Dear Ward 15 Residents,

In January 2023, House Bill 458 was voted into law and signed by Ohio Governor Mike DeWine. This new law puts Ohio among a handful of states with the strictest voter ID rules in the country. Other new restrictions on voting access include cutting the early voting period, giving voters less time to return their mail-in ballots, and limiting ballot drop boxes to one per county. The bottom line is that voter suppression in Ohio has increased.

I know that many Ward 15 residents choose not to vote, aren’t able to make time to vote, or encounter barriers to voting. Some of you have told me that you don’t believe your vote matters. I am writing this letter to let you know that your vote matters now more than ever.

This newsletter includes information about what the community needs to know about Ohio’s new voting laws. Please join me in helping others to understand the laws, check their voter registration status, and get the word out about the importance of voting.

Sincerely,

Jenny Spencer

A Message from Councilmember Jenny Spencer

Queridos residentes,

En enero de 2023, se hizo ley en Ohio el House Bill 458. Ahora Ohio tiene unas de las reglas de identificación de votantes más estrictas del país. Otras restricciones nuevas en el acceso a la votación incluyen reducir el período de votación anticipada, dar a los votantes menos tiempo para devolver sus boletas por correo y limitar los buzones de entrega de boletas a uno por condado. La conclusión es que la supresión de votantes en Ohio ha aumentado.

Sé que muchos residentes del Distrito 15 eligen no votar, no pueden encontrar tiempo para votar o encuentran barreras para votar. Algunos de ustedes me han dicho que no creen que su voto importe. Les escribo este mensaje para que sepan que su voto importa ahora más que nunca.

Este boletín incluye información sobre lo que la comunidad necesita saber sobre las nuevas leyes electorales de Ohio. Para obtener una copia de esta información en español, comuníquese con mi oficina al 216-664-4235. La Junta Electoral del Condado de Cuyahoga también es una buena fuente de información. Visite su sitio de web en el boe.cuyahogacounty.gov/es o llame al (216) 443-8683.

Sinceramente,

Jenny Spencer

New Voting Laws In Ohio: Where to get the Help & Information You Need

Check Your Voter Registration Status

The State of Ohio engages in the practice of voter roll “purging,” which means that thousands of citizens are semi-automatically removed from state voter rolls due to inactivity. The most recent voter roll purge in Ohio occurred in February 2023. If you have not voted in a while or just to be safe, it’s worth taking a few seconds to search the state’s list of removed names, even if you consider yourself to be a regular voter. Go to: registration.ohio.gov

How to Register to Vote

If you have received your voter ID card, you may register to vote at any time. If you have it registered in your name, you may register online at https://voter.ohio.gov, or by contacting the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections at 216-443-8683 or visiting them at 216-443-8690. You can also visit any public library or voter registration center. For more information, visit the Cleveland Public Library at 1016 Lorain Avenue, which will reopen to the public on Saturday, June 17th.

The final day to register for the August 8, 2023 Special Election is July 10, 2023.

New State Photo ID Requirement to Vote

The state of Ohio has always required voters to show identification at the polls, but allowed an exception for voters who could not produce one allowing them to present a basic statement, pay stub or other document to prove their identity. The new law gets rid of that exception and only allows someone to vote if they provide a state-issued photo ID. Residents will no longer be able to use documents like a bank statement, a paycheck, or a government document to cast their ballots.

How to get a state-issued photo ID if you do not have one

Visit the Ohio Secretary of State’s website for more information about identification requirements: www.sos.ohio.gov/voters/id-requirements/

Starting April 7, 2023, Ohioans who are 17 years and older can receive a state ID card at no cost from the BMV. Follow this one to learn more about obtaining an Ohio ID at no cost: https://publicsafety.ohio.gov/paystubs/freemdwcard.pdf

Voter ID Assistance

Sometimes, the issue is access to underlying documents you need to apply for a state-issued photo ID like birth certificates or Social Security cards. VotersAllen, a non-partisan, non-profit organization, provides personalized assistance for voters, such as covering the cost of required documents and arranging & paying for transportation to local ID issuing offices.

Learn more about how VotersAllen can help you by visiting www.votersallent.org/os/ohio, or by calling or texting their Helpline at 866-ID-2-VOTE.

Continued on page 2
Ohio will hold a special election on August 8th, so mark your calendars now. Check your voter registration status and make your plan to vote today. If you know you’ll be away on August 8, vote early or vote absentee. Absentee ballots can be requested now. Visit 443vote.us for information.

