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House District 9

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Budget Transparency Website Passes Oregon House New Bi-Partisan Effort Hopes to Give Taxpayers Better Information

(Salem) The new 'Open Books Oregon' Website received unanimous approval from the Oregon House of Representatives today. [House Bill 2500](#) is co-sponsored by a bi-partisan group of legislators including State Representatives Arnie Roblan, Jefferson Smith, Kim Thatcher, and Gene Whisnant.

The proposed new site is designed to be a single portal for taxpayers to find a wide range of information about state spending and revenue. "I believe this is a great starting place that we can build on over the next several sessions as we find resources," said [State Representative Arnie Roblan](#) (D-Coos Bay) on the House Floor this morning.

[State Representative Kim Thatcher](#) told her colleagues on the Floor that Oregon families use a checkbook to manage their money and the state should do the same. "I hear from folks all the time who will say it's hard to figure out...how the state is spending our tax dollars. And they want to know the real dollar figures."

"At the turn of the last century good government folks came together as political reformers in an era when governments were dominated by machine politics," noted [State Representative Jefferson Smith](#) (D-Portland). "They were dubbed 'goo-goos' by detractors" said Smith. "Today, just about the entire Oregon House got to be 'goo-goos.'"

"Now taxpayers will have a transparent website to go to; a searchable website to find how the money is coming in and going out," explained [State Representative Gene Whisnant](#) (R-Sunriver) in his Floor speech. Approximately two dozen other states have already established similar websites designed to be a single portal which will include a wide array of information.

This allows people to understand how we are spending our money and I believe showing people that clearly we are making good choices with their dollars. It also gives people the opportunity to voice their opinions about things we could do to save some money in the future," added Roblan. The Idaho House recently deadlocked 32-32 and was unable to pass similar legislation. "We are proud we were able to build bipartisan support for the bill, with leadership from both sides of the aisle," said Smith.

"It's great to see the Oregon House of Representatives join the ranks of legislative chambers around the country that are embracing transparency in government spending, and I want to congratulate the bill sponsors for their dedication to seeing this bill through," said Sandra Fabry, Government Affairs Manager [Center for Fiscal Accountability](#). "Hopefully, the Senate will soon join the House in passing this important bill so that Oregon taxpayers will be enabled to track their tax dollars at a mouse click. After all it's their money government is spending." Other organizations supporting HB 2500 including SEIU, Cascade Policy Institute, and OSPIRG.

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