Written Testimony
Prepared for
The Ohio House
State & Local Government Committee

Chair Anielski, Vice Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Bishoff, and Members of the House State & Local Government Committee, thank you for this opportunity to share The Ohio Society of CPAs' (OSCPA) support for House Bill 40. We applaud Representatives Jonathan Dever and Dave Greenspan, and State Treasurer Josh Mandel for their vision with regard to the creation of the Ohio State Government Expenditure Database.

We believe the database, already available since 2014 at www.OhioCheckbook.com, is making state government entities more accountable to the taxpayers who support them. This online checkbook has become a one-stop shop for those taxpayers seeking a clearer depiction of Ohio's financial ledger through each state entity's monthly reporting of expenditures issued to vendors. Transparency and accountability are important goals and will lead to efficiencies benefiting all Ohioans.

Some of you may recall OSCPA's Ohio Budget Advisory Task Force Report issued in 2010. A major emphasis was the reality that any enterprise, public or private, must be accountable to those who provide the means to keep it operating. In the private sector, shareholders must be confident that their investment in a company is being used efficiently and in a manner that will result in both short-term and long-term success. An important way they can do so is by having access to independently verified data that is presented in a consistent manner. Taxpayers want that same level of confidence in the numbers shared by their government entities.

Enactment of HB 40 is another integral piece to this puzzle – to ensure that the database will be statutorily required in the future. Instead of time-consuming, individual public records requests to get whatever information you need from government, this data is now readily available at everyone's fingertips on the Internet.

We appreciate the time and attention this committee is giving to this important open-government proposal, and value the opportunity to support Ohio's effort to be at the forefront of data accessibility.