



# Ohio state representative was told by statehouse security that she doesn't 'look like a legislator,' she says

June 2, 2018(<https://www.wbal.com/2018/06/02/>)

**WBAL** NEWSRADIO  
1090 AM / 101.5 FM  
(<https://www.wbal.com>)

LISTEN  
LIVE  
(/AUDIO)



(NEW YORK) — Ohio state Rep. Emilia Sykes has had trouble on multiple occasions getting into the statehouse building and was even once told by security that she didn't "look like a legislator," she told ABC News.

The state representative for the 34th district in Ohio said she believes she has been discriminated against because of her race in her own place of work.

On Wednesday, Sykes (D-Akron) tweeted



(<https://twitter.com/thehonorablejessc/status/1002020746749792256>) that she had trouble getting into the Riffe Center in Columbus, which is near the statehouse and houses many of the lawmakers' offices.

Sykes told ABC News she was walking to her office when she entered the lane for people who have badges to enter the building — with her badge prominently displayed, hooked on her bag.

As Sykes walked through, a security guard stopped her, asking her where she was going and telling her to he needed to see the badge.

As Sykes kept walking, she told the security guard that she had already showed him the badge, which features a photo of the statehouse to signify authorization for traveling to and from the government building, she said.

The security guard followed her down the hallway toward the elevator before Sykes asked him, “What else do you want from me? I showed it to you twice.” Then, he just moved on and went back to the security booth, she said.

Sykes wrote on Twitter that Wednesday wasn't even the "worst" encounter she had with statehouse security.  
(<https://www.wbal.com>)

**WBAL** NEWSRADIO  
1020 AM / 101.5 FM

**LISTEN  
LIVE  
(/AUDIO)**



Sykes said she was once told by statehouse security that she needed additional screening because she doesn't "look like a legislator."

In February 2017, Sykes and a colleague were walking to the statehouse using underground tunnel that connects it to the Riffe Center, she said. When they got to the steps to get into the statehouse, she was stopped by security and told that her bag needed to be searched.

Sykes questioned why her bag needed to be searched because statehouse employees had just received a memorandum stating a change to the security policy in which badge-carriers who undergo expedited security and not need to be searched. In addition, she was wearing her lapel pin for her district, which was given to each representative of the Ohio house, she said.

Sykes' colleague, who is 65 years old and white, was not stopped, she said. He defended Sykes, telling the security guard that she was a member of the state legislature, but the security guard simply responded that he didn't care who she was, Sykes said.

After a few minutes, the guard relented and let her through — without searching her bag, she said. After he saw her reaction after telling her that she didn't "look like a legislator" (https://www.wbal.com) (https://twitter.com/EmiliaSykes/status/1002022665073446913), he then tried to tell her that it was because she looked "too young," she said.

"I was shocked by that response," she said.

Sykes described the encounter as "inappropriate," especially given the memorandum she had just received. After it was over, she sent an email to the office of the house speaker and the sergeant of arms, asking for clarification of the policy. She said she was assured that she was correct in her understanding of the policy.

Sykes' tweets on Wednesday were in reply to her friend, Jeniece Brock, who tweeted that it was a "shame" that the 34-year-old was denied access into the statehouse building, despite being near the end of her second term and on the brink of running for a third in the November election.

"America, we must do better," Brock wrote (https://twitter.com/JenieceBrock/status/1001993808555454464).

Sykes said that she believes both encounters had to do with her race, stating that the other seven black female legislators have experienced the same treatment, while her white colleagues have not. **(AUDIO)**

Once when Rep. Alicia Reece (D-Roselawn) forgot her badge and had an aide retrieve it, security still questioned whether it belonged to her, despite her photo being on it, The Cincinnati Enquirer reported.

Reece, who had been a state legislator since 2010, said that she suspects the problems have been worse recently because of new policy, which added security guards who are less familiar with members of the House, the newspaper reported.

Sykes said that badge-holders have “already been vetted as safe people to enter the building.”

“[It] just seems odd that, even after that, plus the badge, plus the [lapel] pin ... it’s still not enough to get into your workplace,” she said.

Statehouse security is overseen by the Ohio State Highway Patrol, according to the  
WBAL NEWSRADIO LISTEN   
1090 AM / 101.5 FM LIVE  
Enquirer: State authorities did not immediately respond to ABC News' request for  
(<https://www.wbal.com>)  
comment. (/AUDIO)

Sykes spoke with a representative for the highway patrol on Thursday, who offered an apology as well as explained that the gentleman whom she encountered was new and didn't want her to venture into a part of a building where she didn't have access to.

