

Ohio Republicans propose ‘Natural Family Month’ to promote having children

By Anna Staver
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COLUMBUS, Ohio -- Ohio Republicans want to designate the weeks between Mother's Day and Father's Day as "Natural Family Month" to promote children and marriage.

[House Bill 262](#), sponsored by Reps. Beth Lear from Delaware County and Josh Williams from the Toledo area, would establish a nonbinding state observance from the second Sunday in May to the third Sunday in June. The bill has 26 additional Republican cosponsors in the House.

The bill text does not define "natural family," but the sponsors say the designation is meant to highlight the role of marriage and childrearing in society.

"At a time when marriage is trending downward and young couples are often choosing to remain childless, it's important for the State of Ohio to make a statement that marriage and families are the cornerstone of civil society," Lear said in a press release.

The U.S. birth rate has fallen [to an historic low](#) of 1.7 children per woman. That's below the 2.1 level considered necessary for population replacement and nearly 23% decline since 2007, according to data from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

"If this really is about declining birthrates, personally, I'd think affordable childcare, paid leave, healthcare and lower grocery costs would make people want to have kids," said Rachel Coyle, programs director for Ohioans Against Extremism. "But what do I know? Maybe all they need is a new month with a new name."

The idea appears to have originated from the [Natural Family Foundation](#), a Westerville-based advocacy group that promotes what it calls a return to the "natural family" as the foundation of American culture.

According to its website, NFF defines a “natural family” as a union between “one biological born male and one biological born woman” in a lifelong, monogamous relationship, raising their biological or adopted children.

That would exclude LGBTQ families. Republican state lawmakers have passed several bills in recent sessions targeting LGBTQ Ohioans, including those mandating [which bathrooms they can use](#) and [access to gender-affirming care for minors](#).

HB 262 doesn’t carry any legal or financial mandates. Williams said in the release that it’s intended to emphasize the connection between family structure and long-term economic and social stability.

“We must use every tool at our disposal to support the families that are building the next generation of Americans,” he said.

The bill has not been assigned to a committee.