

# young environmental leaders

**legislative round  
up**

**sustainable fashion  
alternatives**

**personal stories  
from women  
activists**

**volunteer  
opportunities**

**SIERRA CLUB OHIO**



**Y.E.L.**

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# **YOUNG ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS GROUP**

**This statewide group is for those who don't know where to start in their environmental journey, would like to explore new ideas and interests, and meet others from across the State. In this dedicated space, we will provide opportunities for coordination of Ohio campaigns, learning and training activities, leadership development, and interaction to grow personally and explore becoming an environmental champion!**

**There are so many passionate and talented young people throughout our state that want to make a difference and create change but don't know where to start or don't feel comfortable working in the traditional networks. By building the YEL group we plan to create a space to empower young people to become leaders, and to bridge the gap between working on our campuses and in our communities to engaging on a statewide level. We want to help individuals grow, create learning opportunities, and take action on environmental justice issues through this dedicated network of Young Leaders.**

**Our goal is to encourage young leaders of all backgrounds to engage in activism and increase the diversity of our volunteer base in Ohio while providing a space for everyone to be heard and feel welcome. Join us to create a space to fight for justice, learn about environmental issues, and create a diverse community!**

**With any questions about this opportunity, reach out to Nicole Wolcott ([nicole.wolcott@sierraclub.org](mailto:nicole.wolcott@sierraclub.org)).**

# LEGISLATIVE ROUND UP

BY KYLIE HANSON

Keep up to date with our  
legislative activities on  
our Legislative Action  
webpage here.







## House Bill 43

Representative Skindell has sponsored a bill to ban the removal of oil and natural gas from or under Lake Erie. The bill was referred to the Energy & Natural Resources Committee.

The bill specifically prohibits the Director of Natural Resources or any other state authority from issuing permits/leases to extract oil and natural gas from and under the bed of Lake Erie. Under current law, the Director of Natural Resources can issue permits for sand, gravel, stone, and other minerals/substances to be taken from the bed of Lake Erie.

## HOUSE BILL 43 & THE TRANSPORTATION BUDGET

## Transportation Budget

Governor DeWine's proposed transportation budget called for \$3.7 billion in spending during the next two fiscal years, highlighting areas like electric vehicle infrastructure and public transit.

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) offered \$211 million to local governments for public transit, specifically \$103 million in the first fiscal year and \$108 million in the second. Additionally, the budget dedicates \$2 million towards electric vehicle charging programs centered on workforce training and credentialing. This provision follows a nationwide effort towards transforming travel laid out in The Bipartisan Infrastructure law, committing \$100 million to build and operate electric vehicle charging stations in Ohio.

The Ohio House of Representatives passed the transportation budget 74-21 on March 1st. A significant provision added to Governor Dewine's transportation budget was improvements on train safety. This change follows the Norfolk Southern train derailment and chemical spill in East Palestine. Another notable provision paved the way for a rail system to connect Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati in the future.



continued

## this bill would...

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- Spend \$717 million on bridges and \$2.3 billion for pavement and roads projects.
- Require the Public Utilities Commission to report with the Ohio Environmental Protections Agency on the transportation of hazardous materials and waste in Ohio.
- Require trains to have two-person crews to improve locomotive safety.
- Allow political subdivisions with populations over 300,000 to establish their own standards for bike lanes on public streets.
- Reduce the registration fee for a plug-in hybrid vehicle from \$200 to \$100 on January 1, 2024.
- Expand the list of entities that can build railroads in the state from just the Ohio Rail Development Commission.

The expanded list of railroad development entities with the authority to “construct and operate an intercity conventional or high-speed passenger transportation system” would potentially include Amtrak.

The bill is now being considered by the Senate Transportation Committee. Governor DeWine is expected to sign the bill by March 31.

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# personal stories from women activists

mins

Here's to the women  
who inspire us...



