Facts about Ohio Governance

The Kasich Economy: 4 Facts All Ohioans Need to Know

September 5, 2014 By Dale Butland  Communications Director, Innovation Ohio

As Governor Kasich continues to insist that he and his allies have engineered an ‘Ohio comeback,” there are four facts all Ohioans need to know.

Fact # 1: Ohio lags the rest of America in job creation. Governor Kasich often boasts that Ohio has more jobs now than when Governor Strickland was in office. But since virtually every state has more jobs now than it did during the nation’s “Great Recession”, the real question is how Ohio compares to the rest of the country. Ohio not only ranks 41st among all the states in job creation, but has lagged the national average for 20 straight months. And, unlike the rest of America – which has recovered all the jobs lost during the recession and then some, Ohio is still roughly 140,000 jobs short of where we were in 2007 before the national downturn began.

Fact #2: Virtually all the jobs created under Kasich have been low-wage. Although Kasich promised that his privatized development agency, JobsOhio, would move “at the speed of business” to create good-paying jobs in the economy of tomorrow, virtually none of the jobs created during his administration pay enough to support a family. An August 20 [analysis by Innovation Ohio](https://www.innovationohio.org/) found that Ohio’s economy now has more people working in low-paying jobs than in occupations that pay medium or high wages. And an August 31 [study by the Cleveland-based think tank Policy Matters-Ohio](https://www.policymattersohio.org/) found that in 2013, Ohio’s median wage was just $15.81 per hour, 90 cents below the national median wage.

Fact #3: Under Kasich, median income has fallen by $9,000 per household. An August [Associated Press analysis](https://www.ap.org/) found that Ohio’s real (adjusted for inflation) median household income fell from $54,000 in 2007 to $45,000 in 2012 – a far steeper drop than for the nation as a whole. The AP study also found that nearly 50% of Ohio households are now living paycheck-to-paycheck, and 16% of Ohioans have fallen into poverty.

Fact #4: The benefits from Kasich’s income tax cuts have overwhelmingly gone to the wealthy. Under the three income tax cuts that have taken effect since Kasich assumed office (including the “final installment” of the 2005 income tax cut that Strickland postponed during the Great Recession), the richest 1% has, on average, enjoyed an annual tax cut of $10,000. Middle-income Ohioans have received less than $100, and the poorest Ohioans have seen a slight tax increase, thanks to the higher sales and property taxes enacted under Gov. Kasich. This does not include the lower inheritance taxes now paid by the wealthy due to Kasich’s repeal of Ohio’s estate tax. The estate tax applied to only the richest 7% of Ohioans.

For most Ohioans, Governor Kasich’s so-called ‘Ohio Miracle’ has been a mirage. We’re creating fewer jobs than most other states, the ones we’re creating don’t pay a living wage, and the Governor’s income tax cuts have only served to exacerbate the growing gap between the rich and the rest. Surely our state can do better.
Columbus — With a new school year now underway, Innovation Ohio today highlighted “five facts” it says all parents and taxpayers should know about education funding in the Buckeye state. Documentation for all the facts below are available on the IO website.

**Fact # 1:** Traditional Public Schools, which educate 90% of Ohio’s kids, now receive $515 million less state funding than before Gov. Kasich took office. The Governor and his allies have repeatedly blamed this shortfall on the “one-time stimulus money” Ohio received from the federal government during the recession, which they imply was “extra” money they had no duty to replace. In truth, federal law required that stimulus funds be run through the states’ existing school funding formulas, and was intended to make up the difference between what states had been spending and what their lower tax revenues would permit them to spend during the recession. It was always anticipated that states would replace the federal money once their economies recovered.

**Fact # 2:** Ohio’s school funding system remains “unconstitutional” because of its over-reliance on property taxes. Although the Ohio Supreme Court has ruled four separate times that Ohio’s school funding system is unconstitutional, Gov. Kasich and his allies have not only refused to fix the problem, but their most recent state budget devotes, according to the non-partisan Ohio Legislative Service Commission, the smallest percentage of overall state spending to schools since FY 1997 — the year before the first Supreme Court ruling.

