



AMERICANS *for* TAX REFORM

Grover G. Norquist
President

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Dear Kentucky State Legislator,

In light of the tax increase proposals that are currently being floated in Frankfort, I urge you to take a step back and reassess legislative priorities, which seem to be misguided.

Considering tax increases to address a state's overspending problem without having had a serious conversation with Kentuckians about how exactly their government spends their money is like putting the proverbial cart before the horse.

Before you even consider asking taxpayers to shell out more of their hard earned tax dollars, you should join several other states which have opened a dialogue with their constituents on this issue by creating single, searchable websites for state expenditures. These websites, passed by legislation or enacted by executive order, allow taxpayers to track their tax dollars at a click of the mouse and in doing so, to partake in political discourse.

In 2007, five states - Kansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Minnesota and Hawaii - passed legislation that mandates the creation of an online database detailing comprehensive state government expenditure information including, but not limited to, agency expenditures, grants and contracts. Several governors have issued executive orders mandating the creation of similar online databases. This year, at least 17 states have legislation to this effect pending, and several have already passed them.

The vehicle that will allow you to have this serious conversation in Kentucky has already been introduced. Rep. Jim DeCesare's HB 105, the Taxpayer Transparency Act of 2008, would require the creation of a single, searchable website detailing information about state treasury expenditures and transfers in excess of \$5,000. This would include, but not be limited to, grants and contracts.

Transparency is the prerequisite to accountable governing - the very notion this country was founded on. After all, isn't the consent of the governed, from which government is to derive its just powers, much more meaningful, if it is informed consent?

It is essential that taxpayers, who ultimately fund every single expenditure made by government, are part of this current conversation the results of which will affect their pocketbooks and livelihood. I urge you to make passage of HB 105 a priority. Attempting to solve the state's budget woes without having opened up the books first equates flying blindfolded.

Onward,

Grover G. Norquist