



Senator Shannon Jones
7th Ohio Senate District

GUEST COLUMN

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**WORKING TO MAKE OHIO'S BUSINESS CLIMATE MORE CONDUCTIVE
TO JOB CREATION AND RETENTION**

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services recently reported that Ohio's unemployment rate for April was 8.6 percent, its lowest level in more than two years. In addition to dropping below the national rate, April's numbers also mark the 14th straight month that the unemployment rate has decreased.

While this news is encouraging, we still have a long way to go. Although many experts agree that the economic downturn of the past few years has ended and our economy is now growing – albeit slowly – it will likely take several years for the job market and other sectors to completely recover.

Understanding that the best way to get Ohio's economy back on track is to make our state an attractive place for businesses to locate and expand, legislators and the Governor's office have been working over the last few months on a variety of initiatives designed to create a business environment that encourages job growth for all Ohioans.

Last month, Governor Kasich announced a new partnership between the state and the National Federation of Independent Businesses to help get more of Ohio's small businesses using the Ohio Means Jobs website. This site – established in 2007 – allows any employer in Ohio to post their job openings, as well as review resumes posted to Monster.com's database, at no cost to them.

By better promoting Ohio Means Jobs, we hope to enable companies with job openings to more easily find employees with the skill sets they are looking for and provide a one-stop shop for Ohioans looking for work to search available positions and apply. For more information, or to post a job opening or resume, please visit www.ohiomeansjobs.com.

Lawmakers are also looking at ways to promote job creation in Ohio. Earlier this year we passed House Bill 1, which created JobsOhio, a new nonprofit corporation that will focus exclusively on job creation and retention. We also approved Senate Bill 2, legislation that seeks to improve the state's regulatory environment in order to reduce government red tape create a business climate that helps, rather than hinders, those companies seeking to locate or expand in Ohio.

Senate Bill 2 establishes the Common Sense Initiative Office (CSIO), which was originally created by Governor Kasich via executive order. This office will be responsible for helping state agencies determine whether new rules or regulations could have an adverse impact on small businesses. It also creates the Small Business Advisory Council, a nine-member panel that will advise the governor, Lt. governor and CSIO on those findings.

From the beginning of this General Assembly, my colleagues and I in the Ohio Senate have been focused on job creation and reforming the way government serves its citizens. As you can see, we have already accomplished a great deal in just a few short months, but we realize there is still a great deal of work ahead of us. In the months ahead, we will continue to develop and implement innovative policies that will keep Ohio on the road to recovery.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have questions or concerns about any state-related matter. You can reach my office by phone at (614) 466-9737, by e-mail at SD07@senate.state.oh.us or by writing State Senator Shannon Jones, Ohio Statehouse, 1 Capitol Square, Columbus, OH 43215. I look forward to hearing from you.