



March 5, 2009

## **An Open Letter to Iowa Legislators: Taxpayers Support Taxpayer Transparency Act/Taxation Disclosure Act (SF 102)**

Dear Legislator,

On behalf of the more than 4,000 Iowa members of the National Taxpayers Union, I urge you to bring greater transparency and accountability to Iowa's budgetary process by passing recently introduced legislation to create a searchable online database of all government expenditures.

Senate File 102 would put information on state revenues, expenditures, and appropriations on a searchable Web site, thereby providing a new level of clarity to Iowa's fiscal picture. It would also create a searchable online database of rates for all taxing districts in the state. This information is crucial for taxpayers to evaluate the cost of government and how their hard-earned dollars are being spent. It is Iowa's first step down the road toward open, transparent, and accountable state government.

With many states already embracing the pro-transparency movement, it is time for Iowa to do the same. Missouri, Texas, Kansas, South Carolina, Nevada, Nebraska, and Alaska are among the states to have made their expenditures publicly accessible online. These states followed in the footsteps of the federal government, which created USASpending.gov with the 2006 passage of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. The legislation's original sponsors were Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK) and then-Sen. Barack Obama (D-Illinois), a powerful demonstration that this is an issue with widespread support on both sides of the political aisle.

SF 102's positive facets for the taxpayer are obvious. However, Iowa government officials will benefit from a spending database as well. By shining light on the state's books, it will be easier for public entities to pinpoint and eliminate waste in their budgets, allowing them to conduct operations more efficiently and direct funding to where it is most useful. Texas Comptroller Susan Combs identified \$8.6 million in cost savings as a direct result of the transparency site there.

This bill's passage will be a bipartisan triumph for Iowa's taxpayers, who deserve to see where their money goes and how tax burdens differ across the state. It is time to have an open and honest conversation about the Iowa's taxing and spending priorities. That cannot be achieved without transparency. Please work and vote for SF 102.

Sincerely,

Joshua Culling

State Government Affairs Manager

National Taxpayers Union