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# ERICKA COPELAND

**Ericka Copeland is the first Black women State Director of Sierra Club Ohio. A Cincinnati native, she has spent nearly 30 years volunteering and working towards helping disenfranchised communities.**

**From serving on the CPS board, to working with several non-profits, to helping create impactful legislation, Copeland has always centered diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of her projects.**

# AVA LANGRIDGE

**Ava Langridge, founder of Our Youth For The Climate and host of the Let's Talk Climate podcast, is a youth environmental activist and current student at the University College in London.**

**At the age of 12 she began her activism journey and became "The Zero Waste Teen," and has since used her platform to educate others on environmental issues and encourage change.**



Ericka Copeland grew up in the West End community in Cincinnati, Ohio. Describing this neighborhood as historically Black, Copeland said many of her family members—including her parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles—support disenfranchised communities. She said, “As a young person, I saw my family very active in the community, politically, either holding leadership positions in community councils, organizing and advocating for voting rights, equitable education and access to excellent healthcare, as well as ensuring a clean environment.” From litter clean ups to political and voting rights campaigns, she saw her family advocate for equitable change and accessibility.

Before working at Sierra Club Ohio, Copeland held many other positions volunteering and leading non-profit organizations, such as the Urban League of Greater Cincinnati, and serving on community councils such as the Cincinnati Public School Board. Copeland said, “I have worked in the same career track for nearly 30 years, and that is to support any mission or cause that dealt with equity, inclusion, diversity, well before those were buzz words. I didn't even know [they were buzzwords], it was just innate in me.”

Copeland noted an important similarity connecting her many different jobs and roles. She said, “When I look back over the span of my work, it has really spoken to environmental justice. Impoverished communities, frontline communities, the disparities in those communities is what I have fought towards in my career.”

Before she began her career working in environmental justice or even at non-profits, Copeland aspired to work in medicine. “When I was a kid I wanted to be a physician, a pediatrician. I wanted to give my time to young people. Knowing from the root of how young people are reared, it helps them be the folks they are going to be. Even wanting to give back to their communities...it has to be generational for people to be concerned about our climate.”

Copeland served as president of the CPS board for two years and helped build policies for more equitable access to education, including helping inner city schools get AP courses. While working at the Urban League, she fought for the empowerment and financial sustainability of African American people and other POC; at another non-profit she managed a homeless shelter for women and children and advocated for teaching them sustainable financial habits.

Copeland said she has also dedicated much of her career to youth development initiatives, specifically focusing on young African American men. She said, "from age 9 to graduation, they are susceptible to all kinds of disparities, like stereotypes, lack of opportunities, and generational economic challenges. The goal continues to be helping them make good decisions and teaching conflict resolution." She also launched programs for young girls to help them build self-esteem and decide their careers.

Throughout her career, Copeland said she was often a mediator who helped different groups come together. She said, "It's hard when you have people who care so much about specific causes. They all want the best outcomes but have different methods to attain those goals. Being an elected official, there are so many problems you want to tackle that do not happen overnight. It is a rewarding but challenging experience."

Copeland said a few of her biggest role models include her mother and grandmother and other African American women. She said, "[They] took me under their wings. Helped my career blossom. Helped me understand the critical need to advocate for those who are disenfranchised."

Copeland also used the mantra, 'When women run, women win' when running for elected office. "I think as women, sometimes we have been reluctant to be in the forefront or put ourselves out in any movement, but now we are leading. Thinking about some of the legislation that is being passed right now, you see women in front, calling attention to disparities."

On her position at Sierra Club Ohio, Copeland said, "It culminates all the work I have been doing. I'm really most proud of our team. So fortunate to be a part of a team with a wealth of experience, knowledge, and personal passion. That's what is critically important: relationships you build with other people. That's what makes the work possible."

Copeland said she is extremely proud to be the first Black woman State Director of Sierra Club Ohio. She said, "I don't want to wear it on my sleeve like it's a medal, but what an honor to be able to bring my whole self, my culture, my beliefs to help support the awesome work Sierra Club is doing."



