



Mike DeWine, Governor  
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor

Common Sense  
Initiative

Carrie Kuruc, Director

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## **Small Business Advisory Council Meeting – Minutes Thursday, May 7, 2020, 10:00 a.m.**

The meeting, held virtually via WebEx conference call, was called to order at 10:09 a.m. by Emily Groseclose, Common Sense Initiative (CSI) Senior Policy and Business Advocate.

Members Present on WebEx:

- Greg Simpson
- William Bishop
- Doug Barry
- Tyeis Baker-Bauman
- Crystal Faulkner
- Tom Demaline
- Mike Kahoe
- Carvel Simmons (joined by phone)

Mrs. Groseclose introduced Carrie Kuruc, CSI Director, who thanked everyone for joining and gave a brief overview of the role of the Common Sense Initiative and the Small Business Advisory Council (SBAC). Ms. Kuruc explained that the SBAC advises CSI on the adverse impacts that draft and existing rules may have on small businesses.

Ms. Kuruc then introduced John Werkman, Chief of the Business Services Division of the Ohio Development Services Agency, to discuss the newly created Office of Small Business Relief (OSBR).

Mr. Werkman gave a brief overview of the small business development efforts that the Development Services Agency (DSA) leads. DSA, and specifically their small business development programs, have been working recently with small businesses to help them navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Werkman stated that at the beginning of the pandemic, DSA surveyed over 3,000 businesses regarding issues they had faced and actions they had taken during the pandemic up to that point. They established the OSBR as a centralized spot to coordinate efforts to assist small businesses during the pandemic. OSBR has responded to nearly 9,000 inquiries since it was formed and has been working with small businesses to find the appropriate resources to assist them and to answer their questions and listen to their concerns. Additionally, OSBR helps connect businesses with local providers that may be able to offer additional assistance. Mr. Werkman stated that the office has also been assisting people with English as a second language to clarify some of the new requirements during COVID-19,

working with organizations to identify sources of personal protective equipment (PPE), and coordinating with PPE manufacturers. Mr. Werkman also discussed how DSA's Export Assistance office has been working to identify international sources of PPE that can be imported into Ohio. The OSBR is also working with organizations that provide loans and financial assistance, including federal funding, to small businesses and is working with partners to help provide services to the hardest-hit business communities.

Ms. Kuruc thanked Mr. Werkman for his presentation and gave an update on the CSI regulatory reform tool project. Ms. Kuruc provided an overview of the function of the software tool, including its ability to quickly analyze and sort data from Ohio laws and rules, and stated that the preliminary work of the project is progressing well. Ms. Kuruc stated that CSI intends to partner with OSBR to use the tool to research burdensome and outdated rules that may inhibit Ohio's economic recovery, in an effort to streamline regulations and ease small business rebound.

CSI had asked the SBAC members to assist in focusing the research by pinpointing struggles they have faced while operating their businesses during this time. Ms. Kuruc then asked Council members Tyeis Baker-Baumann, Crystal Faulkner, and Mike Kahoe to share their thoughts.

Ms. Baker-Baumann suggested that the state minimize any tax payment penalties for businesses that may be affected by the pandemic. She also suggested that the state allow extensions for individuals with occupational licenses, as the pandemic may affect the ability for licensees to meet continuing education requirements for licensure renewal. She also suggested reducing initial licensure barriers for those currently trying to enter the workforce.

Ms. Faulkner discussed her work as Chair-Elect of the Executive Board of the Ohio Society of Certified Public Accountants (CPA). She stated that some concerns that CPAs currently have are tax audits, and she suggested that the state put a moratorium on state tax audits so that businesses can focus on recovery. She also suggested a tax credit or the suspension of taxes on materials that businesses need to combat the coronavirus, as well as the suspension of penalties on late tax payments for businesses effected by the coronavirus. Ms. Faulkner also suggested a sales tax holiday for businesses to restock before they are reopened. Ms. Faulkner discussed her hope to fast-track legislation to protect businesses from civil action as it relates to customer exposure to the coronavirus.

Mr. Kahoe discussed his work during the pandemic and suggested that requirements by some local governments to pay taxes by mail should be updated to be accepted electronically. Additionally, Mr. Kahoe noted an issue with some government offices that only accept paper copies of certain records, including some required unemployment filings.

Ms. Kuruc thanked the Council members for sharing their experiences and reiterated that identifying specific points of friction helps CSI to identify problematic regulations.

Ms. Kuruc then introduced Jacob Ritzenthaler and Ethan Wittkorn, Regulatory Policy Advocates for CSI, to share some of the rules that they have recently reviewed. Mr. Ritzenthaler discussed companion rules submitted by the Ohio Department of Medicaid and the Ohio Department of Aging – two agencies that serve many of the same populations. The agencies worked together to

align reimbursement rates for individuals served by similar programs that both agencies manage. Some of these rules concerned vehicle modifications and specialized medical equipment.

Mr. Wittkorn discussed Pharmacy Board rules specifically created to address prescribing issues brought on as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, Mr. Wittkorn discussed Accountancy Board rules that CSI recently reviewed regarding minimum qualifications to sit for CPA examinations, and some Ohio Department of Commerce rules to guide the newly created Manufacturing Mentorship Program.

Ms. Kuruc thanked them and opened the meeting to discussion from the Council members. Mr. Bishop asked Ms. Kuruc about the significant steps that have been taken under the DeWine-Husted administration to streamline the rule review process. Ms. Kuruc stated that the administration made tweaks to the business impact analysis, used by agencies to evaluate the impact of their proposed rules on businesses, to focus on clearly identifying the adverse impact and to highlight the issues that should be carefully examined during the review process. Mrs. Groseclose reiterated that CSI has been diligent in ensuring that stakeholders' voices are being heard and that agencies are appropriately engaging and communicating with their stakeholders.

Mr. Demaline asked where agencies will be making budget cuts. Ms. Kuruc stated that agencies are working on that and CSI would look into any specific questions he has.

Mrs. Groseclose asked if any members had changes to the minutes from the February 13, 2020 meeting and reminded the members that the next scheduled meeting is on August 6, 2020. The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.