Sykes will follow up with the Ohio State Highway Patrol at a later date to tour their operations, she said.

Copyright © 2018, ABC Radio. All rights reserved.

Stay connected with the most up-to-date coverage of the stories that matter. Tune in to WBAL NewsRadio for real-time updates and in-depth analysis. Listen at 1090AM, FM 101.5, [wbal.com](https://www.wbal.com) (<https://www.wbal.com/audio/>), or through the WBAL NewsRadio app (<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/1090-am-wbal-radio/id386834691>). Stay informed, stay ahead.

RECOMMENDED POSTS

**WBAL** NEWSRADIO  
1090 AM / 101.5 FM

LISTEN  
LIVE  
(/AUDIO) 

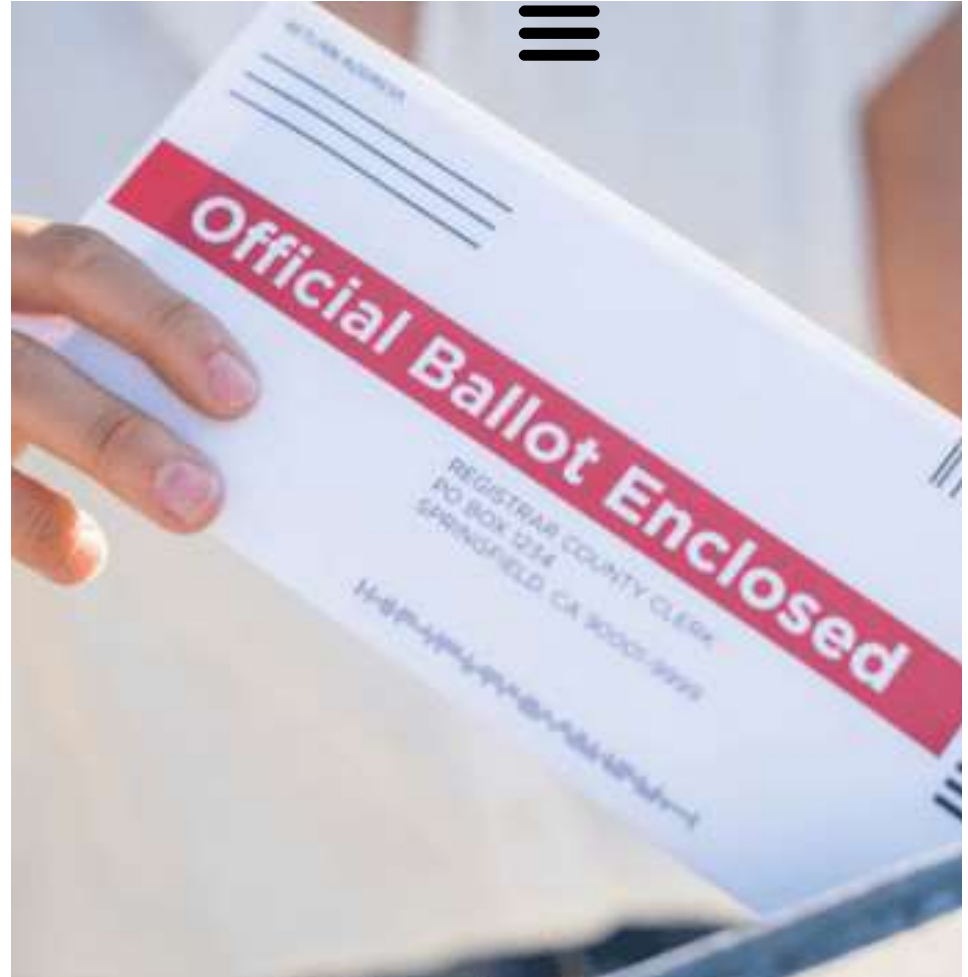
(<https://www.wbal.com>)



### Some NC nursing homes still without water, 3 weeks after Hurricane Helene

(<https://www.wbal.com/some-nc-nursing-homes-still-without-water-3-weeks-after-hurricane-helene/>)

October 19, 2024 10:23 am



### Advocates for overseas military families, expats push back against GOP suits against absentee votes

(<https://www.wbal.com/advocates-for-overseas-military-families-expats-push-back-against-gop-suits-against-absentee-votes/>)



LISTEN  
LIVE   
(/AUDIO)

(<https://www.wbal.com>)



**Orionids meteor shower is this weekend:  
Where and when to watch its peak**

(<https://www.wbal.com/orionids-meteor-shower-is-this-weekend-where-and-when-to-watch-its-peak/>)

October 19, 2024 10:03 am

October 19, 2024 10:19 am



Discover the  
GBMC  
Conference.



