

NOTE: *“If an Ohio business can no longer be certain of guarding its privacy from the prying eyes of Big Government, they’ll soon find some other state in which to do business, expand and hire.”*



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JobsOhio: Business' privacy rights threatened

Some old controversies never die. Especially when there’s politics involved. And, sadly, even when jobs and economic prosperity for Ohio’s families are caught in the crossfire.

When JobsOhio was being established in 2011 as a private, nonprofit corporation to lead economic growth and job creation for our state, there was vigorous public debate about how to strike a proper balance between meeting Ohio’s urgent need for robust economic development and preserving a level of transparency we all have a right to demand. Legislators found that balance and enacted the necessary safeguards into the law that brought JobsOhio to life. Now that we are entering political season, this controversy is being thrust once again onto the public stage.

Auditor of State Dave Yost – who has the unquestioned right to examine JobsOhio’s expenditure of its public dollars – is demanding unprecedented access to its nonpublic dollars as well.

That’s not sitting well with legislative leaders who passed that law. But should you or anyone else outside the Columbus inner-circle really care? Aren’t we all pledged to sunshine, transparency and openness? Should we be concerned about the undisciplined way the auditor wields his power? For me, the answer to all of the above is clear: Yes! Yes! And yes!

Transparency with the expenditure of public money is fundamental to our democracy. But so, too, is the right of private individuals, private corporations and private nonprofits to keep their business just that – private – whenever public dollars are not involved. If an Ohio business can no longer be certain of guarding its privacy from the prying eyes of Big Government, they’ll soon find some other state in which to do business, expand and hire.

As a retired vice chairman of an international accounting firm, former CEO of a private company, and board member of several public and private companies, I share the JobsOhio Board’s concern that this recent, unprecedented move by Auditor Yost will have disturbing consequences for all Ohio businesses, charities, regional economic development organizations and other private groups that do business to even a small extent with state government.

Op-ed continued here: <http://news.cincinnati.com/article/20130319/EDIT02/303190019/JobsOhio-Business-privacy-rights-threatened>

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