

Advancing Excellence and Public Trust in Government

edited by

Cal Clark and Don-Terry Veal

contributors

George Amedee, David M. Anderson, Cal Clark, Maria T. Folmar, Paula Gordon, Richard Greene, Keenan Grenell, Christopher Hoene, Lt. General Harold C. Moore, Kenneth Penn, Suzanne J. Piotrowski, Irene Rubin, William I. Sauser, Jr., Christa Slaton, Michael B. Smith, Sheila Smoot, John Thomas, Don-Terry Veal, David Weil, Juan Williams, Sandra Fabry Wirtz

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Introduction: Advancing Excellence and Public Trust in Government

Cal Clark and Don-Terry Veal

Over the past four decades the public trust in government in the United States has fallen dramatically due to a “perfect storm” of contributing factors. Scandal after scandal has rocked Washington, D.C., and many state capitals; governments have failed miserably in response both to crises and to long-term problems affecting American citizens; and political competition has been increasingly marked by polarization, gridlock, and toxic attack politics. One of the central problems undercutting Americans’ trust in their public institutions has been the pervasive secrecy about many important aspects of government which fuels corruption, abuse of power, and a lack of accountability for officials’ mistakes. The Great Recession of 2008–2010 exacerbated this trend of plummeting public trust; and the 2010 elections were widely interpreted as a citizen’s rebellion against a distant, ineffective, and even threatening government. Consequently, promoting much greater openness or transparency in government has become one of the major strategies for restoring the public trust in the United States.

The Symposium on Advancing Excellence and Public Trust in Government that was held at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on September 17, 2007, was sponsored by three organizations with complementary perspectives on the topic of transparency and the public trust. The Center for Governmental Services at Auburn University is developing the National Transparency Institute; the National Endowment for the Public Trust is dedicated to restoring trust and confidence in our government and country; and the Washington Center coordinates the premier internship program in our national capital. Their partnership reflects a common interest in and commitment to public service and governmental reform.

There was certainly a very broad consensus at the Symposium that transparency in government is extremely desirable, needs to be improved, will bring reform and improvement to the public sector, and should make a major contribution to the restoration of the public trust in the United States. Indeed, support for improved transparency can be found across the political spectrum, as both conservatives and liberals believe that more openness in government will promote parts of their very different policy agendas. Truly, transparency appears to be an all-American issue.

Yet, several problems about transparency were raised as well. First, sometimes too much transparency can create problems for governmental management and policymaking. Second, as Richard Greene, Irene Rubin, and David Weil note, transparency policies, especially in the age of the Internet, often produce information overload that repels citizens trying to learn more about their governments and public policies. Third, as Christopher Hoene argues, transparency can be far from policy neutral. For example, property taxes would be favored over sales and income taxes in terms of transparency but be less desirable in terms of administrative efficiency and of stimulating antigovernment feelings. Fourth, there is controversy over what strategy would best promote transparency reforms. For example, David Anderson and George Amedee present cogent arguments for, respectively, decentralized grassroots and centralized mandated approaches. Finally, Hoene and Amedee in particular point to the danger that transparency can be used as a weapon in today's extremely hostile partisan climate.

The discussion at the symposium revolved around three broad themes. The first concerned transparency about government operations *per se*, such as how decisions were made and what detailed budgets are. A second and somewhat broader theme concerned greater transparency of "performance measures" which tell us what the effects of specific policies are and how effective or efficient government agencies are. Third and even more broadly, some of the participants argued that general questions of governance provide the key for a renewal of public trust among our citizenry. This book of presentations at the symposium is organized into four parts based on this distinction. Part I contains two challenges to America to restore the public trust. Parts II to IV then cover transparency, performance measures, and broader issues about general governance.

Part I introduces the symposium with two presentations on "The Challenge to the Public Trust." Lt. General Harold G. Moore charts the deterioration of the public trust, characterizing it as a crisis "which is everywhere and nowhere." Still, he concludes optimistically that America will prevail over this malaise because of the basic characteristics of our people and our Constitution. Similarly, Michael B. Smith believes that renewal is possible through enlightened public service and uses the experience of a Washington Center intern to illustrate what can be accomplished.

