



AMERICANS *for* TAX REFORM

Grover G. Norquist
President

April 23, 2008

Dear Committee Members,

I write to urge you to support HB 337 and HB 338, which would do much to bring greater transparency into Delaware's local government finance.

Disclosing checking activity and creating a searchable archive of all contracts entered into by school districts will give parents and all taxpayers a tool to hold their local governments accountable and to track how their tax dollars are spent. Taxpayers, who fund every expenditure made by government, deserve the most comprehensive level of spending transparency.

The maturing and expansion of the Internet makes it possible for you to improve constituents' ability to access information specifically in the area of government expenditures, and I would encourage you to seize this opportunity to shed a long-needed light on government finances.

This spending transparency effort is consistent with the Founding Fathers' notion of accountable government: It was Thomas Jefferson, who once said: *"We might hope to see the finances of the Union as clear and intelligible as a merchant's books, so that every member of Congress and every man of any mind in the Union should be able to comprehend them, to investigate abuses, and consequently to control them."*

In providing taxpayers with a means to search and track government expenditures, you will ultimately foster a better understanding of the ways in which government operates. Ultimately, passage of HB 337 and 338 will help reduce fraud, waste and abuse. Opacity in the way government spends tax dollars often leaves taxpayers frustrated, and can create the perception of possible abuse of the system.

More public scrutiny will help eliminate impropriety in dealing with taxpayer dollars – be it perceived or real impropriety. Taxpayers will be best served when all levels of government – federal, state and local - are required to disclose their expenditures in a clear and searchable public format.

By passing these bills in an effort to bring comprehensive spending transparency to the state, Delaware will join thirteen states that have passed legislation and/or enacted executive orders to this effect in the last two years, and will empower its taxpayers to hold their government accountable.

Onward,

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