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By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

Ohio Governor John Kasich recently came to Clevelandto sit down with the Call & Post and to greet a host of community leaders and preachers. The meeting took place at the ClevelandClinicGlickman Institute Conference Center and those in attendance were invited by Gov. Kasich and George Forbes.

While sitting with the Call & Post editorial board, the question was asked if he would consider releasing the Rainy Day Fund.

Gov. Kasich rose up and in a loud voice “don’t you dare touch my fund.” The Gov. has been under fire from the Cleveland Teachers union about these funds.

It was an opportunity to share with the group some of the things he was excited about, like sentencing reform, collateral sanctions and the Jackson Education Plan. and a forum for them to share any thoughts and ideas they have for the governor.

Last year the Republican Governor signed a sentencing reform bill that will allow some felons to skip prison and others to get out early.

When he mentioned that the room applauded and made a lot of noise thanking him for that major overhaul to the prison system. Under the law, judges will have the discretion to send non-violent fourth and fifth-degree felons to community-based halfway-house facilities instead of prison. It increases the earned credit system so that inmates can more quickly shave days off of their sentences. And it allows some felons who have already served 80 percent of their time to be immediately released.

The law will require more rehabilitation services rather than prison for some. But it is not just about helping felons. It also will help the state's wallet by lowering the prison population currently over 50,000 in facilities designed to hold 38,000.Ohiomay save $46 million by 2014.

“I don't want anyone to think we've lost discipline,” Kasich said. “You do bad and we are locking you up. But for someone that wants to do better, we're giving you a chance.” The Gov. also took time to shake hands with the Rev. E. T. Caviness who had taken 4 buses to Columbus in protest of Kasich not hiring any Blacks to his cabinet.

Gov. Kasich clearly offered an apology for not being more intone to the needs of the Black community. It was noted that various cabinet positions had been offered to Blacks ,but had been turned down.

Gov. Kasich has supported Cleveland Mayor Jackson and his Education reform plan since the inception. Cleveland teacher Meryl Johnson, who teaches at John F. Kennedy, talked about her students and how she is trying to get them involved with history and spoke of Jesse Owens who was one of Cleveland's track stars and Olympic goldmedalist (1936). Gov. Kasich smiled and said "I like Jesse, I even wrote about him."

June Taylor was mentioned because she wrote a letter to the Governor. asking about a position and he responded by putting her on another commission. Tayloris the Gaming Commission's vice chair.

Franklin County's Auditor Clarence E. Mingo II was in attendance at the meeting and shared with everyone that he was one of the Black's approached for a cabinet position by Gov. Kasich. "A lot of Black had to turn down the offers for jobs from the Governor because we already had great jobs," Mingo said.

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Last FridayGov. Kasich, who just signed thetexting-while-driving ban into law on June 1, is a very outspoken person who shoots straight from the hip.

Surrounded by family members of those killed by drivers distracted by cell phones, many of whom pressed lawmakers into action, Gov. Kasich signed a bill making Ohiothe 39th state to ban texting while driving. The new law, which takes effect in 90 days, also bans drivers under the age of 18 from using any electronic device, whether to text, make a call or do anything else.