The nine presentations in part II focus upon “Promoting Transparency.” Don-Terry Veal, William I. Sauser, Jr., and Maria T. Folmar provide a broad overview of how to increase transparency in U.S. local government, arguing that transparency is essential for improving public trust in the United States and reflects fundamental American issues, as well as discussing more technical issues about how to measure and improve transparency. Irene Rubin then argues that transparency is vital for maintaining democracy and good government. For transparency to work, however, it must provide information that is relevant to the lives of citizens; and she illustrates this with a discussion of the budget transparency requirements of the financial community, politicians, general citizens, and the press. The next three chapters discuss transparency issues in different policy arenas. Sandra Fabry Wirtz concludes that greater transparency about budgets is necessary to make government accountable to taxpayers and discusses how several states have used the Internet to make searchable detailed budgets available to the public. Suzanne J. Piotrowski considers how greater transparency can be achieved for governmental contracting, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of such mechanisms as the proactive dissemination of information, Freedom-of-Information Act requests, public meetings, whistle-blowing, and leaks by officials. Keenan Grenell contends that higher education suffers from very pronounced transparency problems, citing such areas as strategic planning, presidential decision-making, external contracting, hiring and promotion, and athletics.

Two presentations then give more focused professional perspectives. Sheila Smoot describes how she became a county commissioner due to her concerns about corruption and a lack of transparency; and Kenneth Penn, a CPA, suggests creating something analogous to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act for government oversight. This section concludes with the previously noted debate between David Anderson and George Amedee over the best strategy for promoting transparency. Anderson advocates a “bottom up” approach in which best practices are publicized and states are encouraged to adopt the ones best suited to their circumstances. Amedee, in contrast, argues that central mandates are necessary to overcome past abuses and advocates mandates for transparency reforms as a prerequisite for federal funding.

The four chapters in part III on “Performance Measures and Reform” go beyond providing transparency about just what government does to measure what the effects of governmental activities and policies really are, with the belief that more effective government is crucial to regaining the public trust. Richard Greene analyzes performance measures for state government based on the Government Performance Project. Much to the surprise of many, there has been a tremendous increase in the use of performance measures; and their growing use has clearly increased transparency in government. Still, several challenges remain. The use of performance measures in policy-making is only marginal; problems remain in making this information relevant to

citizens; and there are situations where full transparency may be counterproductive. In addition, John Thomas provides a case study of performance measures in Virginia, one of the national leaders in this area, concluding that government can be reformed to make it more interactive with the citizenry.

The other two presentations in this section go beyond simple transparency in somewhat different ways. David Weil argues that over the past several decades there has been a tremendous increase in “targeted transparency,” in which mandated transparency from private as well as public organizations is used to achieve specific policy objectives, such as improving public health and automotive safety. Some targeted transparency policies have worked quite well, while others have been miserable failures, underlining (again) the importance of finding information that citizens can actually use. Christopher Hoene raises the issue that some types or applications of transparency seem to have an antigovernment bias. From this perspective, he believes that performance measures are important because they help citizens understand the benefits of government activities; and, anticipating the arguments in part IV, he advocates getting citizens more involved in setting the priorities for their communities.

Part IV on “Transforming General Governance” presents several arguments that transparency needs to be integrated into broader strategies for restoring the public trust in the United States. Juan Williams charts the collapse of the public trust over the past four decades across the political spectrum due to repeated scandals and failures of government, in addition to the escalating invective of attack politics. In particular, he believes that the young have become disconnected from politics because they do not believe that government is responding to “their” issues. To regain the trust of the public, he argues, government must meet the needs of specific groups of people. Paula Gordon makes an analogous argument that there should be more concern with the purpose of government, such as the transformational challenge set off by the September 11th terrorist attacks. She believes, consequently, that simple transparency should be subordinated to transformation if American government is to be revitalized and made more attractive to our citizenry. Christa Slaton diagnoses the deterioration of public trust in government much the same as Juan Williams. She makes a somewhat broader argument, though, in advocating greatly enhanced civic engagement as the key to transforming our governments into ones that will truly serve all the people.

