After a relay of fierce legislative brawls over policies intensely opposed by Black lawmakers, Ohio Governor John Kasich is considering a proposal that might please them for a change.

By IKE MGBATOGU

Contributing Writer

COLUMBUS – After a relay of fierce legislative brawls over policies intensely opposed by Black lawmakers, Ohio Governor John Kasich is considering a proposal that might please them for a change.

Last week, the governor announced that he is considering the possibility of increasing the share of state’s contracts for work reserved for minority firms.

He has already instructed his agency directors to review their respective operations and “report back to him” on whether to raise the current ‘15 percent set-aside’ for minority businesses.

Kasich is particularly looking to shore up minority businesses located in economically distressed communities through increase contracts after conceding that “Ohio has not been aggressive enough at promoting minority business growth.”

The governor said encouraging business development in minority communities is a win-win proposal that would benefit not just those communities but the entire state economy.

Not just that, Kasich also noted that successful Black entrepreneurs serve as positive role models for African American children.

The governor’s announcement comes just weeks after Noel Williams, president of the Columbus Chapter of the NAACP, expressed satisfaction that a local Black firm, Smoot Construction Company, was hired to manage the construction of the Hollywood Casino Columbus, a project of about $400 million.

Promoting minority firms is William’s No. 1 priority.

“It’s about jobs,” she said, saying her chief priority as head of the NAACP is “economic diversity.” She called it the “third prong of the Civil Rights Movement” that has not been achieved yet.

She said minorities have made remarkable strides on the ‘political’ prong considering the burgeoning number of minority officials occupying influential political offices around the country. That achievement was capped off two years ago with the historic election of Barack Obama as the nation’s first Black president.

There’s also the ‘social’ prong, where Williams said minorities have also made commendable strides. At least, we can “eat or live anywhere we want.”

Mgbatogu is a freelance writer and editor of Onumba.com based in Columbus. He can be

reached by email at @yahoo.com

Onumbamedia