



NEWS

AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

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CONTACT: John Kartch

Sandra Fabry

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202-785-0266

Two Cheers for Fiscal Transparency in Texas

State House advances legislation mandating the creation of a comprehensive state expenditure database

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Taxpayers in Texas are one step closer to tracking how their state government spends their tax dollars. HB 3430, sponsored by a bipartisan group of legislators, would mandate the creation of a searchable database for state expenditures including grants and contracts. The legislation passed the house without a single vote in opposition. Taxpayers would be able to access, search, aggregate and download all relevant information free of charge. In addition, each state agency that maintains a generally accessible Internet site, shall include a link on the agency's Internet site to the database.

This effort is in line with a broader movement to bring transparency into government finances in Texas. Governor Rick Perry (R) had made spending transparency one of the core planks of his budget reform plan and posted his office's expenditures on his website. State Comptroller Susan Combs (R) has also made expenditure information for not only her own office, but numerous agencies available for public access on the Internet.

“The Governor and the Comptroller have taken the lead by example on this issue. The legislation which just passed the house would complement their efforts and bring Texas taxpayers a huge step closer to being able to truly hold their elected officials accountable.” said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. **“The house has voted to give them an important tool to understand where their hard-earned tax dollars go, and ultimately, passage of the bill will help combat fraud, waste and abuse.”**

In a number of states, similar measures to HB 3430 have been introduced. Most recently, Kansas became the first state this year to sign into law legislation mandating the creation of a comprehensive government expenditure database. Other states are likely to follow soon. For more information on state efforts to bring transparency into government finance, please visit www.atr.org.

“This is a common sense bill. As Governor Perry has pointed out, if the taxpayers are picking up the tab, they ought to be able to look at every item on the receipt. Texas lawmakers clearly understand this – which is shown by the broad bipartisan support the issue enjoys” continued Norquist. **“I am confident that the Texas senate will join the house in empowering taxpayers to track their hard-earned dollars at a mouse click.”**

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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