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CONTACT: John Kartch
Ellen Dargie
202-785-0266

Spending Transparency Train Arrives in Hamilton County

Board of Commissioners unanimously adopts fiscal transparency measure

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Americans for Tax Reform applauds the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners for unanimously passing the Government Accountability in Spending Program (GASP) on June 25, 2008. The resolution adopted today was introduced by County Commissioner Pat DeWine and requires the creation of a searchable online database which taxpayers could use to follow all Hamilton County spending.

GASP will make county payments, ranging from purchase orders, to electronic fund transfers, grants, leaseholds, contracts, and subcontracts subject to public scrutiny. The online database will offer the name and primary location of the recipients of county funds, the amount of funds expended, the type of transaction, the funding or expending agency, the budget program source, and a descriptive purpose of the funding action or expenditure.

“I congratulate Hamilton County’s decision to pass the GASP program,” said Grover Norquist, President of Americans for Tax Reform. “Hamilton County’s leadership at the local level is great news for taxpayers, who ultimately foot the bill for all government expenditures at the federal, state and local levels. They deserve to track and scrutinize where each dollar is being spent.”

County commissioners went even further than the initial proposal envisioned, adding requirements that contract language be accessible, that there be a feedback option and a specific person in the Budget Office designated to respond to citizen concerns, and that the system be designed as an open application programming interface, allowing citizens to search spending data in their own programs.

“Hamilton County’s cutting edge initiative to empower taxpayers to become true fiscal watch dogs sets a new standard for local government transparency.” continued Norquist. “The spending transparency train is gaining steam at the local level, and taxpayers should call on their local governments to make sure this train makes a stop in their area.”