**Fact # 3:** The cost of local school levies has jumped 34% under Gov. Kasich. To offset state funding cuts, local taxpayers have been forced to pass levies raising 34% more new operating money than was required before Gov. Kasich took office. And thanks to Gov. Kasich’s elimination of the 12.5% property tax roll-back, those levies have already cost local taxpayers $10 million more than they otherwise would have.

**Fact # 4:** Charter School Funding Has Increased by 27% and Charters now receive more state money per pupil than do traditional public schools. While Gov. Kasich and his allies slashed state funding for traditional public schools, they simultaneously increased state funding to privately-run Charter schools by $193 million, even though many have performance and graduation rates that are worse than urban school districts. In fact, nearly 1 out of every 4 state dollars paid to Charters since their inception have gone to poorly performing charters operated by David Brennan or William Lager who, together, have contributed over $5.4 million to Republican candidates and causes.

**Fact # 5:** Private School Vouchers have doubled under Kasich. State funding for vouchers at private schools (over 90% of which are religiously affiliated) has risen from $99 million the year before Kasich took office to over $200 million this school year. And under Kasich, the original rationale for vouchers (to allow desperately poor children to escape “failing” public schools in a few urban districts) has been turned on its head. Today, middle class kids from districts rated “excellent” receive private school vouchers. And since voucher money is deducted from the amount public school districts would otherwise receive, the end result is that taxpayers are now subsidizing religious and private school educations at the direct expense of the traditional public schools attended by their own children.
Said IO Communications Director Dale Butland: “When it comes to schools, Gov. Kasich and his allies have flunked the test. Traditional public schools are now receiving less money, and poorly performing charters are receiving more. Local school levies have jumped dramatically, as have private school vouchers. And Ohio taxpayers are being forced to foot the bill for the entire fiasco.”

**The GOP Assault on Women’s Rights: 4 Facts All Ohioans Need to Know**

September 12, 2014 By Dale Butland Communications Director, Innovation Ohio

Though Governor Kasich and his fellow GOP officeholders continue to deny that they are attacking women’s rights, below are some key facts that all Ohioans need to know.

1. **Governor Kasich refused to veto any of the 5 anti-women provisions Republican legislators included in the current state budget, and signed them into law instead.** Though he possesses line-item veto authority, Governor Kasich refused to use it when he signed HB 59 (the current two-year state budget) on June 30, 2013. The bill contained five new anti-women provisions, ranging from the defunding of Planned Parenthood to requiring that physicians give women misleading information concerning abortion. [IO analysis; blog post on bill signing]

2. **Of the 59 GOP members of the Ohio House, 51 earned a grade of F on our Legislative Report Card.** Graded on their votes on 10 different pieces of legislation — ranging from restoring funding to Planned Parenthood to allowing women who face gender-based pay disparities to file actions in state courts — 51 (out of 59) GOP House members received an F, while 7 others received a D. [IO’s women’s scorecard]

3. **Attorney General Mike DeWine has repeatedly opposed women’s access to contraception.** In the 2012 Ohio Republican primary, DeWine withdrew his endorsement of Mitt Romney and threw his support to former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum — several months after Santorum talked about the “dangers of contraception in this country” and said it is “a license to do things in a sexual realm that is counter to how things are supposed to be.”

In 2014, DeWine intervened against women in the so-called “Hobby Lobby” U.S. Supreme Court case by filing a brief which essentially argued that women should have to get their boss’ permission in order to have access to contraception under company insurance policies.

4. **No GOP statewide officer holder supports equal pay for equal work, and all of them pay their male employees more than their female employees.** None of Ohio’s 5 statewide office holders publicly supported the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act (the first bill President Obama signed into law), and an April, 2014 Dayton Daily News analysis found that all five statewide office-holders pay their male employees more than female employees. Governor Kasich, for example, pays women an average of $9.81 per hour less than men — more than twice the $3.99 gap that existed under his predecessor.
An Associated Press investigation found a gender pay gap in the offices of all five statewide office-holders.

Ohio’s Republican office-holders hotly deny that they’re waging a war on women, even as they continue to attack their rights. Whether it’s the GOP’s refusal to back equal pay for equal work or their obsession over controlling women’s health care decisions, Ohio women know that actions speak far louder than words.

If you have wondered why Ohio governance has taken the direction it has then read the following article that appeared on the Truthout web site on 8 February 2012. By the way, the Koch brothers and the Koch funded Americans for Prosperity are financial contributors and major influencers of the American Legislative Exchange Council.

