



JOHNSON TOUTS TAX REFORM IN CLEVELAND ON TAX DEADLINE DAY

Plan to cut income tax by 21 percent receives growing support throughout the state

CLEVELAND (April 15, 2005) – Lieutenant Governor Bruce Johnson visited Cleveland today to promote Governor Bob Taft's tax reform plan. During his visit with the Greater Cleveland Partnership and COSE, Johnson highlighted the proposed 21 percent income tax cut as Ohioans meet the 2004 tax filing deadline. Announced by Taft during his State of the State address in February, the tax reform plan has received a groundswell of support from a broad and diverse coalition of statewide organizations, chambers of commerce and a growing list of more than 120 Ohio businesses. Earlier this week, the Ohio House of Representatives passed House Bill 66, the biennial budget bill, which incorporates Taft's tax plan. The bill is now under consideration in the Ohio Senate.

"There's no better time than tax deadline day to remind Ohioans that we need a fair system that reduces personal income tax and promotes economic growth and job creation," Johnson said. "I thank the Ohio House of Representatives for supporting our plan, and I encourage all individuals and businesses in the Cleveland area to let their local and state leaders know that tax reform is critical to boosting Ohio's economy."

Taft's tax reform plan would cut personal income tax rates for Ohioans by 21 percent over five years; eliminate state income tax for people making less than \$10,000 a year; and phase out the tax on equipment and inventory and the corporate tax, replacing them with a broad-based, low-rate commercial activity tax. The plan also calls for spending \$390 million to hold schools and local governments harmless from loss.

Also promoting the plan in Cleveland today was Ohio Tax Commissioner William W. Wilkins. Later today, Johnson will deliver a similar message to the Youngstown/Warren area, while Taft is spending the day taking his message to Columbus, Dayton and Cincinnati.

The six chambers organizing today's events have all endorsed the Governor's tax reform plan. Additional chamber endorsements include the Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Perrysburg Area Chamber of Commerce. Tax reform has also received support from numerous influential industry associations including the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, the Ohio Manufacturers' Association and the Ohio Business Roundtable. Cleveland area businesses supporting tax reform include International Steel Group, Stripmatic Products, RPM International, the Lincoln Electric Company and Zaclon, Inc.

"Governor Taft and I appreciate the support for tax reform that we have received in Cleveland and across Ohio," said Johnson. "This initiative will improve the dynamic of Ohio's economy and we need everyone's help to make this plan a reality. I encourage all Ohioans to visit www.jobsforohio.com to learn more about the plan and how they can voice their support to our state legislators. Bold changes require bold initiative, and we are asking for everyone's support in ensuring that Ohio remains a great place to live, work and raise a family."

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Information about the Governor's tax reform proposal is available at www.jobsforohio.com

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