



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

COLUMBUS – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel and Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund officials announced today a partnership with the Ohio Treasurer's office to place their spending online at OhioCheckbook.com. Last year, Treasurer Mandel launched OhioCheckbook.com, which sets a new national standard for government transparency and for the first time in Ohio history puts all state spending information on the internet. OhioCheckbook.com recently earned Ohio the number one ranking in the country for government transparency.

The Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund is the first statewide pension fund in Ohio to partner with OhioCheckbook.com. The Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund is also the first statewide pension fund in America to agree to post its checkbook level expenditures online.

"In a show of support for Treasurer Mandel's initiative, the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund Board of Trustees has authorized our staff to work with officials at the Treasurer's office to participate in the OhioCheckbook.com project," stated John J. Gallagher, Jr., Executive Director of the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund. "We believe participation in this project will enhance our already comprehensive financial transparency efforts and provide a tool for increased understanding of our system."

"I believe the taxpayers and retirees of Ohio have a right to know how their tax money is being spent and I applaud the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund for partnering with my office to post their finances on OhioCheckbook.com," said Treasurer Mandel. "My vision is to create an army of citizen watchdogs who are empowered to hold public officials accountable."

"Public-employee pension funds have a particular need to make their information easy to find and understand because of their obligations to thousands of retirees," said Dennis Hetzel, Executive Director of the Ohio Newspaper Association. "We applaud the decision to join the growing number of governmental bodies that are providing information to OhioCheckbook.com."

"The Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund is leading on transparency not just in Ohio, but nationally, as one of the first public funds to commit to post their checkbook spending online," said Catherine Turcer of Common Cause Ohio. "They deserve kudos from active police and firefighters, retirees and citizens alike for raising their hands to partner on OhioCheckbook.com."

"The Buckeye Institute applauds the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund for joining Treasurer Mandel in his drive for increasing public transparency," stated Greg Lawson of the Buckeye Institute. "Having long championed transparency and public pension reform, we think this is another significant public policy win."

On April 7th, Treasurer Mandel sent a letter to 18,062 local government and school officials representing 3,962 local governments throughout the state calling on them to place their checkbook level data on OhioCheckbook.com and extending an invitation to partner with his office at no cost to local governments. These local governments include cities, counties, townships, schools, library districts and other special districts.

30 EAST BROAD STREET · 9TH FLOOR · COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
PHONE: (614) 466-2160 · WWW.OHIOTREASURER.GOV · FAX: (614) 644-7313



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A large coalition of statewide and local government organizations have expressed support for OhioCheckbook.com and local government transparency, including:

- Ohio Municipal League
- Ohio Township Association
- Ohio Association of School Business Officials
- Buckeye Association of School Administrators
- County Commissioner Association of Ohio
- County Auditor Association of Ohio
- Ohio Newspaper Association
- Ohio Society of CPAs
- Buckeye Institute
- Common Cause Ohio

OhioCheckbook.com was launched on December 2, 2014, marking the first time in Ohio history when citizens could actually see every expenditure in state government. Since its launch, OhioCheckbook.com has received overwhelming support from newspapers and groups across the state and, as of September 28, 2015, there have been more than 343,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$473 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 130 million transactions. The website includes cutting-edge features such as:

- “Google-style” contextual search capabilities, to allow users to sort by keyword, department, category or vendor;
- Fully dynamic interactive charts to drill down on state spending;
- Functionality to compare state spending year-over-year or among agencies; and,
- Capability to share charts or checks with social media networks, and direct contact for agency fiscal offices.

In March, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG) released their annual “Following the Money 2015” report and Treasurer Mandel earned Ohio the number one transparency ranking in the country for providing online access to government spending data. Ohio was prominently featured in the report after climbing from 46th to 1st in spending transparency as a result of Treasurer Mandel’s release of OhioCheckbook.com. Due to the launch of OhioCheckbook.com, Ohio received a perfect score of 100 points this year – the highest score in the history of the U.S. PIRG transparency rankings.

The Treasurer’s office is partnering with OpenGov, a leading Silicon Valley government technology company, to provide residents of Ohio the ability to view and search local government expenditures in a user-friendly, digital format. “Ohio is setting the standard for financial transparency on an unprecedented scale. We are excited to partner with the Treasurer’s office to bring world-class technology to communities large and small across the state,” said Zachary Bookman, CEO of OpenGov.

For more information visit OhioCheckbook.com.

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