

# Is JobsOhio extension a good deal for Ohioans? Vote set for Wednesday to extend it

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Are Ohioans getting a good deal from JobsOhio, the state's private economic development arm? It depends on whom you ask.

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, a Republican running for governor in 2026, has "grave concerns" about a Wednesday vote to extend JobsOhio's contract through 2053. He calls it a "one-sided" deal that will harm Ohioans.

However, Gov. Mike DeWine said JobsOhio needs to be empowered to do the work that's the envy of other governors. "If we want to continue to win, we have to have JobsOhio in the game, fully in the game," he said Monday.

JobsOhio is a private nonprofit corporation funded by the state's liquor profits. Former Gov. John Kasich created JobsOhio in 2013 as a more nimble way to attract employers to Ohio in the wake of the Great Recession.

DeWine called his predecessor's idea "literally transformative." JobsOhio was key in landing Intel's semiconductor operation in the Columbus area, Honda's battery plant in Fayette County and military drone maker Anduril Industries to central Ohio.

But JobsOhio has attracted criticism over the years for its lack of transparency, only announcing the details of multimillion-dollar tax breaks after the deals are inked. Former Ohio Rep. Jay Edwards also took issue with the lack of investment in Appalachia.

Now, Yost says JobsOhio is getting too good of a deal on a 15-year contract extension.

JobsOhio's current contract expires in 2038. In the 2023 budget, state lawmakers authorized the seven-member Controlling Board to extend that contract through Feb. 1, 2053. That vote is set for Wednesday afternoon.

Under JobsOhio's initial 25-year lease, the economic development group paid about \$1.4 billion to lease the state liquor profits. Yost wants to know why JobsOhio isn't chipping in anything new for the contract extension.

"How is it in the best interest of the people of Ohio to extend such a valuable franchise under these circumstances?" he wrote in a Friday letter to JobsOhio. Yost wants to delay Wednesday's vote to find out.

Former Republican U.S. Reps. Steve Stivers and Pat Tiberi, who now lead powerful business groups, said there's no reason to delay the vote or ask for more money.

"The stakes are enormous: Ohio must extend JobsOhio for another 15 years," wrote Stivers and Tiberi, who lead the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and Ohio Business Roundtable, respectively. "The success of JobsOhio speaks for itself – now is the time to build on that success, not risk losing it."

The extension is important because businesses making deals with JobsOhio need to know the entity will exist through the end of those agreements, said Rep. Brian Stewart, R-Ashville. He's a member of the Ohio Controlling Board and plans to vote for the extension.

"The record of success warrants continuing the program," Stewart said. "I've never seen a critic come up with an alternative model that would be better."

*This story will be updated.*