**Sponsored: At GBMC, you can be a nurse and so much more**

(<https://bit.ly/3YaDVmS>)

October 19, 2024 10:00 am

Search

**WBAL** NEWSRADIO  
1090 AM / 101.5 FM

LISTEN  
LIVE   
(/AUDIO)

SEARCH



<https://www.wbal.com>  
MORE NEWS

The graphic features a tan background with a blue star at the top center. Below the star is a large blue outline of the letter 'N' with a small 'TM' trademark symbol to its right. Underneath the 'N' is the word 'NAVY' in a blue, blocky, sans-serif font. On either side of the 'N' and 'NAVY' text is a blue outline of a football. At the bottom of the graphic is a blue, jagged, wavy line that resembles a soundwave or a stylized horizon. In the top right corner of the graphic is the WBAL NewsRadio logo, which includes the text 'WBAL NEWSRADIO 1090 AM 101.5 FM'. At the bottom of the graphic, centered, is the text: 'WBAL RADIO, THE HOME OF NAVY FOOTBALL FOR THE LAST 20 YEARS, WILL CARRY NAVY GAMES ALL SEASON LONG.'

<https://www.wbal.com/how-to-listen-and-stream-navy-football-vs-charlotte-homecoming-game/>

How to listen and stream Navy Football vs Charlotte homecoming game

**WBAL** NEWSRADIO  
1090 AM / 101.5 FM

LISTEN  
LIVE  
(/AUDIO)

how-to-listen-and-stream-navy-football-vs-charlotte-homecoming-game/)

(<https://www.wbal.com>)



(<https://www.wbal.com/maryland-juvenile-services-secretary-responds-to-calls-for-his-removal-over-handling-of-crimes/>)

# Maryland juvenile services secretary responds to calls for his removal

**WBAL** NEWSRADIO  
101.5 FM

LISTEN  
LIVE  
(/AUDIO)



(<https://www.wbal.com>)



(<https://www.wbal.com/1-dead-at-least-2-injured-in-mount-vernon-crash-involving-trash-truck-that-crashed-into-building/>)

# 1 dead, 2 injured in Mount Vernon crash involving truck that crashed into building

**WBAL** NEWSRADIO  
101.5 FM

LISTEN  
LIVE  
(/AUDIO)

dead-at-least-2-injured-in-mount-vernon-crash-involving-truck-that-

(<https://www.wbal.com>)



(<https://www.wbal.com/im-just-grateful-im-alive-vigil-held-after-fire-damages-hampden-rowhomes/>)

