



AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

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Four Citizen Groups Launch Coalition and Website to Mobilize “Google-Government” Movement

Washington, DC- States should follow the federal lead and make user-friendly online databases of government spending accessible to the public: that’s the word from a diverse coalition of four citizen groups, which have set up an Internet-based clearinghouse on the state-based “Google-government” trend. The coalition consists of National Taxpayers Union (NTU), Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW), and Americans for Prosperity (AFP).

The one-stop website, www.ShowMetheSpending.org, will serve as a grassroots resource to persuade state leaders to emulate federal legislation sponsored by Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK) and Barack Obama (D-IL). Signed by President Bush last year, that law mandates the creation of a searchable online source that citizens can use to track hundreds of billions of dollars in federal grants and contracts.

“The movement to bring transparency to government spending has the potential of bringing immense cost savings for taxpayers simply because lawmakers will think twice about certain expenditures,” said ATR President Grover Norquist. **“Taxpayers will be best served when all levels of government are required to disclose their expenditures in a clear, searchable format – and can be held accountable.”**

“No state has fully embraced the technology that could make government spending data accessible to the people who pay the bill for it all,” NTU Senior Government Affairs Manager Kristina Rasmussen noted. “Our goal is to ensure that any taxpayer with a computer can become a watchdog over state funds.”

“This is the first step in citizens lifting the veil of secrecy of government spending,” CCAGW Vice President David Williams said. “Every state that passes this legislation will show that government is still for the people and by the people.”

Coalition members are confident that www.ShowMetheSpending.org will help Americans “better understand the spending that takes place closer to home,” as its online introduction notes. The site features a constantly updated state-by-state legislative status center, model legislation for officials, research on the benefits of state spending disclosure, and a grassroots action center that gives citizens the ability to petition state legislators on the issue.

“Last year, taxpayers finally gained the ability to ‘Google’ their federal tax dollars, and there’s no reason in the world why they shouldn’t have the same ability to ‘Google’ their state tax dollars,” said **AFP President Tim Phillips**. “The more information taxpayers have about how lawmakers are spending their money, the more likely it is that tax dollars will be spent wisely.”

ATR is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all federal, state and local tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact John Kartch at (202) 785-0266 or at jkartch@atr.org.

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