



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

By Scott Halasz | Xenia Daily Gazette

XENIA — Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel is trying to open the state's checkbook to whom he says are the owners — the public.

Through HB 175, the "Open Ohio" bill, Mandel would be able to establish the Ohio State Government Expenditure Database to show Ohioans exactly where their money is being spent. It passed the house 86-8 — Greene County representatives Rick Perales and Bob Hackett voted yes — and is heading to the Senate for consideration.

Mandel is on a media tour, visiting various publications trying to drum up enough support to make sure it passes the Senate before Dec. 31. If it doesn't it must be re-introduced in the House in 2015.

Mandel is hoping it passes quickly so he can begin to let Ohioans view the books.

"I'm working to put the state's checkbook online because I think the people of Ohio have a right to know how their tax money is being spent," Mandel said Wednesday during a stop at the Xenia Daily Gazette and Fairborn Daily Herald. "My vision is to create an army of citizen auditors throughout Ohio who are empowered to hold the politicians accountable for their state spendings."

Data would come from the state accounting system and include the amount of the expenditure, the date of the expenditure, the person to whom the expenditure was paid and the state entity that made or requested the expenditure.

If passed it would complete Mandel's three-pronged transparency plan he put in place when he became treasurer. He first created a searchable database with state and public-school employee salaries and then added a state property database.

The cost to implement would not be passed on to the taxpayers. Mandel said he is not requesting any additional funds.

Mandel hopes the open checkbook policy will trickle down to cities, counties and townships — at no cost to the local entities. He said his office will post the information and host the databases. All the entity has to do is send a file via email.

Greene County Commission President Bob Glaser welcomes the opportunity to be more transparent.

"Under the Sunshine Law it's open information anyway," he said. "There's no real secret to what we're doing. We're not trying to hide anything. I think it would be good for the public to see some of these expenditures."

In the long run, Mandel thinks the legislation will cut down on some public records requests, thus saving taxpayer money. He is also hoping the accountability will reduce government spending.

"It's going to make politicians and bureaucrats think twice before they waste taxpayer money and defraud the citizens," Mandel



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said.

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