



With Meager Results, It Is Time to Cut Pay and Move to a Biennial Legislature

More jobs. It isn't complicated or fancy, but Ohioans need more job opportunities. With a good paying job comes self-worth, the ability to start and provide for a family, and a brighter tomorrow. With a booming jobs economy, wages go up as companies compete for workers. Such an economy also attracts the best and brightest from other states looking for greener pastures. Companies follow the workers. We've seen it in warm weather states like Florida and Texas and we've seen it cold weather states like Idaho and Colorado.

For too long Ohio's private sector has been a [laggard among the states](#). That weakness is why our best and brightest head south and west resulting in our [stagnant population](#). It is also why Ohio rarely wins the big, new manufacturing facilities. Month-after-month, year-after-year, and decade-after-decade, Ohio's private sector ends up in the bottom half – [if not the bottom ten states](#) – for net percentage private sector growth. We've [detailed this fact](#) at Opportunity Ohio and provided Ohio's elected officials with [idea-after-idea](#) on what to do to change that fact.

Unfortunately, they often ignore us by taking the easy road of listening to the lobbyists, lawyers, politicos, and charlatans who wine and dine them and fill their reelection coffers with campaign contributions. Even worse, some don't even fail to act because they've been "sweet-talked"; rather, they keep quiet because they are making more money than they've ever made to sit on their hands, as leadership cares more about maintaining the status quo than fighting the consequential fights that must be fought if Ohio is ever going to escape the bottom of the barrel.

Sadly, too many wealthy donors in Ohio don't connect the dots when it comes to funding elected officials who then fail to move the jobs needle in Ohio so the money keeps flowing to failed politicians, as Main Street Ohioans scramble to make ends meet. It is a vicious cycle, but only for the millions of Ohioans left holding the same empty bag they've been holding for twenty-plus years.

As part of our series on Reinvigorating Ohio, along with [replacing term limits with a 20-year time limit](#) and [moving elected officials from a defined benefit government pension to a defined contribution 401\(k\) plan](#), we also should cut the pay of the governor, the lieutenant governor, and all legislators by 50% and allow them to earn a 100% bonus if Ohio's net percentage private sector job growth hits the top ten among the fifty states and Washington, D.C., each year. Legislators also should lose their health care coverage, as they should be required to get that from a non-government job or Obamacare like most Ohioans have to do.

Republicans have long pushed for pay for performance among teachers and other government workers, so applying that same idea to their pay shouldn't be controversial or garner much opposition, right? This pay system will focus their attention like a laser on actually doing something to move the jobs needle.

In addition, given how little they actually accomplish to improve Ohio, there is no reason Ohio's legislature can't move to a biennial system in which they gather for six months every two years plus any emergency sessions that are needed. If it works for Texas and it certainly seems to be working, it can work for Ohio.

These changes will force legislators to focus more on the alleged private sector jobs they hold, which might imbue them with a bit more appreciation for how the rest of us live. Given that they won't be able to live off of their government pay unless they perform and will have eighteen months of the year to work in the private sector, we should expect to see Ohio's private sector get the attention it deserves. If they can't handle the pressure, then they can make room for Ohioans willing to serve who aren't just looking for an easy paycheck without meaningful accountability, but instead are looking to make Ohio great again.

Ohioans can continue with the status quo and watch as Ohio loses more people, power, and prosperity over the next thirty years as it lost over the last thirty years. Albert Einstein was a genius, but he didn't need to be one to know doing so would meet the definition of insanity. Ohio desperately needs jobs, so let's put real pressure on the 134 men and women whose actual job it is to create the most business-friendly and job producing economy possible. They've utterly failed us so far. Let's stop rewarding that failure.