Ohio Common Ground Releases 'The Ledger Behind the Deal: A Framework for Assessing JobsOhio's Return to Ohio Taxpayers'

Ohio Publishes Extensive JobsOhio Data, but Not Enough to Independently Verify Taxpayer Return, New Nonpartisan Framework Finds

DUBLIN, OH, UNITED STATES, July 13, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Ohio Publishes Extensive JobsOhio Data, but Not Enough to Independently Verify Taxpayer Return, New Nonpartisan Framework Finds

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>
> *Mark Pukita*

A new Ohio Common Ground Research Center report lays out a methodology for evaluating JobsOhio's taxpayer return, and applies it to what is currently public — without concluding whether the state's economic-development model helps or hurts Ohio taxpayers.

The Ohio Common Ground Research Center today released The Ledger Behind the Deal: A Framework for Assessing JobsOhio's Return to Ohio Taxpayers, a nonpartisan report examining how Ohio's primary economic-development organization should be evaluated, and what the public record currently supports about whether it delivers a net benefit to Ohio taxpayers.

JobsOhio, a private nonprofit created by the Ohio General Assembly in 2011, is funded not by ordinary tax revenue but by the profits of the state's liquor franchise, which its affiliate leases from Ohio through 2053. The report describes JobsOhio's reported activity — including a JobsOhio-commissioned analysis estimating a consolidated 15-to-1 return on the organization's incentive spending, combining modeled state tax revenue with real liquor-enterprise payments — alongside findings from independent oversight bodies.

Among those findings: an Ohio Auditor of State report covering the most recent reporting period found that 39 of 60 companies reviewed for state job-creation loans and tax credits had not met the job-creation commitments tied to their awards, and that the state took limited or no corrective action in many of those cases. The report also describes JobsOhio's exemption from Ohio's public-records and open-meetings laws, and recent legislative proposals to increase its transparency requirements.

The report's central methodological point is a distinction between economic activity announced by companies JobsOhio assists and economic activity actually caused by JobsOhio's involvement — a distinction economists call the "but-for" question. The report lays out a framework for estimating that distinction project by project, and for weighing JobsOhio's costs, including the opportunity cost of the liquor-franchise revenue, against its verified, incremental benefits.

Ohio Common Ground Logo

“Two people can look at the same facts about JobsOhio and reach opposite conclusions, and both can be right about the facts,” said Mark Pukita, Founding Organizer of Ohio Common Ground and its Research Center. “Our goal with this report isn’t to settle that argument. It’s to lay out, in the open, exactly what evidence would settle it — and to be honest about the fact that Ohio doesn’t yet publish enough of that evidence for anyone to calculate a verified number.”

Consistent with the Research Center's editorial standards, the report is descriptive rather than prescriptive. It does not endorse, oppose, or rate JobsOhio, any state official, or any piece of legislation, and it takes no position on JobsOhio's funding structure or pending transparency legislation. It identifies the specific categories of project-level evidence — audited employment figures, complete subsidy stacks, and documented but-for analyses, among others — that would be needed to move from a framework to a verified conclusion.

The findings draw on JobsOhio's own public reporting and methodology disclosures, Ohio Auditor of State compliance reports, the Ohio Legislative Service Commission, and contemporaneous news reporting. The report includes its full methodology, sourcing, and a summary of open questions for further research. The Ledger Behind the Deal (OCG White Paper No. 002) is available at:

ohiocommonground.com/white-papers

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About Ohio Common Ground

Ohio Common Ground is a nonpartisan civic organization whose work centers on giving Ohio voters accurate information and a stronger voice in their government, under the principle that politicians must earn your vote. The Ohio Common Ground Research Center produces trusted, transparent, and fully sourced research to help Ohioans make informed civic decisions and hold government accountable. The Research Center's work is editorially independent of the organization's organizing and advocacy activities. Learn more at ohiocommonground.com.

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