



April 10, 2007

Taxpayers Support Creating Grant and Contract Database in Washington

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the thousands of National Taxpayers Union and Council for Citizens Against Government Waste members in Washington, we ask you to support HB 2342, introduced by Representatives Mark Miloscia and Dan Kristiansen. If signed into law, this legislation would create a public website that lists information about state government spending.

Providing an easy-to-use tool like the searchable website proposed by HB 2342 would better enable state residents to make sense of how their tax dollars are being parceled out. Timely availability of this information is crucial for helping taxpayers make their own evaluations of Olympia's spending priorities. This legislation deserves your support.

As you may know, last year President Bush signed S. 2590, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act, into law. Originally sponsored by Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK) and Barack Obama (D-IL), the bipartisan legislation directs the U.S. Office of Management and Budget to create a searchable online database that the general public can use to track the flow of hundreds of billions of dollars in federal grant and contract expenditures.

Washington residents deserve this kind of openness from Olympia as well. Creating a similar website on the state level would entail little cost, but it would greatly increase transparency in the distribution of precious tax dollars and help hold all elected officials accountable for state spending. While more than a dozen other states have limited versions of disclosure websites for grants and/or contracts, no state to date has created the kind of cohesive, comprehensive database envisioned in the federal legislation. By acting now, Washington has the opportunity to lead the nation in making government spending data more easily accessible to the public.

As we found at the federal level, support for this legislation will likely transcend party lines. Advocates from across the opinion spectrum share the common notion that transparency of and public access to government information is vital to the health of our political system.

We sincerely hope you decide to help pass HB 2342 into law. If we can be of any assistance in this effort, please do not hesitate to call upon us.

Sincerely,

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