



AMERICANS *for* TAX REFORM

Grover G. Norquist
President

May 1, 2008

Dear State Senator:

As the legislative session winds down, I write to share with you Americans for Tax Reform's position on the Florida legislature's latest efforts to increase transparency in government spending.

I had high hopes for Florida – long a leader on Open Government Issues – to pass the strongest spending transparency legislation yet: a bill that would require the state government and all localities to disclose all of their expenditures.

The senate passed a piece of legislation earlier this session that would provide a good step in the right direction in the form of SB392. While the disclosure threshold for expenditures is still set too high at \$5,000, the bill would be a good starting point. It would make Florida the first state to require government spending transparency not only for the state, but also for the local level, and I commend you for passing this bill.

Unfortunately, proposals touted as “budget transparency” legislation coming from the house, would merely require localities to post their budgets, and summary documents thereof online – not the actual expenditures. While one of the components of the senate bill (the requirement to post state expenditures online) was added to one of the proposals, the threshold for disclosure was raised to \$25,000. In stark contrast, South Carolina's disclosure threshold is \$100, and Alaska's threshold is \$1,000.

I would encourage you to pass no less than the transparency requirements included in SB 392. Settling for anything less under the name of “transparency in government spending” would not do this term justice. While it would be unfortunate to see this process derailed this year, it may be more prudent to start over next year, rather than shortchanging Florida's taxpayers. They not only deserve better, but also have come to expect more in light of Florida's previous leadership on Open Government issues.

Onward,

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