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Ducey plans to eliminate more business regulations, agencies

By Howard Fischer Capitol Media Services

CHANDLER — Gov. Doug Ducey says he's preparing a list of state regulations and state agencies he wants to kill.

Speaking Tuesday at a conference of small business advocates, Ducey cited legislation he championed since taking office in early 2015 to eliminate restrictions, and his executive orders freezing new rules. He said more are on the way when lawmakers convene in January.

"We want to shrink the 220 boards and commissions that exist and are standing in the way of job creation," the Republican governor said, calling for accountability from agencies "that want to justify their existence just by creation of more taxes or spending in regulation."

The governor was not ready, however, to provide specifics.

"I'm not going to give you a preview of the State of the State (speech) in September," he said when questioned after his address. He insisted nothing is off limits, however.

"We're going to look at any regulation that gets in the way of job creation that isn't beneficial, doesn't help the state protect the citizen or protect the consumer," Ducey said.

The promise of more deregulation comes on the heels of the Legislature scrapping require-

ments for some professions to be licensed. Ducey cited in particular the elimination of state oversight of vegetable packers and yoga instructors. "We want freedom for our yoga instructors," he quipped.

In response to a question from the audience, Ducey acknowledged that some U.S. firms have moved their manufacturing operations offshore. But the governor, questioned afterwards, was not jumping on the proposal by GOP presidential hopeful Donald Trump at Monday's debate to put a tax on goods imported from those countries.

"I believe in free trade," Ducey said.

He did say it might be appropriate to discuss what is free, and fair, trade. But Ducey said that's not really the answer to disappearing manufacturing jobs.

"We're doing a lot of things at the federal level where you're actually pushing a company out," Ducey said. "... Are there things we can do at the state level and at the federal level, like getting rid of regulations, like lowering taxes, like allowing people to bring their dollars back into this country at a reasonable tax rate?"

As to companies being able to pay their workers much less elsewhere, Ducey said, "Well, we always want to have our workers paid well here with ever-increas-



Governor Doug Ducey

ing wages."

While the cost of labor may be "the most important part" of a firm's decision to move offshore, Ducey said taxes and regulations can weigh in the computation. "And that's something that governors and governments can deal with," he said.

In speaking to the Job Creators Network, Ducey also touted the fact that Arizona has recovered all the jobs it lost in the recession.

But that recovery has not been across the board. The most recent figures from the state Office of Economic Opportunity put manufacturing employment at 159,100. That's just 11,000 more than when the sector hit bottom in 2010 — and 29,000 fewer than the pre-recession peak of 188,200 in April 2006.

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