



## AMERICANS *for* TAX REFORM

Grover G. Norquist  
*President*

July 1, 2008

Dear Member of the U.S. House of Representatives,

I write to urge you to consider sponsoring a change to the House Rules that would require the online posting of the quarterly statements of the disbursements for the operations of the House of Representatives on the public Internet site of the Office of the Clerk.

Earlier this year, a poll commissioned by the Association of Government Accountants and conducted by Harris Interactive found that while “the public overwhelmingly believes government has the obligation to report and explain how the government generates and spends its money, (...) government is not meeting expectations.” “Improved reporting” and “providing open disclosure of spending” were among the most frequent answers to the question on how government could improve.

Congress took a commendable first step to increase transparency and accountability in 2006 by passing the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act that required the creation of a single searchable online database for federal grants and contracts, and taxpayers appreciate access to this information through the Web site [www.USAspending.gov](http://www.USAspending.gov).

Successive legislation introduced this year, the Strengthening Transparency and Accountability in Federal Spending Act (S.3077) makes several important improvements to the 2006 law, but still does not require the full disclosure of all of the actual expenditure documents and accompanying documentation, nor does it capture congressional office outlays or agency disbursements like salary and travel expenditures. (For a detailed critique of the missing components of S. 3077 please refer to [www.atr.org](http://www.atr.org))

In requiring that the statements of disbursements for House offices be subject to taxpayer scrutiny by posting them on the Internet site of the Office of the Clerk, the House of Representatives could lead by example and take an important step towards restoring the notion of accountability in government finance that our Founding Fathers envisioned.

Note that it was Thomas Jefferson 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.*”

Taxpayers deserve the most comprehensive level of transparency and accountability in government spending. It was true in 1802, and it is all the more true today. **We hope that you will consider sponsoring this meaningful change of the House Rules.**

Onward,

Grover G. Norquist

1920 L Street NW

Suite 200

Washington, DC

20036

T: (202) 785-0266

F: (202) 785-0261

[www.atr.org](http://www.atr.org)