

Thursday, February 28, 2013

Taylor Reaches Out to Green Industry on CSI, Health Care Issues

On Wednesday, a coalition of horticulture businesses gathered on Capitol Square to discuss and advocate for their most pressing issues. Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor addressed the Ohio Green Industry to spread the message on the Common Sense Initiative (CSI) office and explain the potential impact of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

For two years, Taylor said she has been reaching out to businesses around the state to tell them about the resource they have in the CSI office. The hope is that the CSI office can address unnecessary regulation that may be hampering business leaders from succeeding, she said. But leaders need to know who to call before the CSI office can help.

"Often times -- you know any of these small business owners have an issue or a challenge and they're just as frustrated by who to talk to as they are by the issue and so we want them to know that they can call us and we'll act as that intermediary between them and any state agency," said Taylor. "In some cases they don't know."

The companies that gathered to hear Taylor Wednesday came from a variety of industries including nursery and landscape, golf course, and lawn care associations. They told Taylor that they mainly deal with regulation from the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODAg).

The lieutenant governor explained that since the arrival of the CSI process, new rule filings have decreased by more than 40 percent below the historical average. Taylor said this is partly because state agencies are giving more consideration to impact on business.

"Our agencies have a more thoughtful process. I think that they understand that we require them to interact with you as business owners -- not because maybe they want to but because they have to -- and we ask them to not only interact with you but to listen to you," said Taylor.

Acting not only as the lieutenant governor but also the Ohio Department of Insurance (ODI) director, Taylor talked about the future of health care in the state as it relates to the ACA. She has long been a strong opponent of the ACA, and on Wednesday Taylor cited a report that said businesses leaders could see their premiums go up as much as 85 percent.

"And it could be more for some cases," said Taylor. "It is going to impact every small business."

The lieutenant governor told Hannah News that the state has a good working relationship with representatives of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), but said the federal department is frequently handing down regulation and coming out later than expected.

Taylor stopped short of saying that the new provisions were catching officials off guard but explained that the new rules keep changing the way Ohio regulators can prepare to administer the act.

"You've got insurance companies having to rewrite plans -- having to rewrite products -- every single one which has to be approved by the Department of Insurance before it can be sold on the market," said Taylor. "We're talking about a significant increase in workload."

When it comes to Gov. John Kasich's proposal to expand Medicaid, Taylor said that the administration did a cost analysis and discovered that the state would break even on the expansion, leading the governor to go with what would best serve the less fortunate.

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