



**STATEHOOD DAY**

MARCH 1, 2021

# 2021 Legislative Priorities

## Strengthening Ohio Through Heritage

### ➤ Support Ohio history and hard-hit tourism and cultural industries in the state's FY 2022-23 operating budget

An investment in historic preservation, arts, culture, history and tourism is an investment in local economies, quality of life and Ohio's future citizens. The state's two-year operating budget was introduced one month ago and must be approved by July 1. Driven by the global pandemic and economic uncertainty, Governor DeWine's proposed budget contains many forward-looking provisions that will help accelerate Ohio's recovery by boosting our hard-hit tourism and cultural industries. Some strong budget opportunities:

- Governor DeWine proposed nearly \$13 million annually for the Ohio History Connection, the state's nonprofit partner in preserving and sharing history.
- Governor DeWine allocated \$25 million each year to fund a national marketing campaign promoting Ohio to drive visitor spending and investments in Ohio.
- The current budget also proposes \$150 million annually to help lodging, indoor entertainment venues, bars and restaurants hit hardest by the pandemic.
- Additional investments in organizations, including Ohio Humanities (for COVID relief), Ohio's Main Street programs (through Heritage Ohio), TourismOhio, the Ohio Arts Council and other agencies can strengthen Ohio's communities through local arts, tourism and cultural sectors.

Ohio's nonprofit cultural organizations work together with travel and hospitality businesses to drive the Ohio economy. Yet the pandemic has been devastating to visitor spending and resulted in economic hardships. Ohio's cultural organizations and our travel industry is faced with a 22% unemployment rate and more than \$12 billion in lost revenues. Ohio is home to hundreds of local museums and historic sites in both urban and rural settings that have been forced to close their doors, some forever. Simply surviving or returning to pre-COVID conditions is not an option. Ohio now has the opportunity in the next two years to look forward and ensure Ohio comes back stronger than ever.

- ★ **Request: Support investment in Ohio's local economies, quality of life and our future by supporting Ohio history and the state's cultural industries in the state's FY 2022-23 budget.**

### ➤ Create a Task Force to Study How to Better Protect Human Burial Grounds

Ohio contains thousands of abandoned and inactive cemeteries and many thousands more unmarked burial grounds thousands of years old. These places must be treated with dignity and respect regardless of who is buried in them or how long ago they were buried. In Ohio, many of these places are being needlessly lost because of neglect and destruction, and state law protecting these burial grounds is among the weakest in the nation.

Ohio's weak laws and a lack of process have hampered efforts to preserve these places and respect the remains of those who came before us. Other Midwestern states like Wisconsin and Indiana have long since addressed these issues successfully. An Ohio Burial Grounds Law Task Force representing key interested parties is needed to adequately study the matter and make recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on how to better protect these sacred places.

- ★ **Request: Establish an Ohio Burial Grounds Law Task Force to develop recommendations to modify Ohio law relating to unmarked, inactive and abandoned burial grounds.**

### ➤ Establish an Ohio initiative for the upcoming America 250 commemoration

The year 2026 will mark the 250th anniversary of our nation's founding. A national effort to mark the occasion is underway with important themes aimed at strengthening the vitality of the American experiment in democracy: to educate, engage and unite. America 250 will offer Americans and Ohioans the opportunity to reflect on the past, embrace the present and to move us toward a future that fulfills the ideals (realized and unrealized) of our nation's founding—as Abraham Lincoln observed—striving together toward a more perfect Union.

- ★ **Request: Through the leadership of Governor DeWine and the General Assembly, the State of Ohio should establish and support robust initiatives to tell the full, inclusive stories of our state and celebrate the 250th anniversary of American independence. These initiatives should tell stories of Ohioans, by Ohioans and make full use of our state's rich historical and cultural resources.**

➤ **Support legislation to add Poindexter Village as the state’s newest addition to the Ohio History Connection site network**

Sen. Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus) and Rep. Dontavius Jarrells (D-Columbus) have introduced legislation to officially include the two remaining buildings from Poindexter Village on Columbus’ Near East Side in the Ohio History Connection network of historic sites and museums. Senate Bill 31 (Sen. Craig) and House Bill No. 114 (Rep. Jarrells) are identical. The Ohio Senate passed legislation unanimously in November of 2019, but it was not taken up by the House in 2020 following the COVID pandemic period.

The two buildings are original to the Poindexter Village housing development, built in 1940 and dedicated by President Franklin Roosevelt. It was the first public housing project in Columbus and the second in the nation. The two remaining buildings represent a vitally important part of both American and Ohio history—they represent the stories of the Great Migration of Black Americans who moved north in the early 1900s to mid-1900s seeking economic opportunity as well as the story of public housing

★ **Request: Urge support of Senate Bill 31 and House Bill No. 114.**

➤ **Continue to Support the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit**

The Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit has been critical to the redevelopment of Main Street communities and cities across Ohio into vibrant places that attract and retain our young people, talent and entrepreneurs by rehabilitating our historic buildings. Vacant and underutilized buildings are converted to revenue generating, tax paying assets. Besides attracting people, businesses and jobs to Ohio, the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit drives heritage tourism by offering unique and some of the most interesting destinations in the country.

The tax credit program has a strong cost benefit analysis; a return on investment of approximately 6:1. One-third of the state’s investment comes back to the state before the credit is even taken. Since 2007, 433 buildings have been rehabilitated in 57 communities, resulting in \$4.45 billion in total investment.

★ **Request: Continue to support the successful Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit.**