



## PRESS RELEASE

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**COLUMBUS** – The Buckeye Institute for Public Policy Solutions today launched its redesigned website. The new website brings unprecedented levels of transparency to Ohio government, significantly increases the amount of available data for users, and creates a one-stop shop for news from across Ohio. With over 2 million records and 25 million pieces of data, Ohioans will have immediate access to several innovative tools that puts vital information at their fingertips.

With many school levy requests on the May ballot, the information on teacher pay and school performance will allow taxpayers to easily find the information they need to make informed decisions. As elected officials aim to close the projected \$8 billion budget deficit next year, Ohioans can look to see how the costs of state and local workers contribute to the deficit.

The tools include:

- The **Better Days Ohio Project** provides users with over 60 pieces of data on every Ohio county so Ohioans can see how their counties are doing;
- The searchable data tool allows users to search **State Government Salaries** from 2003 to 2009 and **K-12 Public School Teacher Salaries** from 2004 to 2009;
- The **Pension Calculator** lets users input salary data to see how much a state worker will receive in his yearly pension, the estimated lifetime cost of the pension, the estimated most recent 3-year employer contribution to his pension, and his yearly health care and sick leave costs. To provide context, the calculator includes the maximum yearly payment someone can receive from the Social Security program at age 65;
- The **Pension Calculator** for teachers has the same outputs, except the health care/sick leave element has been replaced with one that shows how much the teacher would make if she worked a 2,080-year instead of the 1,350 year she currently works;
- The **School Data** on all K-12 public schools in Ohio shows basic information when queried and allows the user to click on a particular school for grade level scores, average teacher pay, graduation rates, Annual Yearly Performance scores, and other key data;
- The **Lobbyist** database not only allows users to see the activities of state

- lobbyist, but also lets users click on specific names that will automatically bring up all of that lobbyist's campaign contributions from most recent to oldest;
- [OhioVotes.org](http://OhioVotes.org) has been added to the mix, which allows users to see what bills and amendments have been offered at the Statehouse, how Members have voted, and allows users with one click to see all of the campaign contributions to each Member from most recent to oldest; and
  - The website has a component that pulls news and opinion pieces from across Ohio, with refreshes coming throughout the day and, for those who like using new media, a blog will pull all Buckeye Institute staffs' Twitter feeds so users can keep abreast of items and articles we find interesting.

Buckeye Institute President Matt A. Mayer stated, "We created a place where Ohioans can get the data they need to hold politicians accountable and see the true cost of government. Users will be shocked by what they discover."

The website – [www.buckeyeinstitute.org](http://www.buckeyeinstitute.org) – goes live at 1:00 PM on today. All tools on the website are available for free to any individual who visits it.

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