

Governor John Kasich's first five State of the State addresses attracted little consideration outside the Buckeye State. The April 6, 2016 address, however, attracted the attention and the scrutiny of the national media, as it was delivered in the midst of his campaign to capture the Republican nomination for President.

In his remarks delivered in Marietta, Ohio, the Governor touted his record of leading the state's economic recovery and outlined his agenda for the remainder of the year. There will be more specifics in the near future as policy is introduced and Mid-biennial Budget Review legislation is debated.

Following are some of the key themes and proposals:

## **Tax Policy/Economic Development**

The Governor called on the General Assembly to accelerate tax reductions that were enacted last year, an announcement that was met with enthusiastic applause. The reaction from the General Assembly was less enthusiastic, however, when the Governor said that he would once again introduce "comprehensive tax reform" – presumably lowering income tax rates while broadening the sales tax base. Proposals to broaden the sales tax base have been opposed by a variety of interest groups and rejected by the General Assembly in the last two operating budgets.

The Governor talked of the importance of diversifying Ohio's economy, mentioning recent high tech firm relocations (including Amazon, Fuyao Glass America and Enable Injections), reaffirming his support for shale opportunities and underscoring the significance of Ohio tourism.

## **Environment/Water Quality**

The Governor made reference to his recent proposal to address lead in Ohio water supplies and provide funding to help communities replace lead service lines and fixtures.

## **Healthcare**

He restated his support for Medicaid expansion and discussed proposals to continue to address the heroin epidemic and the opioid addiction epidemic. His proposals include stricter education and licensing of pharmacy technicians.

## **Education**

The Governor outlined efforts to address college affordability. In addition to initiatives underway to reduce university expenditures, he encouraged the General Assembly to move on his new College Plus initiative that would allow students to earn up to three years of college credits prior to entering a four-year university.

Kasich emphasized the importance of connecting Ohioans at an early age with opportunities and a pathway to career success with a focus on his "Ohio Means Jobs" website.

Among other proposals, the Governor also called for the expansion of STEM education to all grade levels and stressed the importance of the arts to encourage creativity in Ohio students.

## **Political Reform**

Kasich applauded last year's efforts to reform the way Ohio draws legislative district lines and called on the Legislature to reform the way Ohio's Congressional Districts are drawn. He said such gerrymandering promotes political division.

Our team will continue to monitor these issues and share more details as they become available. If you have any questions, please contact us.

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