



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

By Dustin Ensinger | Delaware Gazette

Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel is throwing his weight behind an effort to make state government more transparent and accountable.

Mandel is fully committed to ensuring that House Bill 175 — which would require his office to create a publicly-accessible database of all the state's expenditures — becomes law.

"What we're trying to do here is put the state's checkbook online," he said during a Wednesday stop in Delaware. "I'm doing it because I believe the people of Ohio have the right to know how their tax money is being spent."

The legislation passed the lower chamber on a bipartisan basis in an 86-8 vote, with both Rep. Margaret Ann Ruhl (D-Mount Vernon) and Rep. Andy Brenner (R-Powell) voting in favor of the measure.

The legislation was first introduced in 2013, and Mandel was surprised at the amount of time it took for it to pass the Ohio House.

"It's like baseball, motherhood and apple pie," he said. "I thought everyone would love it."

He said he believes some public officials are hesitant to release so much financial information to the public.

"I don't care what they want," he said. "I'm going to find a way to get this done."

However, that will require passage in the Ohio Senate and the signature of Gov. John Kasich.

Sen. Kris Jordan (R-Ostrander) could not be reached for comment.

Mandel believes by making all state expenditures available publicly online, it will greatly reduce waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer dollars.

"I'm a big believer in the concept that sunshine is the greatest disinfectant for government waste," he said. "When you shine the sunlight on government spending, it makes the politicians and bureaucrats think twice before wasting taxpayer money."

The legislation has the support of the Ohio Public Interest Research Group, the Buckeye Institute, the Ohio Newspaper Association and the Ohio Society of Certified Public Accountants.

The cost of the endeavor is unknown. But Mandel said his office would cover the cost of implementing and maintaining the database with a small portion of the more than \$5 million he has saved taxpayers over the past three years.

He also hopes to encourage local government to participate, although it would not be mandatory.



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"My vision here is to create an army of citizen auditors," he said.

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