Ava Langridge is a youth climate activist, founder of Our Youth For The Climate, and host of the Let's Talk Climate Podcast. Growing up on the East Coast and later moving to San Francisco, Langridge said she spent much of her childhood surrounded by nature. However, a youtube video she watched at age 12 sparked her interest in zero-waste living and environmental activism.

The youtube video showed how environmental activist Lauren Singer could fit three years of her trash into just one 16 oz mason jar. Inspired by the zero-waste lifestyle Singer promoted, Langridge started to research reducing her waste and even encouraged her family to transition to more sustainable habits.

She said, "It was a lot of [zero-waste] habits in a short amount of time...but if I can do it, other people should be able to do it too." Langridge then started making content to educate others via social media and adopted the name "the Zero Waste Teen." Since then, Langridge has shifted slightly away from zero-waste living and now focuses more on activism.

But Langridge did not always imagine herself as being a youth climate activist. She said, "I originally wanted to be a professional football player. Now that energy and commitment have transferred to climate activism." She also noted her dream job would be working as a chief sustainability officer at an unsustainable business, like the aviation industry.

Langridge said one of her biggest role models growing up was her mother. She said, "[My mother] has worked for multiple non-profits, and her work ethic has absolutely contributed to mine. She gave me an example of what it's like to actually be a woman in a male-dominated space." Langridge also said her role models include environmental activists like Singer and Greta Thunberg and people in her everyday life.

She also noted that most of her interactions within the environmental movement have been with women. She said, "In my conversations with women, we feel more of a responsibility to care and consistently show up, put the effort in, and get others to care."

But her journey with activism has not been without its difficulties. She said, "It's just people who are climate deniers who try to shut you down. And people who doubt my abilities because of my age and my gender." Despite her criticism and doubt, Langridge said, "At the end of the day, I see the responses we are getting. I know the education people are receiving, and I know from experience the importance of education. So I know for a fact that we are making an impact."

Langridge said, "The biggest issue is that people don't take the stories from those facing climate injustice into their activism enough." She said that many people do not listen to Indigenous peoples' experiences, even though they should be at the forefront of the movement. She said, "[Indigenous people] are the ones who know the climate crisis the best because they're directly impacted by it, and they know what would be the best solutions."

Her most recent project, the Let's Talk Climate podcast, focuses on spreading climate education through different media and content. She said, "I started my podcast to have relaxed climate conversations. You have quite a bit of climate education there. Less so stating facts, and more so just storytelling and experiences." She said this relaxed storytelling method also prevents listeners from experiencing eco-anxiety.

"I wanted to make climate education as accessible as possible. It offers a different type of content and media, and it feels like a different level of accessibility."

Langridge said creating Our Youth For the Climate is her proudest accomplishment. "It was a small concept, and the team we have built is genuinely incredible. I'm proud that I've brought that many people together. And we've never met in person. We're on Zoom or across the world and still done so much."

She said, "It shows the power of people's willingness to fight against the climate crisis and how that brings people together."



**Mission:** Our Youth For The Climate (OY4C) is a global grassroots education-oriented organization and movement. The goal is to empower youth to use their voices to advocate for systemic change.

**The Story:** It all started when the founder, Ava Langridge, realized that our youngest generations will be the most impacted by climate change, yet they are the ones without access to quality climate education.

Through her sustainable account, @ava.langridge, Ava found a community that helped her realize that our youth could impact the world as it is today. She wanted to inspire our future generations to take action, and just like that OY4C was born. Our movement started with free weekly zoom classes in August 2021. Sharing a variety of climate topics, the classes aimed to stimulate participants' passion in learning and helping our planet.

Since then, it has become a global grassroots movement empowering our youth through education. Today, we continue to educate and provide resources. We hope to increase awareness about the climate and inform about how to push for radical, systemic change.

## How to get involved with OY4C:

follow [@ouryouth4theclimate](#) on Instagram and TikTok

Check out our [website](#) and [blog](#).

[Sign up for our free weekly classes](#)

[Join the team](#) -- we are currently looking to fill multiple roles!



