

The Free State Foundation
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News Release
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Maryland Funding Accountability Act Introduced

FSF Advocated Easily Searchable Spending Website in Opinion Column

POTOMAC, MD – On February 22, 2007, Delegate Warren E. Miller (R-District 9A), joined by 11 other co-sponsors, including Minority Leader Anthony O'Donnell and Minority Whip Christopher Shank, introduced House Bill 1252, the “Maryland Funding and Accountability and Transparency Act of 2007.” 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, hailed the bill’s introduction, stating: “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. HB 1252 is basically 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.”

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 of HB 1252. In that commentary urging establishment of a state website with information like that required by HB 1252, 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 userfriendly, easily searchable, up-to-date database that allows Maryland taxpayers to readily track how the government is spending their money.”

May commended the sponsors of HB 1252 for introducing a bill consistent with the position advocated in Trevor Bothwell’s commentary, and he added that he hoped a companion bill would be introduced in the Senate soon, with hearings to follow promptly.

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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