

# Rio Grande

## GUARDIAN

### International News Service

#### **SERAFY: INCENTIVIZING EMPLOYERS TO CHOOSE TEXAS**

By **Nick Serafy**

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As the former president of the Texas Economic Development Corporation in the mid-2000s, I can tell you that the “Texas Miracle” didn’t just happen overnight and when our success began to compound, businesses were not moving here because international company boards and out-of-state CEOs agreed with us that Texas is the best state in the Union.

No, companies moved to the Lone Star State because the research from their site selection team on Texas showed that we provide economic incentives and temporary tax abatements in addition to having a strong and skilled workforce, no income tax, low regulatory burden, and – of course – for generally being the best state in the Union.

During the 87th Session, the Legislature decided to sunset our economic incentives package – the one that helped create the “Texas Miracle” – and as a result, the Comptroller saw applications explode for future projects. More applications were processed last year than in the previous three years combined. Since the decision was made, Texas has lost out on an expansion by Intel to Ohio and by Micron who chose New York. Governor Rick Perry used to run ads in New York, successfully attracting businesses to Texas and we lost one of the state’s most heralded to New York?

Times sure have changed, and in this post-COVID world where supply chain hiccups anywhere on the globe can lead to bare shelves here at home, or a deep freeze can trip the breaker on our electricity grid, Texas has an opportunity to build out an economic development package which better delivers for all Texans. The Texas Jobs and Securities Act by Corpus Christi Representative Todd Hunter is such a package, and Governor Greg Abbott as well as Speaker Dade Phelan agree that an economic incentives package must be a priority of the 88th Legislative Session.

Also in agreement, an overwhelming majority of voters. Some 70% support continuing temporary property tax discounts for businesses relocating to Texas according to research posted by the Texas Association of Business. In that same survey even more Texas voters – 84% – believed that we have become too reliant on other nations for essentials.

It is clear to me that Texas is the best state in the Union

with world class research institutions, community colleges, and schools training some of the hardest working and culturally diverse people on the planet. With no income tax, a relatively low cost of living, low-impact regulatory environment, and great climate, more than a thousand people a day choose Texas as the place to pursue happiness and create their American Dream.

Other states know this and have adjusted their economic incentive offerings accordingly – like Ohio and New York – and, as a result, we have lost out on some major projects and thousands of high-quality jobs. Without an incentives package like the one outlined in the Texas Jobs and Security Act, getting these businesses to sign on with Texas is difficult and gives 49 other states a leg up.

We know employers around the world want to be here, we just have to show business leaders that Texas values their investment.

*Editor’s Note: The above guest column was penned by **Nick Serafy**, CEO of Proficiency Testing Service in Brownsville and chairman of the **Texas Business Leadership Council’s Economic Development Taskforce**. Appointed by Governor Rick Perry, **Serafy** served as the president of TexasOne, a public-private partnership to promote Texas as a premier business location, from 2005 to 2010. The above column appears in *The Rio Grande Guardian International News Service* with the permission of the author.*