



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

By Frank Lewis | Portsmouth Daily Times

We all wonder from time to time where our tax dollars go, and if Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel has a say in things, Ohioans will soon see an account of where every dollar spent by the state went for the last seven years.

Mandel was in Portsmouth Wednesday urging public support for House Bill 175.

"This is an initiative that I'm spearheading to put the state's checkbook on the internet," Mandel told the Daily Times. "The reason I'm doing this is I believe the people of Ohio have a right to know how their tax money is being spent and I think the best way to hold politicians and bureaucrats accountable is to empower taxpayers to be able to follow the money."

Mandel said he is a believer in the concept that "sunlight is the greatest disinfectant to government waste."

"I think the more sunlight we shine on government spending the smaller and more efficient the government will be," Mandel said. "My vision in doing this is to create an army of citizen auditors throughout Ohio and empower the people to hold the politicians accountable."

Mandel said the bill passed the House in June with bipartisan support, including the Ohio Newspaper Association.

"Not only will this be a great tool for taxpayers, but it will also be a great tool for investigative journalists," Mandel said.

HB 175, known as the "Open Ohio" bill would establish the Ohio State Government Expenditure Database to help show taxpayers exactly where their money is being spent, requiring the Treasurer's office to place the state's checkbook online.

The bill was originally introduced in May of 2013 and it didn't have overwhelming support when it came to voting on the issue.

"What I found out along the way was while most of the politicians appear publicly to be for it, privately a lot of them are trying to kill it," Mandel said. "I think a lot of these politicians and a lot of the bureaucrats deep in the bureaucracy in Columbus have something to hide."

Mandel said his reason for traveling the state to promote the bill is to get citizens to contact their state representatives and urge them to support the bill.