



March 7, 2008

**An Open Letter to the Ohio House of Representatives:
Taxpayers Support Spending Transparency Web Site (HB 420)**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the nearly 13,600 Ohio members of the National Taxpayers Union, **we urge you to pass House Bill 420, which creates an expansive online database containing expenditure information.**

HB 420 would require construction of a Web site providing details on government grants, contracts, subcontracts, and loan expenditures. In addition, the proposed database would deliver valuable information on funds appropriated by the General Assembly for special projects or programs. Timely access to this information is crucial for helping taxpayers make their own evaluations of Columbus's spending decisions and priorities.

While Ohio already benefits from the State of Ohio Procurement Web site, which displays information on supplies and service contracts, more is needed. We believe state leaders should go further in connecting all aspects of the budgeting process through a single, comprehensive online database. **HB 420 would create such a Web site and enable Ohio'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 HB 420 and bring transparency to Ohio's government.

Sincerely,

Kristina Rasmussen
Director of Government Affairs