



March 7, 2008

**An Open Letter to the Delaware State Senate:
Taxpayers Support Spending Transparency Web Site (SB 184)**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the more than 1,000 Delaware members of the National Taxpayers Union, we **urge you to pass Senate Bill 184, which creates an expansive online database containing expenditure information.**

SB 184 would create a Web site with detailed information on annual state agency expenditures, contract expenditures, funding recipients, and funding sources. In addition, the proposed database would provide valuable details on performance outcomes for programs funded by citizens. Timely access to this information is crucial for helping taxpayers make their own evaluations of Dover's spending decisions and priorities.

While SB 184 would shed some much-needed light on government expenditures, it is important that elected officials preserve the privacy of their citizens. Accordingly, we recommend that information pertaining to tax exemptions and credits be withheld from the database. **Nonetheless, it is imperative that you move forward with this legislation to enable Delaware's residents to make sense of how their tax dollars are parceled out.**

Many states (such as Hawaii, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas) have recently approved or implemented spending Web sites for their own residents' use. These highly commendable efforts are in large part a state response to the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act that was signed into law in 2006. The resulting Web site was launched in December 2007, and taxpayers can now visit www.USASpending.gov to track outlays for federal grants and contracts.

Support for spending disclosure has transcended party lines at both the federal and state levels – and for good reason. Policy makers on both sides of the aisle understand the importance of accountability in government. It is vital that the veil of secrecy be lifted and ordinary citizens be given the ability to scrutinize government expenditures. This access will help promote an informed conversation over public policies and reduce waste and fraud.

Taxpayers deserve to know how their money is spent. We encourage you to support SB 184 and bring transparency to Delaware's government.

Sincerely,

Kristina Rasmussen
Director of Government Affairs