



Governor on Ohio's Renaissance

Ohio Gov. John Kasich joins WSJ's Matt Murray in Davos and discusses the state's renaissance and the dysfunction of Washington



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The US can't be complacent on job creation

By: John Kasich

John Kasich, Governor of Ohio, on the steps his state has taken to create jobs and fuel economic growth.

Countries in eastern Asia and Europe have, in recent decades, developed highly effective training systems that help their citizens prepare for success in a competitive, global economy. Key to this has been the ability of policy-makers to listen to job creators and respond with training programs that meet their needs.

The United States must keep up to remain competitive.

For years, the US held the top spot on the World Economic Forum's [Global Competitiveness Index](#). This year, we ranked 6th; Switzerland came out on top, followed by Singapore, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany. Our country's creativity, plentiful natural resources, and dominant research and development capacity continue to be key advantages. However, a recommitment to high performance in workforce development can further strengthen our position.

Ohio is helping lead the economic recovery in the US and has consistently ranked among the top states for job creation. The reason is that we have cut taxes, balanced our budget and are reforming regulations to create a more jobs-friendly climate. Our next challenge is to improve the way we train Ohioans in order to make sure that they and their employers can more successfully compete.

After researching, looking at successful models in other countries and laying the groundwork for transformation, we are now implementing reforms that better align training programs with the hiring needs of job creators. In the past two years, Ohio has focused on turning a fragmented and duplicative workforce training system into one that's more responsive to the jobs that employers need to fill. This is being done by:

Exposing youth to career options – In 2012, I signed legislation embedding career options into school curricula starting as early as kindergarten. Known as *Career Connections*, this effort helps expose students to career options early enough to develop a lasting appreciation for the practical value of what they learn and gain motivation from it.

Incentivizing degree completion – Ohio's higher education community has embraced the need to increase graduation rates. This is being done through a new formula for distributing state higher education funds that emphasizes degree completion, not just student enrolment. As a result, 50% of Ohio's higher education funds will be distributed to universities based on their success in helping students complete their degrees; more graduates mean a better workforce.

Understanding employers' needs – After beta-testing an online forecasting system with more than 100 employers, Ohio will soon roll out a new system where employers can communicate their upcoming workforce needs to education policy-makers, who can then respond by tailoring and emphasizing training programs accordingly.

Helping workers before they are unemployed – Worker training programs usually focus on helping unemployed workers. In Ohio, the recently launched [Incumbent Workforce Training Voucher](#) allows employed workers and their employers get state-supported training to upgrade their skills to stay competitive.

A special focus on veterans – Ohio recognizes veterans as a priority, a group of workers that are disciplined, extensively trained and tested, and often looking for work as they transition back to civilian life. Reaching out to this population not only helps meet their employment needs, but also brings a valuable and competitive workforce asset to Ohio's employers.

Ohio's workforce transformation agenda is a bold one, and I look forward to discussing it in more detail in a session on Advanced Manufacturing at the [World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2013](#).

Author: John Kasich is Governor of Ohio, USA and is participating in the [World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting 2013](#)

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