



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

By Tony Wolfe | Lima News

LIMA — State of Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel was at Rhodes State College on Friday morning for the Smart Money Choices conference, the third conference in a series of five that Mandel does annually around the state. Mandel discussed his job, then his new Open Ohio bill, before opening up to questions from the audience.

"I'm proud to be in Lima today at Rhodes State," Mandel said. "I appreciate all of the leadership I've been shown here in Lima and in Allen County. This is a county that really exudes hard work and strong family values. We're happy to be here today to talk about financial literacy and government transparency."

Mandel was here to talk to those present about Senate Bill 175, or the Open Ohio bill, which Mandel hopes will clear at least the Ohio House before summer recess.

The Open Ohio bill is a proposal that would allow taxpayers to track the state government's spending online, just as they would their own personal checkbook. The plan would require the treasurer to keep an accurate database on his website of every check that the government writes, something the public would have free access to.

"I believe in government transparency," Mandel said. "I believe that when you shine some sunlight on government spending, it will make government more efficient. And I believe the people of Ohio have a right to see how their tax money is being spent."

The idea has gained bipartisan support, which Mandel hopes will allow the proposal to pass smoothly. Ohio has recently gained low marks from the Ohio Public Interest Research Group compared to other states in the area of spending transparency.

"Citizens will be see it and ask questions," Mandel said. "They will be able to make suggestions, and most importantly, they will be able to hold politicians and bureaucrats accountable for how our tax money is being spent."

The Smart Money Choices workshop that Mandel participated in on Friday was free to the public, and had three sessions spanning three hours covering several different aspects of financial literacy at the family level. In addition to Smart Money, Mandel also conducts conferences for local fiscal officers called Center for Public Investment Management, which he also conducts regularly throughout the year.

"This kind of education is integral to the financial health of this country," Mandel said. "You have families in Ohio and throughout America that are wading through enormous debt and financial problems, and that causes other problems in the household. Financial stress causes emotional stress in families, and that's why these financial literacy efforts are so important."

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