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Utah Taxpayers Only One Step Away From Greater Accountability

Legislature passes spending transparency legislation

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Only hours before the legislative adjournment, lawmakers passed an amended version of Bill SB 38 sponsored by Sen. Wayne Niederhauser (R-Sandy). Gov. John Huntsman, Jr. is expected to sign this bill as soon as it reaches his desk.

This bill requires the creation of a single, searchable website detailing information on state expenditures, including financial reports, financial audits, budgets and other financial documents that are used to allocate, appropriate, spend and account for the government funds. The to-be-created Utah Transparency Advisory board will have the goal to make sure that private records stay private.

“I commend lawmakers for coming together to pass this legislation”, said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. “Taxpayers, who ultimately foot the bill for every expenditure government makes, should be able to scrutinize where their money is going. This legislation is a huge step in the right direction.”

Efforts to increase transparency in spending are also being taken in at least 17 states which have bills pending requiring the creation of searchable websites for government expenditures this year. Similar budget transparency projects have been launched with great success in other states, giving individual citizens easy-to-use web sites that allow them the ability to learn how the government is spending their money.

“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,’” continued Norquist. “The Founding Fathers had the vision, and today, we have the technology to fully implement their vision. Utah taxpayers can look forward to greater accountability in government thanks to the passage of this bill.”

Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact John Kartch at (202) 785-0266 or by email at jkartch@atr.org.

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