



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Josh Mandel talks transparency and financial literacy
By Lisa Nicely | Defiance Crescent-News
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Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel spoke about challenges for Ohio's businesses and the need for transparency in government at a kick off of the Sound Advice Smart Money series on Monday at Defiance College.

The series, which will have several free sessions on Saturday at Defiance College, is sponsored by State Bank of Ohio with Defiance College and Defiance Area Chamber of Commerce.

When I first came into the treasurer's office three years ago, the state of Ohio was ranked 43rd in the nation in financial conditions, Mandel said. The report was done by Forbes and George Mason University. A few days after the report was released that had us at seventh in the nation. While our ultimate goal is to be ranked first in the nation, seventh is good progress.

He said manufacturing and agriculture have really helped Ohio economically.

One of the issues that is near and dear to my heart is the shortage of skilled trade in the state, Mandel said. Baby boomers are retiring throughout Ohio and America we're seeing a shortage of welders, pipe fitters, carpenters and other workers who work in skilled trades.

He said while many students are encouraged to seek higher education, so should those who work on the family farm be taking things apart and putting them back together.

The state is venturing to have bigger investment in trade and technical school, as well as inform high school students of the opportunities students can have through a technical or trade school.

Another issue in education is financial literacy. Mandel said it is important that youth make habitual decisions. A requirement that all high school students take a financial literacy class begins this year in the state.

We've been partnering with banks and other financial institutions to do this throughout the state, he said. We're using technology to do it and think outside the box to deliver this financial literacy education to every high school student.

Mandel also added that the state is working to ensure that young men and women coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan find a job to match their skills.

One of the problems though is one of the licensing requirements for Ohio doesn't take into consideration those who come back overseas, he said, using the example of truck driving. In that case, experience overseas driving a truck doesn't count.

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experience toward a license in Ohio.

We (the state) also have been trying to work with veterans so they know specifically how their skills in the private sector, he said.

Turning to current legislation, Mandel discussed House Bill 5, which aims to simplify the municipal income tax, and House Bill 175, which would put the state's checkbook on the Internet.

Turning to House Bill 5, Mandel said Ohio is the only state in America that allows municipalities to make up their own regulations and forms.

It creates mountains of paperwork for small businesses. A lot of small businesses don't have the money or the time to spend money on more people to get more product out the door, they spend money to have someone help with the paperwork.

Mandel said if the process is simplified it will make Ohio's financial environment more conducive to economic growth.

Area businessman and City Council President Mike McCann said he understood how complicated the forms can be from a business perspective, but questioned if the bill would lower local income tax rates, which would create a competitive advantage for municipalities.

This bill does not change tax rates at all, Mandel said. All it does is simplify the process. The tax rates are set at the local level. It (the bill) argues to make a unified form and simplify processes. It also doesn't impact the centralized collection point. The cities are still the collection point. The reason I'm so passionate for this is for small businesses.

Turning to the transparency bill, Mandel said having transparency in government is the best way to hold elected officials accountable.

As state treasurer I've taken a lead to increase transparency in Ohio government, he said. First thing I did was put every state worker and put our salaries on the Internet.

He added he also put up a database of state-owned property.

House Bill 175, if passed, will compel me to take the state checkbook on Internet so you can see how the money is spent. The project will be the largest step forward for transparency in state. Individuals can search vertically (search through time (comparing various administrations) and search horizontally (to compare agencies.)).

When you have a more transparent government what you have are citizens that have more faith in government, you have today is young people who are cynical about government and I don't blame them. The more we can do to increase transparency, the more faith we can have in our government.



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books and show that transparency I think we will be stronger as a state and a country.

Ken Weinstein, dean of students at Defiance College, asked if JobsOhio would be part of the state's checkbook made transparent.

Mandel said since there was no legislation to create JobsOhio, it did not classify it as a public entity. C information would be part of state's checkbook put online.

Mandel also said that oil and gas drilling in Ohio with the various shale deposits located in or near the business.

The more oil and gas we drill in Ohio ... the better it will be for businesses and family in northwest Ohio bring down cost of energy. That's good for family and jobs. Secondly for companies that make products for t for job creation. Third, the more energy we produce here in America the less we have to depend on radical I Middle East. This is game changing. One of the main obstacles of energy dependence in Ohio is infrastructure cars and fleets. As that expands and you can go to local (gas) station and fuel with natural gas or regular changi ng.

We have the resources here in America to be energy independent, it's just having the infrastructure in place