



Is Corporate Immunity Really Necessary to Keep Businesses in OK?

By Hugh M. Robert

Many of the Tort Reform Bills that have been presented over the past two sessions have provided immunity for corporate interest by taking away rights of Oklahoma Citizens. One justification being used by proponents of the bills is that businesses are not coming to Oklahoma because of our lack of limitations on liability for corporations. They are also claiming that businesses are leaving the state because of the legal climate in Oklahoma. However, they have failed to name one single business that has not come to Oklahoma or left the state for this reason.

- *Forbes* magazine listed Tulsa in the top ten and Oklahoma City in the top fifty for “Best Cities For Job Growth.”
- In 2010, the Milken Institute ranked Tulsa (38th) and Oklahoma City (21st) among the Top 200 Best Performing Large Cities and Lawton (10th) for Best Performing Small Cities for creating and sustaining jobs and economic growth.
- The *Dow Jones Market Watch* named Oklahoma City 19th and the Tulsa metro area the 27th "Best City for Business" for 2010. The list was compiled after ranking the nation's 50 biggest cities by number of started, grown, and retained businesses and after interviewing business leaders from each of the cities.
- The nonpartisan Tax Foundation ranks Oklahoma's business tax climate No. 18 and among the 50 states based on 2009 tax rates. The Tax Foundation also ranks Oklahoma with the 7th best Corporate Income Tax Index.
- RelocateAmerica identified Tulsa and Norman in its top 100 places to live in 2010. RelocateAmerica identifies the top places to live based on its evaluation of communities poised for recovery and future growth. Its editorial team discovered communities with strong local leadership, employment opportunities, thriving community commitment, improving real estate markets, growing green initiatives, plentiful recreational options and an overall high quality of life.
- The Oklahoma Department of Commerce boasts that “From *Forbes* to *Fortune* to *RelocateAmerica*, almost every leading business magazine consistently ranks Oklahoma among the most recession proof, affordable, livable, and pro-business states in the country. Entrepreneurs and established companies alike recognize Oklahoma as the best place to launch and thrive.”
 - In 2010, there were 35 new companies which located to Oklahoma, an increase from 2009 of 118%.

Facts about the current economic condition in Oklahoma (pg. 2)

- In 2010, 54 companies announced they would expand their businesses in Oklahoma, providing over 5,600 new jobs.
- Major job announcements over the year were made by Baker Hughes, Claremore; The Boeing Company, Midwest City, Enerflow Industries, Broken Arrow; Affiliated Computer Services, Oklahoma City; US Cellular, Tulsa; and Diagnostic Laboratory of OK, Oklahoma City.
- According to Business Facilities Magazine 2010 Rankings Report, Oklahoma is ranked #2 for Quality of Life, #4 for Employment Leaders, #5 in Cost of Labor, and #7 in Biofuels Manufacturing Research.
- According to CNBC, it has ranked Oklahoma in its top 10 in several categories including: #1 Cost of Living, # 3 for Cost of Doing Business (2009 ranking was 6th), and #6 for the Overall Economy.
- Each year since 2000, Oklahoma has added several thousand net migrants from California, making the Golden State the primary pipeline for new Sooners; the flow is a big part of the reason that Oklahoma ranked eighth nationally in net migration last year. **In the past two decades, Oklahoma has added about 600 new companies or divisions**, including part of Boeing, which last month moved 550 jobs from Long Beach, Calif., to Oklahoma City. Oklahoma gave companies 5 percent cash back on payrolls for creating new jobs. It was the only state to offer a “cash in hand” policy, rebating money without telling CEOs how to spend it. The result has been 400,000 new jobs since 1993. And now state officials want to use the same trick to add more knowledge-based jobs. Last fall they doubled the payroll benefit for companies offering average annual salaries of at least \$94,000, three times the state average. September 11, 2010 Newsweek.
- Oklahoma is ranked 15th of pro-business states in the country, according to the 2010 Pollina Corporate Real Estate, Inc. study. The group conducted the most comprehensive study of its type to identify state governments that are most effective in job retention versus global competition. They characterized Oklahoma as “a state that understands international competition and is willing to take the necessary steps to be globally competitive. In the west, Oklahoma is certainly a state that companies should be looking at.”
- *Expansion Management Magazine* in 2007 ranked Tulsa and Oklahoma City as being in the top 50 hottest cities for business relocation and expansion. They ranked Oklahoma as 13th out of all 50 states to a favorable place to relocate your business. All 331 of America's Metropolitan Statistical Areas were reviewed by a panel of 80 site location consultants in determining the rankings.