



**Senator Peggy Lehner**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Ohio Senate District**

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**GUEST COLUMN**

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**A Focus on Ohio's Children**

*By State Senator Peggy Lehner*

For well over a century, members of the General Assembly have taken great pride in maintaining the legislature as a place for respectful and constructive debate. It is an unfortunate truth, however, that this healthy dialogue sometimes leads to partisan gridlock and ideological polarization. But, despite the differing stances we often hold, there remains a wealth of topics that unite lawmakers from both sides of the aisle.

Three fellow legislators and I recently closed the political ocean to take action on an issue that seemingly all of our state's residents hold dear - Ohio's children. Last week, alongside Rep. Ted Celeste (D - Grandview Heights), Sen. Nina Turner (D - Cleveland), and Rep. Dave Hall (R - Millersburg), I took part in announcing the legislature's first-ever Children's Caucus. In doing so, we have taken a bold step in creating a bipartisan panel to tackle challenges facing a truly nonpartisan cause.

The Children's Caucus plans to identify innovative, effective ways to help the 2.7 million children who live in Ohio. The four of us will work closely with a variety of experts and stakeholders to lead an ongoing dialogue centered on improving the lives of our youngest residents. In turning this work into sound policy proposals, we hope to produce measurable outcomes that will assist in guiding these children into the future.

Recent times have given way to an increasingly complex world and younger generations find themselves facing no real shortage of challenges. Areas such as education, child health and care, juvenile justice, poverty, and economic security will all be placed at the

forefront of our work. An informed and comprehensive approach to dealing with these issues is essential in ensuring that all of Ohio's children are provided with a pathway to prosper in the years ahead.

The aspirations and dreams of children often define a society. No matter the political party or economic circumstance, there is no acceptable excuse for neglecting the well-being of our young. Through the charge of the Children's Caucus, a steady eye will now be focused on what is truly important. By investing our ideas and resources into the lives of the young, it will unequivocally be demonstrated that Ohio is dedicated to working on behalf of its youth.

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*Senator Lehner represents Ohio's 6<sup>th</sup> Senate District which includes a portion of Montgomery County. She currently serves as Chairwoman for the Senate Education Committee.*