

IOWA TRANSPARENCY NEWSLETTER



Where is the Sunshine?

by Jennifer L. Crull

So far, the month of June has brought Iowa nothing but rain. When I think about rain, I think about the cleansing aspects and the rainbow that comes when we finally see the sun after the rain. The sunshine after the rain is what many voters want to see with state government; however, this is not happening for the people of Iowa. Finding the sunshine in government spending is like finding the “pot of gold” at the end of the rainbow. It is a make-believe idea that would be great, but it seems the “lep-rechauns” in government like to hide our money.

Public Interest Institute (PII) is excited to unveil our redesigned Iowa Transparency website (www.IowaTransparency.org). We hope that you will find the new design more user-friendly and that it will make it easier to access information that you are looking for. You will see that we have created continuity on the site with the tabs at the top being the same on every page. We also have added to the homepage a box that will

list what is new to the website. When we upload the newsletter, add a new link to a featured website, or update anything on the website, it will be listed in this box. You will also be able to click on that new item and go straight to its location on the website. As you look through the newsletter you will see a couple of screen shots of the website to give all our members an idea of what the new layout is like.

Other additions to the website are our Facebook link and Twitter link. You will see these two icons under the Follow Us section of the webpage. If you are on Facebook or Twitter, click on the icon and join the discussion about limited government. This will allow you to get updated information from us about what is going on with transparency in government spending and with PII in general. Plus, it allows you the ability to connect with other people who are concerned about transparency in government spending. Please take the time to sign up for one or both of

these services. You will receive updates about the newsletter and other additions to the website.

In addition to the new design, we have added the title and author of all the newsletters. The tab *Newsletters* will allow you to find a newsletter more quickly based on the title. We will also be adding a summary of each of the newsletters over the course of the next few weeks. This will allow you to have an idea about the topic if you are searching for something in particular. We hope that you find the new format easier to use.

We now have all our links for resources about government spending listed under *Featured Websites*. This page has the websites split up by federal, state, county, city, and school districts. As we find websites that are related to transparency in government spending, we are adding them to the website. If you are aware of government spending at any level that is being shared on the Web, please let us know by emailing us using our email address given on page

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Dr. Don Racheter,
President

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WRITE us at our address on page 8

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Featured Websites of Iowa Transparency

Federal Level

[Americans for Tax Reform](#)

[Center for Fiscal Accountability](#)

[National Taxpayers Union](#)

State Level

[Tax Education Foundation](#)

[Iowans for Tax Relief](#)

[IECDB State and Local Campaign Disclosure Reports](#)

[Legislative Services Agency - Fiscal Services](#)

[Governor's Open Up Iowa](#)

[State of Iowa - Auditor of State](#)

[Treasurer of the State of Iowa](#)

[Iowa Department of Administrative Services - State Accounting](#)

[Iowa Department of Management](#)

[Iowa Department of Revenue](#)

[State of Iowa Salary Book](#)

County Level

[Iowa State Association of Counties](#)

City Level

None at this time.

School Districts

[Cedar Rapids School District](#)

Iowa Transparency

Lifting the Veil on State of Iowa Government Spending...



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Welcome To Iowa Transparency

The key principle underlying government transparency is the fact that the government is a public servant of the people, and that the government's affairs are the people's business. Unfortunately, taxpayers are often left with little idea about what "their" business entails — or how much they're paying for it.

Many state governments as well as the federal government are moving slowly to "transparency" or making it easier for citizens to find out how much the government is spending and how those funds are being spent. Public Interest Institute is furthering the cause of transparency and accountability in Iowa state government with the creation of a transparency website, allowing visitors to easily see the votes and spending patterns of each Iowa Legislator. If our elected and unelected governing officials truly are public servants, then the people, as their supervisors, should expect full disclosure of their operations.

What's New @ Iowa Transparency

Iowa Vote Tally

Iowa Vote Tally has been updated with the new bill information from the 2010 General Assembly. This contains information about how each Legislator voted and ranking of all the State Senators and State Representative. See how much of your tax dollars your Legislator voted to spend in this session. Click on Iowa Vote Tally to access all the information.

About Public Interest Institute

The Public Interest Institute (PII) is an independent, non-profit organization. We do research on principles and methods to promote and encourage human rights, economic freedom, economic growth, and the creation of jobs here in Iowa. We research issues such as limiting government spending and privatization of government services.



Projects

[Iowa Vote Tally](#)

[Iowa Bill Tally](#)

[Iowa Votes](#)

Favorite Links

[Public Interest Institute](#)

[Tax Education Foundation](#)

[National Taxpayers Union](#)

[Iowans for Tax Relief](#)

[Other Featured Websites](#)

two of the newsletter and we will add the link to the appropriate list. This will help resources grow for everyone.

We changed our terminology a little bit on the website by adding a tab called **Projects**. This tab allows you to access our three main projects that you read about in the April Newsletter: Iowa Votes, Iowa Vote Tally, and Iowa Bill Tally. There is also a quick link to the projects located on each page in the right hand column. When you go to Iowa Vote Tally and Iowa Bill Tally, the first thing you will see is the methodology used for each

of the two reports. Iowa Vote Tally and Iowa Bill Tally are now split by House and Senate members. This should help you find the report you want faster by not having to scroll through the entire list of reports for both chambers.

You will see on the **Join or Give** tab that you have the option of becoming a member of Public Interest Institute by supporting the Iowa Transparency Project (ITP). You also have the option of signing up to receive email updates about ITP. As you may know, PII has received a Matching Challenge from a supporter

of our ITP. This means any contribution you make to the Institute that you designate for the ITP will be doubled, up to a gift of \$10,000. So, if you contribute \$500, it will mean \$1,000 to PII and the ITP. It is a great way to get more bang for your buck.

I invite you to take a few minutes and check out the new design and also invite you to email us at our email address listed on page two of the newsletter to provide feedback on the new layout. We invite all feedback concerning the ease of use and information on the website. We want this website to be the

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clearinghouse of information in hopes of persuading all government bodies to put their expenditures on-line in an easy-to-use format. This is the right of the people of Iowa. Technology is a wonderful device that has made an overload of information available to people. Being able to sort through the information can be a daunting task. We hope that the IowaTransparency.org website will help in sorting through the information overload we experience when trying to find user-friendly information about our tax dollars.

Take the time to sign up for one or more of our services, whether you do that through Facebook or Twitter, or through our website. Transparency is a topic politicians keep talk-

ing about, but seem unable to back up with any action. We, as citizens, have to demand that Iowa opens up the expenses of the state and allows the average citizen the chance to access this information. Only then will we really know the true state of the budget of Iowa. Rhetoric is all that we hear from both sides about the state's budget. So let's put rhetoric aside and open the books to the citizens. Then we can move forward and have an honest discussion about what is best for our state. In order for this to happen we need your support. Please take time to join the cause and please consider a donation to the cause. For only with your support will things change.

I hope we have seen the last of

all the heavy rain this month, but I doubt it. But as we all work to move forward, I hope that the people of Iowa will start to see more sunshine in our government. Not that I think we will find the "pot of gold" at the end of the rainbow, but just letting the sun shine on the spending will improve everyone's outlook.

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