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Ohio takes a big step forward

In the latest sign that word is getting out about Ohio's business-friendly makeover, the Buckeye State is the biggest gainer in *Chief Executive* magazine's 2013 ranking of Best States for Business.

Ohio advanced an impressive 13 spots from last year, by far the biggest gain of any state, on the list based on responses from more than 700 CEOs around the country.

Ohio landed at No. 22 after CEOs ranked states on factors including taxation and regulation, work-force quality and quality of life.

In addition to its impressive one-year gain, Ohio had the third-largest four-year gain among states, rising from a dismal No. 45 in 2009.

State tax reforms signed into law by former Gov. Bob Taft and phased in over several years have had a major impact on Ohio's reputation as a good place for business.

Gov. John Kasich has taken the foundation of Ohio's diverse economy and continued to build Ohio's reputation for business-friendliness.

A state can't promote itself as business-friendly if it can't get its own house in order. Kasich quickly closed Ohio's \$8 billion budget gap, has overseen the addition of 115,000 new jobs since taking office and just announced refunds to employers from the state Bureau of Workers' Compensation, which is running a surplus.

A common theme that's developed in the list is the bottom-tier rankings of states that were long seen as the business leaders of the country, and which are home to America's largest cities: California, New York and Illinois rank 50th, 49th and 48th, respectively, on the *Chief Executive* list.

Those states have in common high-tax, high-regulation policies that a majority of CEOs say are crippling the growth those states desperately need to prop up their unsustainable entitlements and public-pension obligations.

By contrast, low-tax, low-regulation states have solidified their grip on the list's top spots: Texas, Florida and North Carolina remained unchanged on this year's list at Nos. 1, 2 and 3.

CEOs say that, in contrast to Washington, D.C., the states are adopting pro-growth policies by reducing business taxes and streamlining regulations, among other things.

Editorial continued here: <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/editorials/2013/05/12/1-ohio-takes-a-big-step-forward.html>

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