Ohio for Ohioans is what I believe is the solution. It appears much of Ohio governance is originating from outside of Ohio.

Ohio Lawmakers Introduced 33 Bills Last Year Based on ALEC Model Legislation

Wednesday, 08 February 2012 07:34 By Mike Ludwig, Truthout | Report

The American Legislative Exchange Council’s (ALEC) influence weighs heavy in the Ohio’s GOP-controlled legislature, where brazen attempts to crush the collective bargaining rights of public workers and change voting rules in favor of Republicans have made national headlines in recent months. Over the past year, Ohio lawmakers introduced 33 bills that are identical to or "appear to contain" elements of the ALEC's infamous model legislation that promotes a pro-corporate agenda, according to a report released this week by watchdog groups.

At least nine of the 33 bills have passed the State Legislature, including the now-defunct Senate Bill 5, which was poised to strip public employees of collective bargaining rights until Ohioans overwhelmingly voted for a repeal in November

"At a time when Ohioans are desperate for cooperation ... seeking Democrats and Republicans to come together to create jobs to get our economy moving again, far too often we see legislation introduced that does just the opposite," said Tim Burga, president of the Ohio ALF-CIO. "Far too often, we see the influence of ALEC on the legislation that's introduced, legislation that is anti-worker, anti-consumer and anti-education, and it really seems like it's on behalf of the super-wealthy and the investor class."

ALEC brings together state legislators and lobbyist from some of America's wealthiest corporations to draft model legislation that participating lawmakers can introduce in their homes states. Last year, the Center for Media and Democracy exposed 800 of these model bills, revealing a conservative agenda aimed at privatizing education and prisons while weakening unions and environmental legislation. One model bill, for example, would repeal a state's prevailing wage laws that require certain wage rates for those employed by public projects, making it harder for union workers to compete for contracts.
Elements of 64 ALEC model bills can be found in the 33 bills recently introduced in Ohio, according to the report. Some of the bills have the same content as ALEC model bills, while sections of others match ALEC language word for word.

Included in the list of bills carrying ALEC's stamp is proposed legislation that would require voters to show a photo or state ID to cast a provisional ballot. Another bill signed into law last year allowed Ohio to become the first state to sell a public prison to a private corporation, in this case the Corrections Corporation of America, which donated $10,000 in 2010 to Ohio's Republican Gov. John Kasich's post-election transition fund.

As of January, 57 members of the Ohio legislature, or 43 percent of state senators and representatives, were ALEC members. Rep. Michael Stinziano of Columbus is the only Democrat on the list, according to the report.

Senate Bill 5 champion Governor Kasich is a former ALEC member. The governor has publicly downplayed his connection to the organization, but the report references an internal ALEC document on Ohio fundraising that credits Kasich for helping "mold ALEC in its formative years." Kasich worked as a legislative aide in the 1970s for state Sen. Donald "Buz" Lukens, who was ALEC's longest serving national chairman.

Kasich and Republican legislators that supported Senate Bill 5 received $563,000 in campaign contributions from ALEC corporations in 2010. And, last year, an investigation by Truthout revealed that ALEC companies such as Walmart and Coca-Cola quietly funneled tens of thousands of dollars into front groups like the Republican Governors Association to support Kasich's election in 2010.

"In many states across the nation, our partner organizations have also released reports about ALEC's influence, but in no state has it been as great as it is here in Ohio," said Brian Rothenberg, director of Progress Ohio, on the groups behind the report.

Rothenberg said ALEC uses corporate donations to fund scholarships that reimburse state legislators from Ohio and beyond for "paid vacations" to ALEC conventions, where they are "wined and dined" and introduced to the model legislation promoted by the group.

The report includes an untitled document uncovered by the Freedom of Information Act that lists small donation amounts from corporate interests such as the American Petroleum Institute and AT&T under a "debit" column and a list of 20 Ohio lawmakers under a "credit" column. The lawmakers received an average of $1,900, which matches amounts they were reimbursed by the scholarship fund.

Rothenberg said a loophole in Ohio ethics law allows corporate money to be funneled to politicians via the scholarship fund and should be closed immediately.

Common Cause, People for the American Way, Progress Ohio and the Center for Media and Democracy released the report.

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