# spotlight on Rachel Carson

by Kylie Hanson

**Before the 1960s, the use of a pesticide called DDT was widespread. The United States used around 600 million tons per year in neighborhoods and for agricultural purposes. While it was successful in limiting populations of pests to humans like mosquitos, people started noticing several of its unintended consequences on nature.**

**One of these people was Rachel Carson, a writer, ecologist, and scientist. She worked a long career in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as Editor-in-Chief for all publications. In her spare time, she wrote about the natural beauties of the world, teaching others about her research in the form of “lyric prose.” She had published several articles, pamphlets, and books about nature and the human influences on it.**







**Carson began to study the widespread effects of DDT use. Through several years of research, she discovered that this toxin lingered in ecosystems long after its initial use, causing immense damage. It harmed populations of birds, bees, agricultural animals, domestic pets, and even humans. This powerful chemical entered the bottoms of food chains and accumulated all the way up them in organisms' fatty tissues. DDT disrupted reproductive processes of apex predators like Bald Eagles and was cancer-causing in humans. In 1962, Carson published these findings in *Silent Spring*, a best-selling book that left a lasting impression on the world.**

**Her advocacy for environmental and human health through *Silent Spring* eventually led to the banning of DDT. After this event, Carson faced mass scrutiny for her research. She was vilified by the chemical-industry; they framed her as hysterical and emotional because they opposed DDT regulation. Carson courageously defended her truth, proclaiming that the need to regulate industry to protect the environment was essential.**

**Carson passed away in 1964 from breast cancer. Her research was a catalyst for a future of regulating private entities in the name of environmental protection. Her love of nature and fearless defense of it was an inspiration for the modern environmental movement. Her legacy will forever be remembered.**

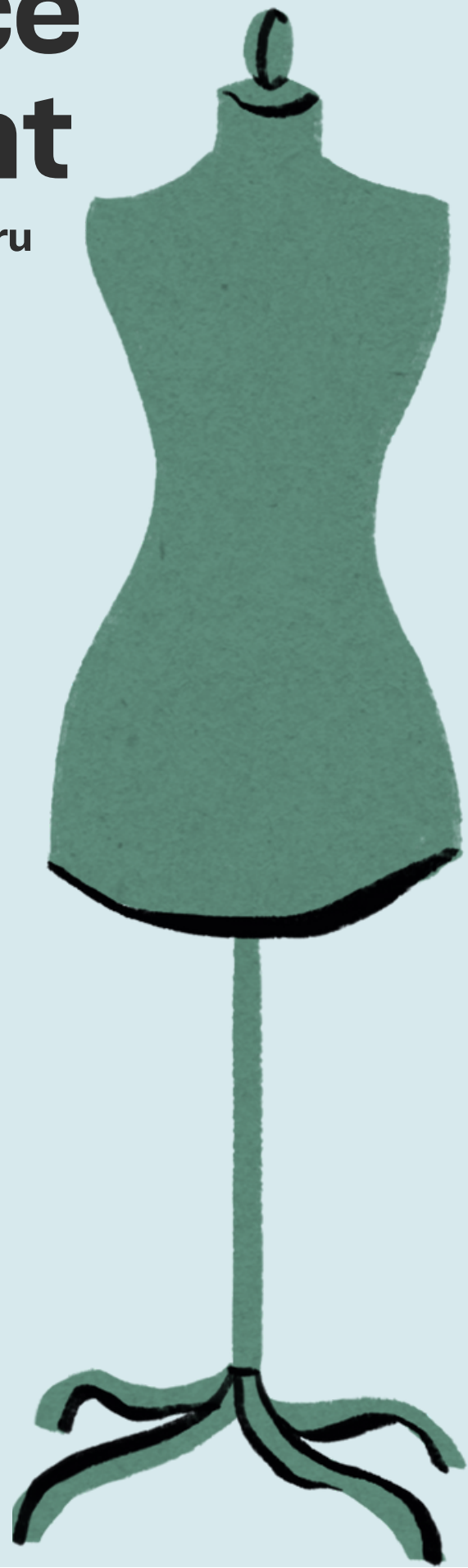
# fast fashion: how to reduce your footprint

by **Annaleigh Koch and Divija Sri Kandru**

Tiktok, Instagram, Snapchat, as well as a plethora of other social medias, have effectively transformed the very nature of the fashion world. Fashion “trends” are described as the popularity of a certain style, silhouette, color, or item of clothing, and trend “cycles” are the introduction and popularization of a specific trend.

