

The Free State Foundation

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News Release

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“Accountability And Transparency Act” Introduced In Maryland Senate

*May Commends Sen. Mooney, Co-Sponsors for Promoting Searchable
Spending Website*

POTOMAC, MD – On March 5, 2007, Senator Alex Mooney (R-District 3) introduced Senate Bill 995, the “Maryland Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2007” in the Maryland Senate. The bill is identical to House Bill 1252 introduced in the House of Delegates by Delegate Warren Miller (R-District 9A). The bill would require Maryland to establish a “single, searchable website, accessible to the public at no cost,” that allows Maryland citizens to easily track state funding of grants, loans, awards, and other forms of financial assistance.

Randolph May, President of The Free State Foundation, lauded Senator Mooney and Delegate Miller for taking the lead in proposing legislation to bring more transparency and accountability to Maryland government: “In the age of the Internet, there is no reason why Maryland residents should not be able to readily track spending by their government by accessing one single state website that contains such spending information in easily searchable form. The proposed ‘Maryland Funding Accountability and Transparency Act’ is a ‘good government’ measure that should receive bipartisan support. After all, it’s the citizens’ tax dollars that the government is spending, and there is no reason why Maryland’s legislators should make citizens jump through hoops to find spending information that every citizen has a right to know.” Senate Bill 995 is cosponsored by Republican Senators Colburn, Jacobs, and Kittleman. HB 1252 has 11 co-sponsors: Republican Delegates Aumann, Bates, Beitzel, Frank, Jennings, J. King, Kipke, McConkey, McKee, O’Donnell, and Shank.

HB 1252 requires that the website include spending information that includes the amount of all state awards, the transaction type, the name of the agency making the award, and the budget program funding source. In a commentary entitled, [*Put Maryland Government Spending on the Web*](#), published in the Washington Examiner on January 22, 2007, Free State Foundation Research Associate Trevor Bothwell advocated the adoption of legislation along the very same lines as “Maryland Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2007”. In that commentary, Bothwell stated: “All politicians will not welcome this increased scrutiny. But if they want our money, they should at least welcome our oversight. Key to that oversight is putting in place a

user friendly, easily searchable, up-to-date database that allows Maryland taxpayers to readily track how the government is spending their money.”

May commended Senator Mooney for quickly introducing a companion bill in the Senate to match Delegate Miller’s bill, and called for prompt hearings on the measure. “The question is: Where are the General Assembly’s Democrats on this accountability question? If U.S. Senators Barack Obama and Tom Coburn, two Senators from different parties with very different political philosophies, one liberal and one conservative, can get together at the federal level to enact the legislation upon which the ‘Maryland Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2007’ is modeled, Maryland’s Democrats and Republicans ought to be able to join together to do the same for Maryland.”

The Free State Foundation is an independent non-profit Maryland-based think tank. Its purpose is to promote, through research and educational activities, understanding of free market, limited government, and rule of law principles.

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