

MACKINAC CENTER

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Tuesday, May 27, 2008

Ms. Patricia Caruso
Director
Michigan Department of Corrections
Grandview Plaza Building
206 East Michigan Avenue
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Director Caruso:

As part of its "Show Michigan the Money" government transparency project, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy has begun to approach Michigan school districts and departments of state government, encouraging them to regularly post the details of their spending on the Internet. So as to provide one-stop transparency shopping for Michigan taxpayers, the Center has created a website (www.showmichiganthemoney.org) where all online spending transparency links from both the state and school district level are being compiled in user-friendly form, along with other government transparency resources. I am writing to you today so as to request a meeting whereby we may bring about the participation of the Michigan Dept. of Corrections in this project.

The first state government department that we approached for participation was the Department of State. Within weeks of that meeting, the Secretary of State provided what we believe is an achievable level of transparency for all departments of state government: A quarterly report of its expenditures, detailing how much was paid, to whom, and under what general expense heading. The Department of State's annual expenditure report for fiscal 2007 is available online at our "Show Michigan the Money" website, should you wish to see in advance what we are asking for.

While we believe that the Department of State has admirably met a higher standard of spending transparency than any other state department to date, there are some omissions from their reporting that we would ideally prefer to see if other departments are able and willing to provide them. Some examples:

1. The Department of State's report details meal and travel expenses by name of employee, but it omits salary and benefits compensation information, which is obviously a significant portion of departmental costs.
2. We would prefer check numbers and specific details regarding the exact products or services being purchased from each vendor. This standard of transparency compliance has been met by the Montrose Community Schools, whose reports are also linked from our website, should you be interested in providing this level of detail.

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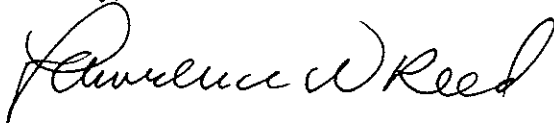
3. A fully searchable database, the so-called “Google Government,” and many other features are also high on our list of desired taxpayer-friendly disclosures.

But at a minimum, we are seeking a reporting compliance equal to the example set by the Department of State and would respectfully request a meeting whereby we can discuss this matter with you or a representative of your department that is qualified to speak to this issue. The Mackinac Center’s policy analyst, Kenneth M. Braun, is in charge of the government transparency project and can also handle any questions or concerns that you may have beforehand. His contact information is as follows:

Kenneth M. Braun
Mackinac Center for Public Policy
140 West Main Street
Midland, MI 48640
braun@mackinac.org
517-482-7108

We look forward to hearing from you soon about this exciting project, and to working with your department to expand citizen access to the details of how their tax dollars are being accounted for.

Sincerely,



Lawrence W. Reed
President
Mackinac Center for Public Policy

Cc: Ms. Lisa Webb Sharpe
Director
Michigan Department of Management and Budget