KEY DATES FOR AUGUST 8 ELECTION

JULY 10: VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE
JULY 11: EARLY VOTING BEGINS
AUGUST 1: ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUEST DEADLINE
AUGUST 8: ELECTION DAY

“I encourage residents to vote ‘NO’ on August 8th to preserve the right Ohio citizens have had to amend our state constitution for the past 175 years.”

“I believe this proposed amendment shreds our Constitution, ending majority rule in Ohio and taking away our right to decide what happens here. It undermines the sacred principle of ‘one person one vote’. We need to protect our freedoms to determine our future in Ohio, not permanently change our constitution to give up our rights. The August special election will also be an expensive and unnecessary undertaking.”

–Jenny Spencer

Voting laws continued

I have my State - Issued Photo ID & I’m All Ready to Vote. How Can I Help Others?

Voter turnout in Ward 15 generally lags other communities in our region. For example, in the 2022 General Election was 35%, compared with 47-48% countywide. And many of our residents are not registered to vote or have never voted – a process made much more challenging due to House Bill 458.

If you’d like to speak with your Ward 15 neighbors about the importance of voting and help others register to vote, you may wish to volunteer for a local nonpartisan voter registration organization, such as:

• Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates (NOVA): nova-ohio.org/volunteer/
• League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland: lwgreatestcleveland.org/
• Young Latino Network (f/k/a Spanish Speakers): ylncle.org
• Cleveland VOTES is another organization in the democracy-building space: focusing on equitable civic engagement. To learn more about Cleveland VOTES and what they do, visit clevotes.com.

August 8 Special Election

Ohio will hold a special election on August 8th, so mark your calendars now. Check your voter registration status and make your plan to vote today. If you know you’ll be away on August 8, vote early or vote absentee. Absentee ballots can be requested now. Visit 443vote.us for information.

On March 21, 2023, Councilmember Spencer chaired a special Rail Safety Hearing on behalf of Cleveland City Council. During the hearing, Council expressed its support for the bipartisan Railway Safety Act of 2023 – a bill introduced by U.S Senator Sherrod Brown and U.S Senator J.D. Vance that would increase federal regulation of the freight rail industry, as well as proposed changes to state law. In addition, Council members heard from representatives of Mayor Justin M. Bibb regarding emergency preparedness in the event of a train derailment.

Cleveland and the Mayor’s Administration have pledged to work closely together on not only questions of hazardous materials transportation, but also rail infrastructure.

On May 2nd, U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown issued a letter to Norfolk Southern CEO Alan Shaw about the condition of bridges, including the Lake Avenue bridge. See: https://tinyurl.com/2b4bnm7w

On June 8th, Council and the Cleveland Department of Law hosted a press conference to share the City’s findings regarding the condition of rail bridges. Of 99 bridges, 23 were found to have structural flaws. See: https://tinyurl.com/43hnruf

Although much work remains to be done, Councilmember Spencer would like to thank and recognize the Lake Avenue bridge advocates, led by resident Nikki Hudson, for their tireless efforts to draw attention to bridge conditions.

“Ward 15 is bisected by two active freight rail lines, and a derailment would affect tens of thousands of residents. It was imperative that Council hold a Rail Safety hearing not only about emergency preparedness, but about advocating for new laws that will make Clevelanders safer.”

–Jenny Spencer
Councilmember Spencer Named to Urban Forestry Commission

Councilmember Jenny Spencer has been named Cleveland City Council’s representative to the City’s Urban Forestry Commission.

The Commission formerly known as the "Tree Commission" was established in the early 1990s and went dormant in the early 2000s. New legislation was introduced in 2021 by Cleveland City Council to amend and revive the Commission in the City’s Codified Ordinances.

Now known as the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC), its purpose is to advise the Mayor and City Council on tree canopy policies and regulations. “Ward 15 is deeply committed and engaged around the Cleveland Tree Plan,” said Councilmember Spencer. “I’m proud to represent Council as a member of the Commission to advance tree policy to protect and increase our tree canopy.” Ward 15 resident Divya Sridhar has also been named to the UFC.

The UFC holds quarterly public meetings, with the next upcoming meeting to take place on Tuesday, July 11, 2023 from 4:00-5:30pm. The public can watch virtually via Sustainable Cleveland’s Youtube LiveStream or the TV20 Channel. In addition, members of the public may submit public comment by attending the meetings in person.

Councilmember Spencer also continues to convene the Ward 15 Tree Canopy Steering Committee to advance neighborhood canopy goals, in collaboration with Northwest Neighborhoods CDC.

