



# SOTS Reaction: Redistricting, Tax, Education Statements Among Topics That Draw Instant Feedback

April 11, 2016

Gov. John Kasich's sixth State of the State address drew some immediate responses Tuesday evening, with a fellow statewide officeholder not even waiting for it to end before celebrating his support for revamping Ohio's congressional redistricting process.

Secretary of State: Jon Husted applauded the governor's strong endorsement for changing how the state draws its congressional districts.

"For more than a decade, I have been working to reform the outdated and broken system Ohio has for drawing congressional districts. In this cause, Governor Kasich's call in tonight's State of the State address gives us the most significant endorsement yet," he said.

"To fix the broken system in Washington, we must start by fixing the broken system at home. Congressional redistricting reform's time has come."

Community Colleges: Jack Hershey, president & CEO of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges, welcomed mention of the administration's recent higher education proposals. (See [Gongwer Ohio Report, February 22, 2016](#))

"His vision for creative solutions to the challenges faced by higher education has been achieved by working closely and collaboratively with college and university presidents, ensuring that college remains affordable and that students are connected to available jobs early in their academic career," he said.

"The proposals outlined in tonight's the State of the State speech ask community colleges to play an even greater role in helping businesses find highly skilled workers. That's a call we're eager to answer."

Ohio Republican Party: Chairman Matt Borges credited the administration with turning the state around from the "mess" inherited from former Gov. Ted Strickland.

"Republican leadership has turned a budget shortfall into a \$2 billion surplus, lowered taxes for all Ohioans by \$5 billion, and created a business friendly environment that has produced 416,000 new jobs. There is no denying that under Governor Kasich's leadership, Ohio has turned around and is much stronger today," he said.

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"Politicians make a lot of promises, but Governor Kasich and Republican leaders in Ohio have delivered by balancing budgets, cutting taxes and helping to grow Ohio's economy. Republicans are not settling on our laurels though - there is still more work to do to keep moving our state forward."

Democratic National Committee: Reflecting the attention he has received nationally for his presidential bid, Mr. Kasich's speech was panned ahead of time by the DNC, which released a list of critiques on the governor and his administration. They included contentions that:

--Kasich has spent more than half of the past year -- at least 177 days -- out of state.

--Ohio taxpayers have shelled out more than \$350,000 so far to foot the bill for Kasich's out-of-state campaigning, and overtime pay for his security detail has jumped 64 percent.

--Ohio's job growth has trailed the national average for 39 straight months.

--There are more Ohio kids living in poverty today than there were during the height of the recession back in 2008.

--Ohio's public education system has plummeted from 5th in the nation to 23rd.

--Kasich signed a bill earlier this year to defund Planned Parenthood. Already, half of Ohio's clinics were forced to stop providing constitutional, safe and legal abortions under laws signed by Kasich.

--Ohio ranks 45th in the nation for infant mortality, 47th in hunger, and 46th in home foreclosures.

Buckeye Institute: The Columbus-based free-market think tank lauded the governor's record on reducing taxes and regulations but urged more "pro-growth energy and labor policies" and continued to question the Medicaid expansion.

"Governor Kasich has rightly shifted local government responsibilities back to where they belong, and rebuilt Ohio's 'Rainy Day Fund' from below \$1. Yet despite recovering the jobs lost in the Great Recession, Ohio languishes far from its peak. It is essential that the Governor and General Assembly embrace further regulatory and tax reforms in order to reach Ohio's potential," the group stated.

"The policies critical to making Ohio more competitive among our neighboring states and attracting people, companies, and jobs to relocate here include labor reforms and reforming the burdensome Medicaid expansion that threatens to fiscally derail Ohio."

UHCAN Ohio: Steve Wagner, executive director of the health care advocacy group, said it was "pleased Governor Kasich's State of the State address urged communities to use a comprehensive and community-based approach to stop the opiate epidemic."

"However, the current approach is missing a critical element - a dialogue between every child and a trained professional. UHCAN Ohio believes Ohio's schools need to implement a proven prevention approach, called Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment. SBIRT can prevent substance use before our young people get too far down the wrong road. A staggering 90% of people who suffer from addiction say they started using substances before they turned 18. SBIRT has the support of the American Academy of Pediatrics," he said.

"If Ohio wants a truly comprehensive and community-based approach to addressing Ohio's opiate epidemic, the Administration needs to take the last critical step and implement SBIRT in schools across Ohio."

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One Ohio Now: Gavin DeVore Leonard, state director of the group backed by labor and other government service advocates, questioned the governor's continued push for tax cuts in light of the state's recent economic performance.

"If tax cuts are the answer for Ohio, when will we see the results? We've consistently trailed the nation in job growth and we're below average for poverty, hunger, and wages," he said. "The Governor said "jobs" 25 times tonight and vowed to cut income taxes in 2017. But the overwhelming evidence shows little to no correlation between state income tax cuts and economic growth. In fact, after 10 years of major tax changes in Ohio, it's hard to point to a single piece of evidence that those changes have worked."

"Governor Kasich talked about the value of addiction services, guidance counselors, early education, and more, he added. "Instead of spending billions more on tax cuts that have overwhelmingly benefited the wealthy, he should call for meaningful investments to these public services that will enrich the lives of all Ohioans."

National Wildlife Federation: Gail Hesse, the group's Great Lakes Water program director, said in a statement that the governor "has a great story to tell regarding the leadership shown by his Administration and the General Assembly in developing policies to protect the quality of Lake Erie."

"Through provisions such as prohibiting the spread of manure and commercial fertilizer on frozen ground, outlining manure application certification, and other measures reflected in his budget, Governor Kasich has demonstrated that he understands the importance of preserving this critical natural resource," she said.

"Now, we greatly anticipate the release of the Ohio collaborative implementation plan that will keep Ohio on track to reduce phosphorus run-off into Lake Erie by 40 percent. Together, we are ready to double down on efforts to prevent and mitigate the sources of harmful algal blooms and protect quality drinking water for all Ohio residents."