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Final Transparency Bill Passes Oregon Senate

(Salem) Legislation to further improve the Oregon Transparency Website www.oregon.gov/transparency was unanimously approved by the State Senate today. [House Bill 2788](#), sponsored by [State Representative Kim Thatcher](#) (R-Keizer, Newberg, St. Paul) and [State Representative Jefferson Smith](#) (D-Portland), is the final piece of legislation introduced this year to give Oregon taxpayers more information about state government processes. The bill now moves to Governor John Kitzhaber's desk for his signature.

HB 2788 makes an important change by adding a place for citizens to check all notices for public meetings held by state agencies, boards and commissions. "Constituents in my area have complained many times about how difficult it is to find out about an upcoming hearing on a fee increase or other change in state policy," said [State Senator Larry George](#) (R-Sherwood) after he carried the measure on the Senate Floor today. "This change will help improve access and accountability for state government."

The legislation also adds the State Treasurer's Office to the transparency website. "When the website was first created the Treasurer's Office raised concerns about confidential information, so they were excluded from the website," noted Thatcher. "However, we have addressed those concerns and the Treasurer now agrees to post information about his agency on the site."

A few weeks ago another measure also passed unanimously in the Senate and was sent to the Governor which calls for including information about tax expenditures for economic development projects on the transparency website. [House Bill 2825](#) was co-sponsored by Thatcher and [State Representative Phil Barnhart](#) (D-Central Lane and Linn Counties).

Both bills were supported by a number of advocacy organizations including the Oregon State Public Interest Research Group. In an [annual report](#) released by OSPIRG regarding government spending transparency, Oregon received a grade of "B-minus" this year. That compares to a "D" grade last year before the new state website was fully up and running.

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