Ohio House Speaker Batchelder deserves ‘our’ respect

Ohio Governor John Kasich could learn a thing or two from veteran statehouse politician and now Ohio House Speaker William Batchelder.

Last week, the Speaker, a conservative, White, Republican from Medina County, visited The Call & Post to speak to this newspaper’s editorial board.

This visit was historic for two reasons

One: Mr. Batchelder extended his hand to us. He wasn’t asked to come.

Number two: He becomes the first speaker of the Ohio House to ever visit The Call & Post in our 95 year history. And he came to us of his own volition and accord and without any hidden agendas.

For this, we have nothing but respect. Not because a White man came knocking on our door, but because a White man – and a conservative Republican, at that – came to open the doors of dialogue to make this state a better state for all residents and businesses.

During his meeting in our office, Mr. Batchelder talked about the future of this state and what the legislative body that he presides over can do insure that all Ohioans can have productive lives, raise families and partake of the American Dream.

We are not surprised by the Speaker’s outreach initiative to us.

As a matter of practical politics, Batchelder's reach-out offers Black Democrats interesting possibilities, given that a GOP legislature must soon redraw congressional districts and a Republican Appointment Board will redraw General Assembly districts.

Reaching out to African-American politicians and Ohio's Black communities, is not only good politics, but is the right thing to do.

During his visit to Cleveland last week, the House Speaker visited Cleveland's historic Karamu House and later quietly met with some of our community's religious, political and community leaders. He was well received in all gathering places.

It was and is a testimony to a man that wants to serve ALL Ohioans.

Ohio Governor Kasich would be wise to take a page or two out of the House Speaker's "page book."

It's never too late for "out reach."

In Speaker Batchelder's case, he "got ahead of the curve."

That's smart politics.