTER

What's going on with the Ohio Legislature:

Our State Legislature had its last Legislative Session in mid-June and they are currently on recess until after the November election. However, that being said, they do have some **“as needed” Session days scheduled for the months of September and October.** Unfortunately, we may not necessarily get much advanced notice as to when those sessions will be held.

In any event, we should periodically check the Ohio Senate and Ohio House's websites to see when those “As-needed” Sessions will be held. Additionally, we should be prepared for them to hold various marathon Sessions when they do come back from their recess because there are a lot of bills that will “die” at the end of this year if they are not passed by the end of the year.

What's Our Next Steps?

Keep in mind that even while the Senators and Representatives are on recess., their staff is still working and available. They still answer the phone and note comments from constituents; they still read and print off the emails and track the comments so that they can share your input with your Legislator. They also are still available to receive letters which again, they count and note your position regarding pending legislation so that they can share that information with your Legislator. Most importantly they still meet with constituents.

Also, if you are someone who likes to meet with people face to face, your Legislator may have a local office that you can stop in and speak to them or may be holding local Town Halls. Reach out to their offices or staff to see what is available to you. Use the means available to you to still advocate on the following issues:

1. **VOTER RIGHTS:** In my last Newsletter, I provided an update on Senate Joint Resolution 10. That legislation in conjunction with House Joint Resolution No. 9, **authorized putting before voters in November an Amendment to the Ohio Constitution. This Constitutional Amendment would require voters to provide one of the following types of photo identification when they vote:**

- A Driver's License or State ID Card issued by the Ohio BMV.
- A United States Passport or Passport Card
- A United States Military ID Card
- An Ohio National Guard ID Card
- Any Identification Card issued by the US Department of Veterans Affairs

If this Amendment passes, it will become a permanent portion of our Ohio Constitution and future elections.

Make sure that you, your families, and others understand what having this requirement as part of our Ohio Constitution means. Educate others about this change.

Keep in mind that Joint Resolutions 9 and 10 dealt with in-person voting, however, the Legislature also passed **House Bill 472** which would require absentee voters to provide their driver's license or state ID, starting with the November 2027 election. This bill would require absentee voters to show their ID either when they request an absentee ballot or if they submit their ballot in person. **On June 26, 2026, Governor DeWine vetoed this legislation.**

However, we should be prepared for the Legislature to try to over-ride this veto when they are back in Session. So again, you can start reaching out now to your Senators and Representatives to let them know that you do not agree with HB 472 and you do not want them to vote to override the Governor's Veto.

2. ELIMINATION OF CHILD MARRIAGE IN OHIO

Prior to the Summer Recess, Senate Bill 341, which requires someone to be 18 years of age before they can be married was voted out of the Senate Judiciary Committee. The next step is for it to go before the entire Senate for a vote. If passed out of the Senate it will go to the House for action and if it passes the House it will then go to the Governor.

Continue to track this legislation on the Senate's Website. You can also send letters, emails or make calls to your Senator to request that when it comes up for a vote in the full Senate, you want them to vote in favor of this Legislation. Letters or emails can also be sent to members of the House of Representatives so that they know your position on this matter before it officially gets to the House.

As previously stated the Arguments for banning child marriage include the difficulty of married minors to get divorces, the severe power imbalance if you have a 17-year minor married to someone significantly older than they are and issues related to human trafficking.

Fair Paycheck Workplace Certificate – Senate Bill 74: This legislation will create a mechanism by which an employer can obtain from the Department of Commerce a Certificate verifying that they pay their employees a fair and living wage, irrespective of gender. In other words, it provides a mechanism for employers and potential employees to know that an

employer does not engage in wage discrimination. This legislation is still pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee and has only had one hearing. We need to contact member of that Committee to advocate for more hearings and that the legislation gets voted out of Committee so that it can go to the full Senate.

SENATE BILL 77: ANONYMOUS REPORTING OF WAGE DISCRIMINATION

This bill is also still languishing in the Ohio Judiciary Committee Senate. It would provide a mechanism for someone who believes that their employer has engaged in or is engaging in wage discrimination to report that discrimination without fear of reprisal. SB 77 also has only had one hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee, so we need to contact members of that Committee as well as all other Senators that we take wage discrimination very seriously and we want everyone to be paid fair and equitable wages. At the very least, the Committee should hold additional hearings to get testimony from those affected by wage discrimination and proceed to pass this Legislation.

Again, if these pieces of legislation are not passed by the end of this Legislative Session, they die and will need to start all over again in with the 161st Legislature.

SENATE BILL 421: INCREASING THE PERIOD FOR VICTIMS TO FILE CIVIL CASES FOR DAMAGES ARISING OUT OF BEING A VICTIM OF A SEXUAL OFFENSE.

This legislation would give victims of a sexual offense an additional five (5) year period in which to file a civil action against the perpetrator. This would be especially helpful to child victims or anyone who suffered a sexual assault but for some reason they were not able to take action until at a later time. The alleged abuser can be a family member, a teacher, a medical provider, a therapist, or basically anyone. This bill recently passed the Senate and it now goes to the House for their review before proceeding to the Governor for action.

BPW Ohio members these are just some of the bills that we can still promote and educate our Legislators about even though they may not currently be in Session. Our lives are not on “RECESS.” Things are happening to us, our family members, and friends every day. We need to advocate on behalf of ourselves and others. We don’t need to wait until they are “back on the job” so to speak before we make our positions know and our voices heard. Which brings me to the last item for this Newsletter.

STATE HOUSE VISIT: Last September, a number of us went to Columbus to Lobby our Legislators about some of the issues that are important to us. I think that the more visible our members are as well as the more engaged we are with our Legislators helps us to get our message across and lets them and their staff know that we take our Motto, “To be the Leading Advocate for Working Women” seriously.

Therefore, **I would like to plan a Day at the Statehouse**, which would consist of us taking an “Official Tour” of the Statehouse, which is conducted by members of the Ohio Statehouse staff. These tours are approximately 45 minutes long and will provide an excellent opportunity for those who have never been to the Statehouse before to become familiar with it so if they come back for future Lobby Days, they may feel more comfortable in the space.

In addition to the tour, if possible we could attend some Senate or House Committee Hearings and if possible a Legislative Session. These events would give us an opportunity to see our “Legislators” at work and will also help us to understand how the Committee hearing are conducted, how individuals can testify before a Committee and an opportunity to see how our Legislators debate or discuss the issues that come before them. These observations will help us to become better advocates or lobbyist when we come back the next time.

Further, we can schedule meetings for those BPW members who want to visit the offices of their respective Senator or Representative. In the past, like last September when we had our Lobby Day, we have met with some of the Staff members of the Senators or Representatives and those meetings have been just as worthwhile as meeting with the actual elected official.

Given the Legislature’s current scheduling, I am looking at going sometime in mid-October. In fact, I think it might be a good way to Celebrate National Business Women’s Week. If you are interested in participating, please email me at chardew1@yahoo.com or you may call me at (419) 266-1291. Once I know how many people are possibly interested in participating, I can start making plans, submit a Budget for this event for the Executive Committee to review/approve and confirm our arrangements. Your input would be appreciated and again let me know asap if this is something you would be interested in doing.

Best Personal Wishes to each of you.

Charlon K. Dewberry
BPW Ohio Legislative Chair 2026-2027
Chardew1@yahoo.com
BPWOHLegChair@gmail.com
(419) 266-1291

July 17, 2026