Clevelanders with FirstEnergy service will pay more on the energy supply portions of their bills in June and July due to a delay on the part of the administration in selecting an electric aggregator. Cleveland Public Power and FirstEnergy customers enrolled in PIPP will not be impacted by the delay. For more information, the Mayor’s Administration is directing residents to its community choice aggregation FAQ page at: sustainablecleveland.org/CommunityChoiceAggregation

Residents can also call 3-1-1.

What you need to know about Electric Aggregation

With Covid pandemic benefits coming to an end, please share this information with neighbors who may need it.

Ward 15 Food Bank Pantry List & Hot Meals as of May 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Hours of Operation</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CALVARY REFORMED CHURCH</td>
<td>Pantry</td>
<td>Mon-Fri 9:00am-3:00pm, Sat 9:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>11397 Philips Rd</td>
<td>(216) 881-2222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEWHAMS MINISTRIES</td>
<td>Pantry</td>
<td>Tues 7:30pm-9:00pm</td>
<td>4200 W 103rd St</td>
<td>(216) 881-4720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEM FOOD CENTER AT COMMUNITY CORNER</td>
<td>Pantry</td>
<td>Mon-Fri 9:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>6300 Detroit Ave</td>
<td>(216) 661-4008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SABRINA PAMELA PARISH</td>
<td>Pantry</td>
<td>Tues 9:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>7039 Detroit Ave</td>
<td>(216) 661-4008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST 28TH STREET CHURCH OF GOD</td>
<td>Pantry</td>
<td>Mon-Fri 9:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>3150 W 11th St</td>
<td>(216) 281-2908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE CENTERS-GORDON SQUARE</td>
<td>Pantry</td>
<td>Mon-Fri 9:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>5200 Detroit Ave</td>
<td>(216) 661-7800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAINT LAURENS EPISCOPAL CHURCH</td>
<td>Pantry</td>
<td>Mon-Fri 9:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>1349 W 71st Ave</td>
<td>(440) 666-5706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHAEL J. ZONE RECREATION CENTER</td>
<td>Produce</td>
<td>Tues 9:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>6301 Lorain Ave</td>
<td>(216) 881-3333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST. COLMAN CHURCH</td>
<td>Hot Meal</td>
<td>Mon-Fri 9:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>2021 W 120th St</td>
<td>(216) 661-0550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH</td>
<td>Hot Meal</td>
<td>Mon-Fri 9:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>6415 W 112th St</td>
<td>(216) 881-0550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Utility Assistance

Need help with water and sewer bills? There are a variety of different programs tailored to help either renters or homeowners with their water and sewer bills, as well as other utilities. Understanding the many rules and eligibility requirements can be a daunting task; however, CHN Housing Partners can assist applicants with finding and applying for the right programs. Call CHN at (216) 774-2349 or go to chnhousingpartners.org/utilityassistance/ to schedule an appointment.

Medicaid Re-Enrollment

Early in the pandemic, the U.S. Congress passed a law that prevented states from dropping people from their Medicaid rolls. Those protections expired on March 31, 2023, and those with Medicaid must now re-enroll each year. As Ohio resumes its Medicaid eligibility operations, it is important to make sure that your enrollment is in good shape. Go to benefits.ohio.gov or call 800-324-8680 for questions and more information about your eligibility.

For any other need not identified in this section, contact 2-1-1, the United Way’s Help Center. Simply dial 2-1-1 or chat for assistance at www.211oh.org. Se habla español.
Navigating New Roundabouts on Franklin Blvd.

Phase 1 of the Franklin Blvd. Rehabilitation project (West 85th Street to West 50th Street) is complete, and Phase 2 construction (West 50th Street to West 25th Street) is now underway. The speed limit on Franklin has also been lowered to 25 mph. But what are those new circles at the intersections?

The circles are traffic calming elements called traversable mini-roundabouts. Here is how to navigate around them:

- Slow down as you approach the intersection.
- Look for and yield to any pedestrians before you enter the mini-roundabout.
- At the entrance, yield to any vehicles already in the intersection. If you arrive at the intersection at the same time as another road user, the person on the left has the right-of-way.
- Slowly proceed around the mini-roundabout to the right of the center island until you reach your desired destination.
- Look for and yield to any pedestrians at the crosswalk before you exit the mini-roundabout.

A unique feature of traversable mini-roundabouts is that the center islands are mountable by vehicles such as fire trucks, school buses, or trailers that are too large to make the right-of-way. All other road users should yield to the large vehicle until it clears the intersection.

Visit www.WestFranklinCLE.com for more information about the Franklin Blvd. rehabilitation.

**New mini-roundabout on Franklin Blvd.**

Don’t Miss This Two-Minute Mini-Roundabout Video!