



Senate Finance Committee

Senator Patrick M. Browne
Chairman

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BILL SUMMARY

SENATE BILL 1350, PN 1971 (SENATOR BROWNE)

Summary:

This legislation creates the Taxpayer Transparency Act, which will enable taxpayers to easily access the details on how the Commonwealth is spending their tax dollars and what performance results are achieved for those expenditures.

Specifically, Senate Bill 1350 directs the Secretary of the Budget, by January 1, 2009, to develop and make publicly available a single, searchable budget database-driven Internet website which shall contain the data for the 2008-09 budget which is required under the act. The secretary shall maintain the Internet website, which shall allow the public to individually search and aggregate, at no cost, information related to the following:

- 1) The name and principal location or residence of the entity and recipient of funds.
- 2) The amount of funds expended.
- 3) The funding source.
- 4) The budget line item from which the expenditure is made.
- 5) A description of the purpose for the expenditure, including all details on the type of expenditure.
- 6) The expected performance outcomes achieved for the funding action or expenditure.
- 7) The past performance outcomes achieved for the funding action or expenditure.
- 8) Any State audit report relating to the entity or recipient of funds or the budget program or agency.
- 9) Any other relevant information specified by the Secretary.

A recipient of funds is defined as any recipient of state funding other than an individual recipient of State welfare assistance. No single transaction less than \$25,000 is required to be posted.

Beginning July 1, 2009, the searchable budget-driven database-driven Internet website shall be updated for each fiscal year no later than 30 days following the close of the fiscal year. The secretary may update the searchable budget database-driven Internet website as new data becomes available.

Each agency shall provide to the secretary all data that is required to be included in the searchable budget database-driven Internet website no later than 30 days after the data becomes available to the agency.

Each agency shall create and maintain the data in an ASCII-delimited text file, spreadsheet file or other file as provided by regulation promulgated by the Treasury Department.

The secretary shall ensure that all data added to the searchable database-driven Internet website remains accessible to the public for a minimum of ten years.

The secretary shall not be considered in compliance with this act if the data for the searchable database-driven Internet website is not available in a searchable and aggregate manner or if the public is redirected to other government Internet websites, unless each of those sites has information from all agencies and each category of information required can be searched electronically by field in a single search.

Background:

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act was passed in 2006. This legislation created a searchable website to increase transparency and accountability in federal government spending. Since this law was enacted, five states have enacted similar legislation, four states have issued executive orders, and twelve states have legislation introduced that would create a similar website at the state level.

Effective Date:

This act shall take effect immediately.