Traditionally, these trend cycles last around 20 years, including the rise, fall, and resurgence of a particular trend. However, the influence of social media has been accelerating trend cycles so much that we have seen the emergence of microtrends—specific items that go in and out of style with immense speed. These microtrends are directly dictated by what influencers on Tiktok and Instagram post. Do you remember the House of Sunny dress? Or the strawberry dress? Or even most trends from 2020? These are all great examples of microtrends.

In order to keep up with the demands of social media, fast fashion brands such as Shien, Fashion Nova, and ASOS have had to significantly ramp up production, introducing hundreds of new pieces being introduced every day—with many of these designs being stolen from small businesses.







With the number of new clothing items bought each year currently sitting at 80 million, consumers have increased the amount they buy by 400% in the last two decades alone. To keep customers willing to buy their items, fast fashion brands have had to drastically lower prices by using lower-quality materials and cutting wages.

Companies are milking the citizens of less developed third-world countries for extra profits. According to Earth.org, "Workers in the garment industry are required to put in 14 to 16 hours per day, seven days a week, and endure verbal and sometimes even physical abuse from managers. Oftentimes, workers are exposed to harmful substances while working without enough ventilation." Around 90% of the world's clothing is produced in low and middle-income countries as a means of cheap labor.

In addition to the humanitarian issues the fast fashion industry presents, it also has negative implications on the environment. The overconsumption of fashion leads to an increase in waste and pollution. One such place where clothing ends up at the end of its life is The Atacama Desert, where mountains upon mountains of last season's unwanted fast fashion pieces end up every year—60,000 tons to be precise. This clothing is often made from synthetic fibers which take hundreds of years to decompose. In the meantime, they sit in the world's driest desert polluting our precious Earth. The fast fashion industry also accounts for 10% of the world's carbon emissions and the consumption of 93 billion cubic meters of water. By cutting down on fast fashion, we would be able to provide water for 5 million people and reduce the effects of climate change.





photo credit: [The Spokesman-Review](#).

Being conscious about your purchases is key in order to lower your consumption. A study done in the UK with 2,000 women revealed that a clothing item had been worn only seven times before being discarded. In order to mitigate this, it helps to reduce buying clothes for every occasion and mix and match with what you have. One of the ways to boost your wardrobe and find new pieces to wear with others, is using an AI tool to track every piece of clothing you have and create new outfits so you don't forget what pieces you have stashed in different drawers or in your closet. Some of these wardrobe apps include OpenWardrobe and Save Your Wardrobe. Another great way to reduce waste is to hold a clothing swap with friends so you can trade new pieces without contributing to more waste.

The overall goal with clothing is to get as much use as possible before donating. If you do need to buy more clothing, it is suggested that you buy pieces that go with a lot of other pieces of clothing so you use it all its life. There are lots of sustainable fashion alternatives to buying from fast fashion brands such as Romwe or H&M. Etsy is a small business platform with ethical and low-waste alternatives for not only clothing but gifts as well. ThredUp is also an online thrift store that has a great brand selection and is size inclusive. [Good On You](#) is also an extremely helpful website to search and determine if the brand you are looking to buy from is ethical or sustainable.

As for shopping in person, try to shop local and invest in your community!

