



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

State treasurer promoting H.B. 175
Bethany J. Royer | Troy Daily News

PIQUA — Ohio State Treasurer Josh Mandel is on a statewide informal tour to promote State House Bill 175, or Open Ohio, which would put the state checkbook online.

This would allow taxpayers to have access to billions of dollars in government spending via a searchable database available on the treasurer's website. The data would answer the who, what and where of the expenditure in question.

"I'm doing this because I believe the people of Ohio have a right to know how their tax money is being spent," Mandel said Monday afternoon in Piqua, citing the best way to make government more efficient is to be transparent so Ohioans can "see the money."

Mandel believes an online tool such as Open Ohio would empower Ohioans, hold politicians accountable and shed a little light on government spending.

"I believe in the concept that sunlight is the greatest disinfectant to government waste," Mandel said. "I believe when we shine sunlight on government spending it makes politicians and bureaucrats think twice before wasting taxpayer money or defraud the citizens."

H.B. 175 was introduced in May 2013, and passed the Ohio House of Representatives in June of this year with a vote of 86 to eight, according to Mandel. It will be debated in the Ohio Senate in the fall, thus the reason behind his visit so as to spread awareness of the bill, encourage citizens to write their state senators, and to in turn encourage its passage.

Should H.B. 175 pass, the treasurer hopes to have the information up and running by the beginning of next year, which is step one.

"Step two is to get the cities, counties and schools online," continued Mandel, saying if any of these entities were to fail to provide the information he would have to ask, "What do you have to hide? It's the people's money."

Mandel said those opposed to the bill wonder why Mandel just doesn't go ahead and post the information now as opposed to going through the hassle of making it a law.

For the state treasurer, it is a matter of keeping the information available — no matter what.

"When I'm done being state treasurer four years from now, I don't want the next person four years from now to take it all off the Internet after the people are accustomed to having access to it," Mandel said. "We want to put it into law that the people have a right to know how the money is being spent and its going to stay there on the Internet for them to see."

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