

Perspective: Boeing deal great, but what about real job creators?

By Brad Jones

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Absent from the heated debate

surrounding a tax incentive deal to coax Boeing into expanding operations in Missouri is any discussion on a real job creation plan for the state.

While we hope to see Boeing choose Missouri, what about the backbone of our state's economy – our small businesses?

According to the Missouri Division of Employment Security, businesses with less than 10 employees added 14,207 workers between 2005 and 2012 and they didn't get a billion dollars in tax incentives to do it.

When will they call a special session to help those companies expand and excel in this state?

Small business is the engine that drives our state's economy. Small businesses represent about 98 percent of the state's employers and employ a little under half its private-sector workforce, according to the latest figures from the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Advocates tout the potential of 8,000 new jobs the Boeing deal may bring to our state and we hope we get every single one of them, but those jobs come with a price tag that will be absorbed by all working Missourians through diverting an estimated billion dollars in incentives over a 10-year period.

It should also be noted that companies with 50 or fewer employees created 72,562 new jobs between 2005 and 2012.

Boeing is a fantastic company and these will be great jobs, but this hurry-up exercise to cater to one company underscores a bigger problem facing our state.

Last summer, Missouri's leading pro-business advocacy groups, including my association, the National Federation of Independent Businesses, fought tirelessly for legislation which would have provided the first tax reduction Missourians have seen in nearly 100 years and made Missouri more competitive with other states throughout the country.

This legislative plan would have leveled the playing field for all—not just a chosen few—by reducing individual and corporate income taxes over a 10-year period and phasing-in a 50 percent income tax reduction for small businesses over five years.

The hypocrisy of incenting one company should not be lost on Missouri individuals and small businesses that were denied a tax break due to half-truths and misinformation.

When our legislators return to Jefferson City in January, we hope legislative leaders will pay more attention to small businesses—the largest, most innovative, and fastest growing job creators in our state—and support them by leveling the playing field and reducing the tax burden for every Missouri taxpayer.

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