# Listed here are some Vintage stores throughout Ohio that have great selections:

- Columbus:
  - North Market Farmers Market (weekends during the summer!)
  - Flower Child
  - Smartypants Vintage ([Short North Businesses: Smartypants Vintage](#) )
- Cleveland:
  - Moonstruck Cleveland Moonstruck Vintage | Moonstruck Vintage ([moonstruckcle.com](http://moonstruckcle.com))
  - Eclectic Eccentric in Shaker Heights (near Cleveland)
- Cincinnati:
  - The Daily Vintage ([@thedailyvintagecincy](#))
  - Casablanca Vintage ([www.casablancavintage.com](http://www.casablancavintage.com))
- Akron:
  - Highland Throwbacks ([Highland Throwbacks](#))

However, once it's time to donate your clothes, you can send them to [ThredUp](#) or [For Days](#). With ThredUp, about 76 million clothing items have been resold and that in total reduces carbon emissions by 25% when clothes are put back into rotation. With For Days, 50% of their donated clothes are turned into insulation, 45% of the clothes are resold, and only 5% are truly trash. If you were to donate to Goodwill, only 20% of the clothes they receive actually get sold in their stores.

Overall, fast fashion is a major contributor to waste, and if we all make a small difference in our wardrobe, it can make a big positive impact on the planet and everyone who lives here!

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# volunteering opportunities across Ohio

## Green Columbus (Columbus, OH)

- Take part in Tree Planting, Tree Nursery Care, Event Planning (including upcoming Earth Day events), and Litter Clean Ups with this volunteer-driven nonprofit!
- To volunteer: <https://www.greenbus.org/volunteer>

## Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed (Columbus, OH)

- Help clean up the stream, lead recreational activities and maintain the local Olentangy Water Trail!
- For more information:  
[https://www.olentangywatershed.org/?page\\_id=319](https://www.olentangywatershed.org/?page_id=319)

## Femergy (Columbus, OH)

- Help empower girls and women of Central Ohio!
- To volunteer: <https://www.femergy.org/volunteer>

## Sustainable Cleveland (Cleveland, OH)

- Join a volunteer-led working group and get involved with tailored initiatives and events!
- For more information:  
[https://www.sustainablecleveland.org/join\\_a\\_working\\_group](https://www.sustainablecleveland.org/join_a_working_group)

## Ohio Lights Out (Cleveland, OH)

- Join in protecting birds from injury from city buildings in downtown Cleveland during peak migration months!
- <https://www.clevelandmetroparks.com/parks/support/volunteer/become-a-volunteer>

# volunteering opportunities across Ohio

## Ohio Citizen Action (Cleveland, OH)

- Help protect citizens against environmental and public health impacts by raising engagement!
- To volunteer:  
[https://www.ohiocitizen.org/volunteer\\_signup](https://www.ohiocitizen.org/volunteer_signup)

## Keep Cincinnati Beautiful (Cincinnati, OH)

- Get involved in local efforts like revitalizing the city and helping out with environmental initiatives!
- Learn more:  
<https://www.keepcincinnatibeautiful.org/how-to-help/opportunities.html>

## Civic Garden Center (Cincinnati, OH)

- Work to restore urban forests, propagate native plants or facilitate school field trips!
- To volunteer:  
<https://www.civicgardencenter.org/volunteer>

## Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) (General Ohio)

- Assist in hunter education courses, trail maintenance, and stream quality monitoring!
- To learn more: <https://ohiodnr.gov/buy-and-apply/support-odnr/volunteer-odnr>

## Citizens Climate Lobby (General Ohio)

- Join a non-partisan fight against climate change!
- To find your local chapter:  
<https://citizensclimatelobby.org/about-ccl/chapters/>



**TAKE ACTION  
NOW**

**STOP WILLOW PROJECT  
CLIMATE DISASTER!  
SUBMIT A COMMENT HERE**

**EAST PALESTINE TRAIN  
DERAILMENT  
SUPPORT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

**NO RADIOACTIVE WASTE IN  
OUR COMMUNITIES  
TAKE ACTION NOW**

**TRANSPORTATION BUDGET  
BILL  
CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS**



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thank you for visiting our virtual magazine



Resources and Links:

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