



Representative Emilia Strong Sykes Minority Whip

August 22, 2018

Governor John Kasich
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Governor Kasich,

In Ohio and across the nation you frequently talk about bringing people together to solve problems and making sure our actions reflect our American values of equality and fairness. From your work on assembling the state's first police-community relations task force to the national stage where you have made it clear hate and division have no place in today's world, you have used your office to profess a message of unity and reason.

This is why I appeal to you in an effort to gain your assistance in bringing your Department of Public Safety (DPS) and Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to the mediation table with me and the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) to resolve experiences of gender discrimination and racial bias in Statehouse security practices.

I, like other African American women, have experienced unfair treatment and discrimination at Statehouse security checkpoints. I have tried to work with DPS Director John Born and the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP), but they have yet to even acknowledge issues of discrimination, let alone offer an apology to me and other Black women who have experienced unfair scrutiny and treatment, which raises a bigger question: If credentialed elected officials are being treated differently because of our skin color and/or gender, how are citizens being treated by the Highway Patrol at their statehouse and on their highways?

After a lot of thought, prayer and reflection, I felt I had no choice but to file a complaint with the OCRC after numerous meetings with Public Safety and the patrol went nowhere. Now, we are faced with a unique opportunity to bring all responsible parties – OSHP, DPS, DAS, the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board and the Ohio House of Representatives –

Committees:

Finance Committee
Finance Subcommittee on Health & Human Services
Rules and Reference
Ways & Means
Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee
Health

**www.ohiohouse.gov
77 S. High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-6111**

Contact Information:

Office: 614-466-3100
Toll-Free: 1-800-282-0253
Fax: 614-719-6968
Email: Rep34@ohiohouse.gov

together around one table to reflect on these instances of discrimination and bias to ensure nobody is ever treated this way by a state agency or officer again.

Unfortunately, to date, your agencies, DPS and DAS, have rejected this opportunity to come together in a good faith effort to better understand how we can move our state forward and ensure all people are being treated with dignity and respect, especially at the Ohio Statehouse.

I respectfully urge you to compel your DPS director and DAS director to reconsider mediation. Not only would this avenue save taxpayers significant time and money by sidestepping a full OCRC investigation, but by working together we can build long-lasting results and a deeper understanding of each other to make sure everyone feels welcome in our state.

Sincerely,



Emilia Strong Sykes
State Representative,
House District 34