

Statement by Ohio House Minority Leader Emilia Sykes
March 18, 2020

Let's talk about the March 17th Primary Election!

First thing first. The election was not delayed. A court did not order it and the legislature did not change it. As such the election date has not changed from March 17th. There's more on that.

Dr. Acton did not change or delay the election with her order. Her authority through the order closed down the locations where voting was to occur. While in practical application it appeared to change the election, because people couldn't vote in person, However, her order DID NOT and could not change or delay the election date. Just the ability to access the physical building where election activities would have been held. She did not overstep her authority. Stop yelling at her. She's a hero.

The Secretary of State does not have the authority to change or delay the election. Period. He does not have the authority to extend absentee voting. Period. There is no election on June 2nd. There could be one on that date, but it has not been set by the legislature or a court.

Ohio's primary election was March 17th. It came and went. And as a republican House member argued it should have been yesterday in court. That's arguable for sure.

FORTUNATELY the Ohio Democratic Party filed a lawsuit yesterday to preserve the right to vote beyond March 17th. This was a good move. Not a partisan move. And it may preserve the right for people to vote who had not already voted early. I hope their lawsuit prevails. Thank you ODP.

So what's next?

Let's hope the lawsuit filed by ODP prevails. If it does, people who haven't voted will be able to do so safely, by mail. Details to be figured out.

The Legislature needs to get its act together. This could have been fixed by calling us back into session. It was not politically expedient, so it didn't happen. Do not give praise for the fact we are coming back next week. It's not deserved. Save that praise for Dr. Acton. She's the real MVP. I'll come back to that.

The legislature is a co-equal bench of government that should be supporting the Governor and the administration ease the blow from the coronavirus. If we aren't cranking out a bailout or economic support and more for Ohioans you should start yelling. Loudly. Very loudly.

Finally, Dr. Acton is incredible and I'm proud she is leading the public health charge here. Public health is everywhere.