



For Immediate Release

Ballot Committee Receives Donation to Promote Open and Clean Government

SIoux FALLS, SD, January 30, 2008 – South Dakotans for Open and Clean Government announced today that their organization has received a substantial donation in support of their drive to collect signatures for a landmark government accountability ballot initiative. The \$10,000 donation was made by Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), one of the nation's leading taxpayer watchdogs.

"Americans for Tax Reform has consistently supported open government reforms because its members know that additional sunlight translates into actual savings," said Jim Anderson, Board Member of the South Dakotans for Open and Clean Government. "The support of ATR and its president, Grover Norquist, will be invaluable in our ongoing effort to bring about a more open government in South Dakota."

Anderson said the country's founding fathers intended government finances to be clear and understandable, so that anyone could look at the budget, investigate abuses, and seek to do away with questionable spending items.

"Open government is more than just a cause," said Anderson. "It's one of those central pillars on which our democracy was founded, and on which the trust of the people in that democracy can hopefully be rebuilt."

Under South Dakota's present system, there is no simple mechanism for taxpayers to track government spending on state contracts. Additionally, the law presently permits government officials to corrupt the system by exchanging state contracts for campaign contributions or other favors. The petition being circulated by South Dakotans for Open and Clean Government would address each of these problems.

The South Dakota Open and Clean Government Act would change the current law in five ways:

- Taxpayer funds could not be used to lobby or campaign for partisan political agendas, including increased taxes.
- Legislators would not be able to use their legislative positions to ensure "golden-parachute" jobs after their public service has ended.
- The "pay to play" system -- where contractors are forced to make campaign donations to elected officials in order to get a government contract -- would be outlawed.
- Recipients of no bid contracts would be contractually prohibited from donating to political campaigns while they hold a state contract and two years thereafter.

- A simple, searchable website with information on all state contracts over \$500, not including employment contracts, would be launched so citizens can know how their money is being spent.

"This is common sense, non-partisan, pro-taxpayer reform," said Anderson. "It's time South Dakota recognized this basic right and started using 21st century technology to fulfill the timeless wisdom of our founding fathers."

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"We might hope to see the finances of the Union as clear and intelligible as a merchant's books, so that every member of Congress and every man of any mind in the Union should be able to comprehend them, to investigate abuses, and consequently to control them."

Thomas Jefferson, 1802