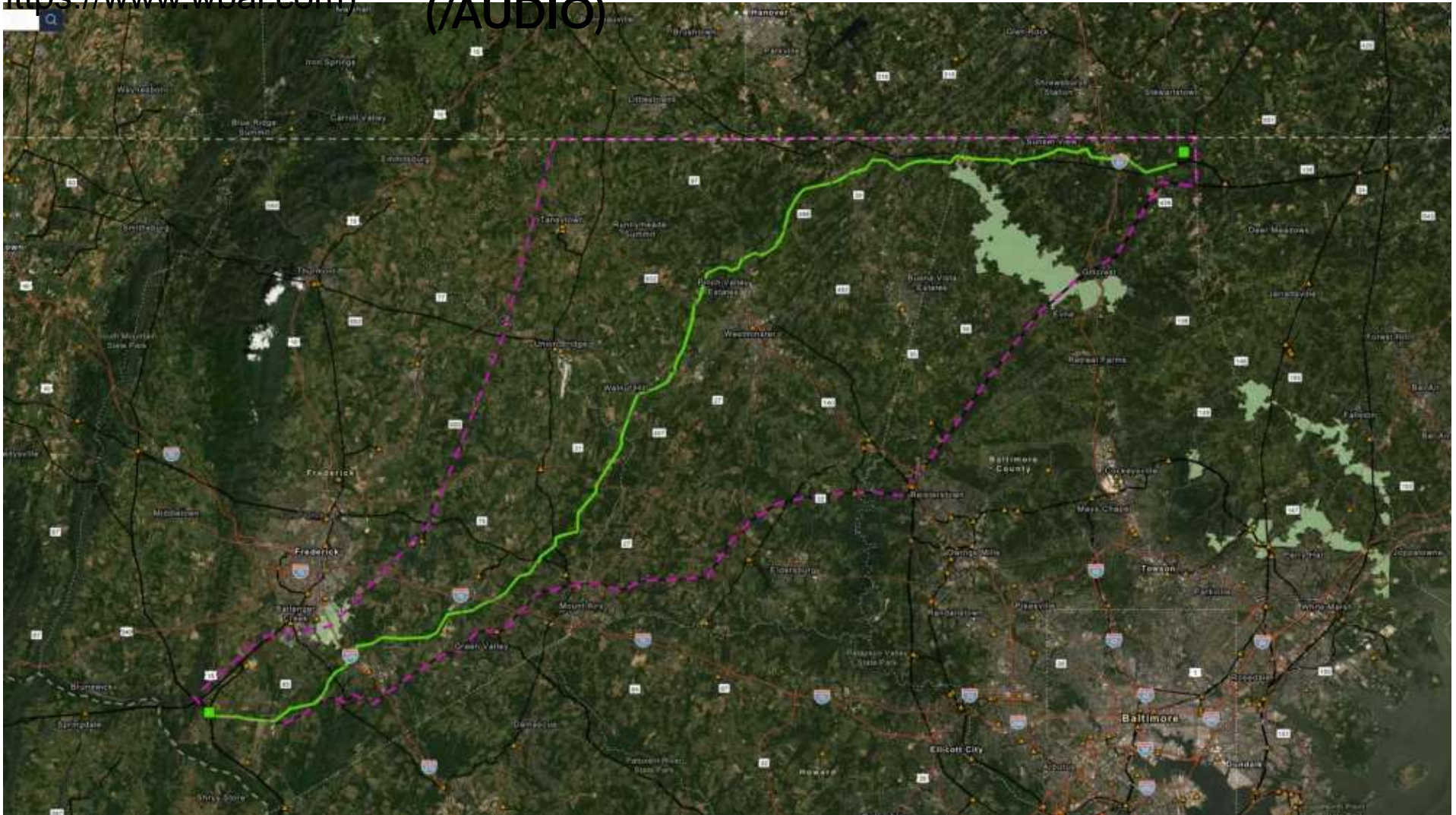
'I'm just grateful I'm alive': Vigil held after fire damages Hampden rowhomes

**WBAL** NEWSRADIO  
1890 AM / 101.5 FM

**LISTEN  
LIVE  
(/AUDIO)**

[I'm just grateful I'm alive': Vigil held after fire damages Hampden rowhomes](https://www.wbal.com/route-picked-for-contested-70-mile-power-line-project-through-3-major-counties/)

(<https://www.wbal.com>)



(<https://www.wbal.com/route-picked-for-contested-70-mile-power-line-project-through-3-major-counties/>)

**Route picked for contested 70 mile power line project through 3 Maryland counties**

(<https://www.wbal.com/route-picked-for-contested-70-mile-power-line-project-through-3-major-counties/>)

**WBAL** NEWSRADIO  
1090 AM / 101.5 FM

(<https://www.wbal.com>)

LISTEN  
LIVE  
(/AUDIO) 



(<https://www.wbal.com/maryland-gov-wes-moore-touts-administrations-record-of-lowering-juvenile-crime/>)

**Maryland Gov. Moore touts administration's record of lowering juvenile crime**

(<https://www.wbal.com/maryland-gov-wes-moore-touts-administrations-record-of-lowering-juvenile-crime/>)



(<https://www.wbal.com>)

---

LISTEN  
LIVE   
(/AUDIO)





**WBAL** NEWSRADIO  
1090 AM / 101.5 FM

(<https://www.wbal.com>)

LISTEN  
LIVE   
(/AUDIO)





LISTEN  
LIVE   
(/AUDIO)



WBAL NewsRadio 1090, FM 101.5 and the WBAL mobile app. All day, every day: News, weather and traffic. Also, insight and analysis, and the flagship stations for the Baltimore Ravens, the Baltimore Orioles and Navy Football.



Follow us on:



Hearst Television participates in various affiliate marketing programs, which means we may get paid commissions on purchases made through our links to retailer sites.

©2023, Hearst Television Inc. on behalf of WBAL NewsRadio 1090 and FM 101.5





(<https://www.wbal.com>)

LISTEN  
LIVE   
(/AUDIO)



© 2024 WBAL Baltimore News Powered by OneCMS™ |

(<https://www.intertechmedia.com/features/one-cms/?>

[utm\\_campaign=footer\\_link&utm\\_medium=website](https://www.intertechmedia.com/?utm_campaign=footer_link&utm_medium=website)) Served by InterTech Media LLC

([https://www.intertechmedia.com/?utm\\_campaign=footer\\_link&utm\\_medium=website](https://www.intertechmedia.com/?utm_campaign=footer_link&utm_medium=website))