



Iowans for Tax Relief Stands with Legislators to Provide Government Transparency

This week Iowans for Tax Relief took part in a press conference at the Iowa Statehouse with five Iowa lawmakers introducing the Iowa Taxpayer Transparency Act of 2009. This legislation would create a single website database for taxpayers to search state expenditures and all tax rates across the state.

In 2006, when President Obama was in the United States Senate, he introduced legislation which created a website providing access to information about entities who are awarded federal grants, federal loans, federal contracts and other forms of federal assistance.

The transparency legislation in the federal government was approved by Congress and signed by President Bush. The result of the federal legislation is www.USAspending.gov where Americans can see how their tax dollars are spent. In his inaugural address, President Obama further stated the importance of transparency in government.

Government transparency legislation is not only a federal issue. The momentum for opening up government spending to the taxpayers has spread to state legislatures. Over the past few years, nine states have created state government transparency websites to open government to the citizens.

Over nine billion dollars is collected by Iowa state and local governments annually. Knowing how and where tax dollars are spent provides Iowans with the information they deserve to know.

Iowans for Tax Relief enthusiastically **SUPPORTS** the Iowa Taxpayer Transparency Act of 2009. We believe all Iowans should be able to easily access the details on how we are taxed and how our money is spent.

The Iowa Taxpayer Transparency Act of 2009 would create a publicly available website detailing where tax dollars are expended, the purposes for which tax dollars are expended, and the results achieved for all taxpayer investments in state government.

Currently, much of this information is collected and tracked by different state agencies, the Iowa Taxpayer Transparency Act of 2009 would set up a one-stop shop for Iowans to get clear answers to their state spending questions.

Estimated costs of transparency programs vary from state to state. Oklahoma, with a population somewhat larger than Iowa, in a fiscal impact statement estimated the cost for the transparency website around \$40,000. However, it has since been reported the software for the Oklahoma transparency program was purchased for \$8,000 and the website was built and loaded by reallocating staff at no extra cost.

Iowans for Tax Relief is excited to support the goal of President Obama for a truly transparent government. We thank bill sponsors:

- Representative Kraig Paulsen (R-Hiawatha)
- Representative Linda Upmeyer (R-Garner)
- Representative Doug Struyk (R-Council Bluffs)
- Representative Erik Helland (R-Grimes)
- Senator Paul McKinley (R-Chariton)
- Senator Kim Reynolds (R-Osceola)
- Senator Shawn Hamerlinck (R-Davenport)

It was encouraging in the Statehouse Democratic Leaders' weekly press conference on January 22; Senator Mike Gronstal (D-Council Bluffs) and Representative Pat Murphy (D-Dubuque) spoke optimistically about the Iowa Taxpayer Transparency Act of 2009.

We understand many additional legislators are interested in signing on as co-sponsors of this legislation. Look in future editions of *The Watchdog* for sponsorship updates.

Iowans for Tax Relief applauds the legislation introduced in the Iowa House and Iowa Senate this week.

KCCI Des Moines' News Channel 8 is conducting an online poll to see if Iowans support a website to track government spending. To vote on the poll, visit:

<http://www.kcci.com/news/18532849/detail.html>

In the coming weeks we will be adding new features to our website, www.taxrelief.org, so please check back often.

Did you get this email forwarded to you? Sign up for free at www.taxrelief.org/join.

The Watchdog is a weekly update of issues which are being considered by the Iowa Legislature. It is a service to members of Iowans for Tax Relief. Permission is granted to forward this to any interested individuals.

Comments or questions concerning The Watchdog should be directed to:
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