



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

By Katie Wedell | Springfield News-Sun

SPRINGFIELD — State Treasurer Josh Mandel is touring the state to drum up support for a proposed online database of state spending.

House Bill 175, which was passed by a bi-partisan majority in the Ohio House in June, would require the Treasurer's office to place the state checkbook online for public review.

Mandel's office is currently working to create the online database and hopes to have it up and running by early next year. But he said the legislation will ensure that the information remains accessible no matter who is serving as Treasurer.

"I'm doing this because I think the people of Ohio have a right to know how their tax money is being spent," Mandel said. "My vision is to create an army of citizen auditors, throughout Ohio, who can hold the politicians accountable for state spending."

All the information in the database will come from the state's accounting system and it will not require additional work or reporting from state agencies.

The public would be able to see every check written by state government agencies from hotels and travel expenses to which contractors the state is doing business with.

The information is all currently public record, but the database will make it easily accessible in one place, Mandel said.

"You'd have to do a public records request of every single agency in state government," Mandel said of the current access to state spending information.

The bill does not request any money for the project, which Mandel said will utilize existing IT infrastructure and be paid out of the current Treasurer's office budget.

If this project is successful, Mandel said he'd like to go further and ask each city and county government as well as school districts to follow suit and post their checkbooks online.

State Reps. Ross McGregor and Bob Hackett voted in favor of the bill.

State Sen. Chris Widener said he supports the measure.

"I fully support transparency in the expenditure of taxpayer money, as proposed by our State Treasurer," Widener said via e-mail.

The bill, sponsored by state Rep. Mike Dovilla (R-Berea), was introduced in the Senate in June and is expected to be voted on



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this fall.

Mandel is encouraging Ohioans who support the measure to contact their state senators and urge them to vote for the bill.

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