



Mike DeWine, Governor  
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Common Sense  
Initiative

Carrie Kuruc, Director

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## Small Business Advisory Council Meeting – Minutes Thursday, August 6, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by Emily Groseclose, Common Sense Initiative (CSI) Senior Policy and Business Advocate, at 10:02 a.m.

Members present:

- Greg Simpson
- Bill Bishop
- Mike Kahoe
- Crystal Faulkner
- Tom Demaline
- Carvel Simmons (joined by phone)

Mrs. Groseclose introduced CSI Director Carrie Kuruc for a regulatory reform update.

Ms. Kuruc provided an overview of CSI rule filings since the last Council meeting and highlighted the emergency rules in response to the pandemic that have been submitted for CSI review with plans for enactment as permanent rules. Ms. Kuruc also addressed the continued filing of rules required by Senate Bill 7 to provide military members and their spouses with better employment opportunities by simplifying the process to transfer their occupational licenses to Ohio. Ms. Kuruc announced that the regulatory reform artificial intelligence tool project kicked off in July and early feedback from state agencies has been largely positive.

Mrs. Groseclose asked if any members had changes to the minutes from the May 7, 2020 meeting.

Ms. Kuruc introduced CSI Regulatory Policy Advocates, Ethan Wittkorn and Jacob Ritzenthaler, to discuss some of the rules that they have been reviewing. Highlighted rules included those to which agencies made improvements to ease compliance and health and safety concerns during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other rules that garnered substantial stakeholder engagement.

Ms. Kuruc then introduced Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted to address the Council. The Lieutenant Governor provided an unemployment update, noting that initial jobless claims during the previous week were down from filings in the weeks before, but still abnormally high. Ohio hit an all-time peak of initial jobless claims during the pandemic.

Lieutenant Governor Husted reiterated the importance of supporting workforce training during the current economic climate. The TechCred program's June application period saw a 101% increase in credentials funded compared to the January application period. A total of 7,473 tech-focused credentials had been approved for reimbursement cumulatively as part of the TechCred program. Lieutenant Governor Husted announced that another application period began on August 4<sup>th</sup>.

Lieutenant Governor Husted also discussed employer liability during the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted there are two bills pending in the Ohio General Assembly that would help address employer concerns, and emphasized the importance of liability protections during the pandemic for businesses that are taking all of the steps asked of them to create a safe environment for their employees and customers. Mr. Husted mentioned that Governor DeWine joined with 20 other Governors signing on to a letter to Congressional leadership stressing the need to address business liability protections. Mr. Husted also shared his optimism for the regulatory reform tool project and the drive to make Ohio the most attractive and innovative state in the Midwest for businesses.

Crystal Faulkner praised the TechCred program and asked the Lieutenant Governor if Ohio training providers receive preference over out-of-state providers. The Lieutenant Governor stated that because there are more than 900 credentials approved for funding and the program is employer-driven, it is difficult to limit use to only Ohio providers. The goal is to give freedom to employers to find training providers that best meet their needs. Lieutenant Governor Husted stated his desire to ensure that Ohio providers benefit from the program, while also meeting the needs of providing over 900 credentials.

Mrs. Groseclose thanked the Lieutenant Governor and introduced J.P. Nauseef, President and Chief Executive Officer of JobsOhio. Mr. Nauseef provided a background of JobsOhio and explained the vision of the nonprofit to make Ohio the best place to live, work, and make your version of the American dream a reality. JobsOhio is a unique economic development organization. It is a private entity, its funding does not come from tax dollars, and the way it operates allows it access to statewide resources delivered at a local level.

Mr. Nauseef stated that JobsOhio has worked to soften the negative economic impacts of the pandemic and prepare for the future. Mr. Nauseef emphasized that \$250 million were allocated to establish programs for Ohio's small and medium-sized businesses, and an additional \$250 million is being used to secure personal protective equipment (PPE) for Ohioans. JobsOhio recently launched PPE safety toolkits to distribute thousands of kits to small businesses with a highlight on minority-owned, woman-owned, and veteran-owned businesses. JobsOhio's team has been reconfigured to develop economic assessments related to the pandemic and to support the efforts of the Governor to get Ohioans back to work. Aside from PPE, the work of JobsOhio has impacted over 300,000 individuals and 15,000 small- and medium-sized businesses during the pandemic.

JobsOhio also implemented a liquor buyback program to alleviate economic strain on bars and restaurants, as well as loan deferment programs for small businesses. Mr. Nauseef stated that

Ohio's unemployment rate is better than the national average, while northern Ohio has been hit hardest by the pandemic. Mr. Nauseef also shared his belief that Ohio is positioned well both regionally and nationally to lead coming out of the pandemic, noting the positive global coverage of the DeWine-Husted Administration during the pandemic. JobsOhio will be focusing on Ohio's resilient sectors—talent and workforce—investing in innovation and an inclusive economic recovery.

Mrs. Groseclose thanked Mr. Nauseef for his time and opened the meeting for further discussion by the Council members.

Tom Demaline and Crystal Faulkner posed questions regarding stakeholder engagement processes during rulemaking. Ms. Faulkner also relayed some concerns regarding proposed changes to commercial activity tax rules.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.