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**Ohio House State and Local Government Committee  
House Bill 40—Government Expenditure Database  
Written Testimony of Dennis R. Hetzel  
President & Executive Director / Ohio News Media Association  
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Chairwoman Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Holmes, and members of the House Committee on State and Local Government, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of House Bill 40. As we've stated in previous testimony, the current Ohio Checkbook website operated by the Treasurer of State is very easy to use and effective for journalists, business people and everyday citizens. It would be a shame if state government does not continue this effort in the future so a statutory requirement makes sense.

We've watched versions of this bill evolve over three legislative sessions, and our additional testimony today is submitted in hopes that we can be an impetus to seize an obvious opportunity and correct the odd, current situation: We not only have one helpful state spending website, we have two helpful state spending websites. While two is better than none, it is not better than one good site that combines the best aspects of both.

The competing state spending websites contain duplicative information and have different levels of functionality and convenience. In our opinion, the treasurer's office website richly deserves its status as a national model for other "checkbook" sites. It is superior to the OBM site in what web developers call "user experience." The interface is better and easier to use. It also provides some key information that the OBM website lacks, most critically the voluntary participation of local governmental bodies from around the state. It also has contact information for specific departments if citizens have additional questions. These assets should be maintained. As Director Keen has noted, the OBM site allows for deeper exploration into how state revenue and budgetary information interface with state spending, and that's also a good thing.

So, while we urge the committee to favorably report HB 40, we hope you also will continue to urge these two state offices to resolve differences. While it is legitimate to discuss the most appropriate place to house such a website, we feel it's inarguable that a single, merged site makes the most sense both in terms of serving citizens and avoiding duplication of effort at taxpayer expense.