

Dayton Daily News

Progressive group blasts JobsOhio spending

March 18, 2013

By [Andrew Tobias](#) |

A liberal Columbus advocacy group today criticized the semi-private economic development agency JobsOhio for “lavishly” spending \$1 million in tax dollars on office expenses.

In a press release issued on the eve of the deadline for a subpoena Ohio Auditor Yost issued that would force JobsOhio to turn over financial records, Innovation Ohio also urged the Republican auditor to “stick to his guns” in his pursuit to get JobsOhio to open its books.

In the release, Innovation Ohio spokesman Dale Butland said taxpayers paid for a “corporate version of the Taj Majal” as part of nearly \$1.2 million in office expenses for JobsOhio.

The press release highlights the following 2012 expenses, which are contained in an audit by a private company released earlier this year:

- \$367,000 spent office remodeling;
- \$362,000 spent on office furniture;
- \$233,000 spent on rent
- \$167,000 spent on IT (information technology)
- \$67,000 spent on “supplies”

JobsOhio, a creation of Republican legislators and Republican Gov. John Kasich, was launched in February 2011 to replace the Ohio Department of Development. Innovation Ohio was founded in 2011 by a former top staffer for former Democratic Gov. Ted Strickland, whom Kasich defeated.

“Do 20 or so employees of JobsOhio really need \$362,000 worth of furniture?” Butland said in a written statement. “Did they really need to spend \$366,000 on remodeling, including the installation of a coffee bar? No wonder Gov. Kasich doesn’t want Auditor Yost to see the books. JobsOhio is spending money in ways that would make Donald Trump blush.”

JobsOhio has served as a political flashpoint recently. Yost [issued a subpoena](#) earlier this month after JobsOhio refused to release its financial records for a state audit.

Kasich, as well as [Republican leadership in the General Assembly](#), say Yost should only be able to review the millions in public money — the exact amount still remains unclear — that

JobsOhio has received. Yost said he should be able to review the \$6.9 million in private donations and other funding JobsOhio has received, too.

The subpoena's deadline is 12 p.m. tomorrow.

Democrats have seized on JobsOhio, [using the issue](#) as a launching pad to criticize Kasich and other Republicans. Democrats allege Yost's fight for records illustrates a secrecy and lack of public accountability at JobsOhio, which as a non-profit is exempt from Ohio public records laws.

Kasich staffers retort that JobsOhio is one of the most transparent non-profits in the country, and that it is part of the reason Ohio has seen some early signs of an economic recovery.

Original article:

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