

Ohio approved more than \$240M for job retention

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio —

Gov. John Kasich has approved more than \$240 million in grants, loans and tax breaks to Ohio companies in order to keep them — and their jobs — in the state.

Three deals alone added up to \$166.9 million in incentive money to retain and create 4,410 jobs — or \$37,845 per job, the Dayton Daily News reported.

In March, the state offered American Greetings \$93.5 million to keep it from moving 2,000 jobs to Chicago. Instead, the company moved less than 15 miles from Brooklyn to Westlake near Cleveland.

In the same month, Kasich announced a package worth \$17.4 million for Bob Evans Restaurants to move its headquarters from Columbus to the suburb of New Albany 18 miles away. Kasich said the company could have moved 150 jobs to Texas, where it already owns property, but instead it will add 360 jobs and stay in Ohio, where the company's founder first started making sausage in the 1940s.

In April, the Kasich administration gave Canton-based Diebold Corp. a \$56 million package to keep its 1,900 workers in the Akron-Canton area. The company, which makes ATMs, was reportedly looking at moving to North Carolina and Virginia.

Currently, the Kasich administration is talking with more companies that are threatening to leave Ohio: Cincinnati-based Chiquita Brands International and Eastman Kodak in Kettering. Both businesses are being courted by other states.

Mark Kvamme, the director of Kasich's semi-private jobs creation engine JobsOhio, told the newspaper that without the tax incentives, Diebold would have moved, and "we could never risk Diebold leaving."

In September, Kasich announced \$8 million in incentives to move Omnicare Inc. and its 500 jobs from northern Kentucky to downtown Cincinnati.

Zach Schiller of the liberal think tank Policy Matters Ohio said poaching companies from other states is a bad idea.

"What it is likely to lead to is a race to the bottom because everybody will do it," he said.

Kasich told Fox News' Sean Hannity that he was accused of trying to steal Kentucky's jobs — and his accusers are right.

"I'm going to go everywhere I can in America to make Ohio work better," he said.

Kvamme said all but a few of the 156 deals with businesses in the last eight months have worked out so that the state will receive more money in taxes paid by the company than tax credits, loans, grants and other support that those firms receive.

However, the Ohio Department of Development declined a public records request from the Dayton Daily News seeking analysis on some of those high-profile deals, contradicting what the governor told the newspaper last week.

"They're not trade secrets," he said. "We'll release all the numbers."

In the first nine months of Kasich's term, Ohio offered \$722.9 million in job tax credits for 44,659 jobs — or \$16,433 per job. In the last nine months Gov. Ted Strickland spent in office, his administration approved \$682.46 million for 29,304 jobs, which works out to \$23,289 per job.

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Information from: Dayton Daily News, <http://www.daytondailynews.com>

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