



Senator Tom Patton
24th Ohio Senate District

GUEST COLUMN

January 12, 2012
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JOB GROWTH AND ECONOMIC EXPANSION MARKED 2011

BY STATE SENATOR TOM PATTON

Like so many of you, I welcome the start of every new year as a chance to explore new opportunities. Having recently returned to Columbus to resume my legislative duties, I was quickly reminded of the many opportunities that Ohio has before it in 2012. Thanks in large part to the sound policy proposals of the past twelve months, our state finally has the chance to break through and bring true relief and recovery to its families.

This was made apparent in December when it was reported that Ohio's unemployment rate had dropped to 8.5-percent, down from 9.5-percent just one year before. Most encouraging, however, was that our state experienced its greatest one-month drop in unemployment since 1983. While we cannot rest until all Ohioans are able to find steady work to provide for their families, there is ample proof that many of the initiatives launched in 2011 have begun paving a new road toward economic growth.

Legislation such as House Bill 58, which included my amendment to create a jobs retention tax credit that helped companies like American Greetings and Diebold to continue operating in Ohio, and the state operating budget that granted a series of landmark tax reforms, are encouraging businesses to reinvest in our region and to grow Ohio's workforce. Additionally, last year's elimination of the "death tax" is offering our local businesses an added reason to stay within our state's borders.

However, some of the most significant and immediate changes to our jobs landscape have come as a result of House Bill 1, which was signed into law nearly a year ago. That measure made way for JobsOhio, a new job creation entity that merged state resources with private sector expertise. At the time of this writing, JobsOhio is already redefining the way in which Ohio approaches business, and vice versa.

To date, JobsOhio has been involved in a total of 245 projects across our state that have created 21,000 new jobs and retained more than 61,000 additional positions. I am happy to report that Cuyahoga County has played center stage to this renewed investment in workforce and productivity. Thus far, JobsOhio has collaborated with 28 local businesses to create 2,500 new jobs, while managing to keep an additional 8,400 positions in our area.

Just a few months into its existence, it is clear that this new workforce initiative is helping to build a strong foundation for continued growth.

Ohio has seen its share of tough times in recent years, but our families have persevered. They are good, hard-working people who remain ever-optimistic no matter what challenges come before them. The time has come for government to do what is right by them. Through the implementation of innovative, new initiatives like JobsOhio, we are beginning to even the playing field so that industries and employers can recognize the talents of our people. For that reason, I am confident that the next twelve months will be a time of expanded investment in our state and increased opportunity for Ohio residents

As our work continues, it is vital that I hear your thoughts on the many issues facing our state. If you have an idea or concern that you would like to share, I ask that you contact me by phone at (614) 466-8056, by email at SD24@senate.state.oh.us, or by writing to me at One Capitol Square, 1st Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

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Senator Tom Patton represents Ohio's 24th Senate District, which contains a portion of Cuyahoga County. He currently serves as the Majority Floor Leader and Chairman of the Senate Highways and Transportation Committee.