



**Common Sense
Initiative**

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Carrie Kuruc, Director

**Small Business Advisory Council Meeting – Minutes
Tuesday, February 4, 2021, 10:00 a.m.**

The meeting was called to order by Carrie Kuruc, Common Sense Initiative (CSI) Director, at 10:00 a.m.

Members Present:

- Mike Kahoe
- Tyeis Baker-Bauman
- Doug Barry
- Senator George Lang
- Tom Demaline
- Crystal Faulkner
- Greg Simpson

Ms. Kuruc thanked the members for their participation and introduced Lieutenant Governor Jon Husted.

The Lieutenant Governor provided highlights of the CSI 2020 Annual Report. During 2020, CSI reviewed almost 2,000 rules and received 700 comments from stakeholders. Lieutenant Governor Husted also noted the promising early results of the artificial intelligence tool project, which allows state agencies to quickly sort and analyze Ohio's rules with the goal of modernizing outdated processes and removing unnecessary regulations.

Lieutenant Governor Husted addressed the Council regarding measures proposed by the administration in the biennial state budget. A priority in drafting the budget was to provide resources to small businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The budget provides \$1 billion in funding for economic recovery that focuses on small businesses and community infrastructure.

The Lieutenant Governor provided insight into the expansion of broadband internet access in underserved regions of Ohio, stating that \$290 million is being invested into regions where approximately 300,000 households are without adequate internet access. Lieutenant Governor Husted said that businesses are unable to expand and students are unable to attend remote learning sessions without this vital access.

Lieutenant Governor Husted also addressed the expansive workforce initiatives that have been a priority of the administration. The TechCred program, which provides employers with funding for credentials for their employees, is setting a new goal of 20,000 earned credentials since the program has surpassed its first-year goals.

The Lieutenant Governor introduced Lydia Mihalik, Director of the Ohio Development Services Agency, to provide an update on Agency initiatives. Director Mihalik addressed the Council about programs that have benefitted small businesses during the pandemic, including the Ohio Emergency PPE Maker's Exchange and the PPE Retooling and Reshoring grant program. The Ohio Emergency PPE Maker's Exchange allows businesses to easily find PPE that is offered by Ohio producers. The PPE Retooling and Reshoring grant has been awarded to 68 small and medium-sized businesses to help with reshoring and retooling PPE and has helped businesses create over 800 new jobs and retain over 1,000 existing jobs. Director Mihalik also addressed the success of the Minority Micro-Enterprise grant program, which has awarded over 500 grants to minority or women-owned small businesses, and the Small Business Relief grant program, which provides \$10,000 grants to small businesses in all of Ohio's 88 counties.

Director Mihalik shared information with the Council about some of the economic relief initiatives found in the administration's budget proposal, including \$50 million targeted towards the lodging industry, \$40 million to the indoor entertainment industry, and \$20 million to help businesses established within the past year that were not eligible for initial pandemic economic relief efforts. Director Mihalik reiterated the impact that the pandemic has had on Ohio's tourism industry, which is a \$48 billion dollar industry and employs approximately 400,000 Ohioans. Agency efforts have encouraged Ohioans to "shop local" to help businesses that have felt the losses of expected tourism. The budget also proposes \$50 million to attract people interested in moving to Ohio.

Ms. Kuruc then spoke regarding the CSI 2020 Annual Report, stating that the AI tool project was a highlight that would soon be delivering important results. On the topic of rule review, Ms. Kuruc shared that 45% of rules reviewed by CSI were improved as a result of the stakeholder outreach process. Ms. Kuruc also mentioned rules that CSI reviewed for the Manufacturing Mentorship program, which helps 16 and 17-year-old Ohioans receive valuable on-site training in vital fields. The CSI office has also been involved with occupational licensing reform, including steps made towards easing requirements and ensuring reciprocity for military members and their spouses.

Crystal Faulkner raised concerns regarding fraudulent unemployment filings that have been cropping up across the state and tax implications of Bureau of Workers' Compensation dividend distributions. Tom Demaline spoke about seeking vaccinations for agriculture-based employees who are deemed essential workers.

Ms. Kuruc asked if any members had changes to the minutes from the November 5, 2020 meeting and set the next meeting for May 6, 2021. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.