Previous drafts of five of these presentations appeared in a “Forum on Transparency, Performance Management, and the Public Trust” in the Spring 2009 issue of *The Public Manager*. These are:

Irene Rubin, “Bringing Transparency to Municipal Budgets”

Sandra Fabry Wirtz, “Using the Internet to Make State Budgets Transparent”

Richard Greene, “Measuring Government Performance to Promote Transparency”

David Weil, “Targeted Transparency”

Christopher Hoene, “Transparency, Governance, and Civic Engagement”

I

The Challenge

Chapter One

The Challenge of Resurrecting the Public Trust

Lt. General Harold G. Moore (Ret.)

As I stand before you here today, I have a flashback. Having just been around a corner in Washington in early 1940 as a brand-new eighteen year old in a strange city, please permit a couple of reflections which have significant bearing on my purpose here today. Sixty-seven years ago in February of 1940, I left my room in a boarding house in Washington; and I walked up the steps of a capitol transit company streetcar at the corner, at the intersection of Connecticut and Florida Avenues, NW. I dropped a thin dime in the till, got a transfer ticket, and headed to my thirty-dollar-a-week job in the cockroach- and rat-infested Senate warehouse, a book warehouse or archives. It was in an alley at the foot of Capitol Hill. Fifteen minutes later we rolled down 15th Street with the Willard Hotel on the left and the White House grounds on the right and stopped on Constitution Avenue where I transferred to another streetcar to Capitol Hill and my workplace.

I had just turned eighteen years old three days before in a small 1,700-person town deep in the hills of Kentucky. I was in my last year of high school there when I left. From age fifteen, my goal and my dream was to get into the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and become an army officer, but I was unable to get an appointment. Then on February 13, my eighteenth birthday, the local representative of U.S. Senator Happy Chandler of Kentucky told my dad that the senator had an opening in the Senate Book Warehouse under his patronage. I was offered a job and I grabbed it. I figured I would have a far, far better chance to find an appointment to West Point on the ground in Washington, D.C., rather than in the middle of Kentucky writing letters. I left Bardstown, Kentucky, two days later for Washington and the warehouse job.

In retrospect that decision was the major turning point in my life. I finished high school at night in Washington with middle-aged cab drivers and government workers; and then I completed two years at George Washington University night school. I paid for clothes, books, college fees, streetcar fares, housing, food, all on thirty bucks a week. It certainly was good experience for a young kid, but I never gave up my dream to get into West Point; and I was convinced that I would prevail in my pursuit of that goal one way or another. It took me more than two years. Every week I got the list from the War Department, no Pentagon then. The War Department was in World War I temporary buildings along Constitution Avenue. Some of you may have seen pictures or remember that. Anyhow, I visited the senators' and congressmen's offices, knocking on the doors begging for an appointment to West Point. I was unsuccessful, but I never quit.

Twenty-seven months later in May of 1942, with World War II in full swing, the president signed a bill authorizing every senator and congressman an additional appointment to the Military and the Naval Academies. I asked my congressman for his West Point appointment, but he had already given it to another boy. However, at my request, he gave me the Annapolis Naval Academy appointment. I then asked him if he would agree to a swap if I could pull it off. He was surprised but agreed, saying that if you can do it, I will go along with it. Ten days later I had an appointment to West Point from a Georgia congressman, Eugene E. Cox. I was appointed to West Point from Thomasville, even though I had never been in the state of Georgia.

I graduated in 1945 and became a 2nd lieutenant infantry paratrooper. I had prevailed! Lesson learned: keep a positive attitude, especially in adversity. Never quit! There's always a way you can prevail. Some of us have been in places where the odds were not great that we might come out of it successfully or even alive.

In November 1965 in Vietnam, my 450 men and I of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalary, leaped out of Huey helicopters into Vietnam into a valley of death, the Ya Drang Valley. We were quickly surrounded by an estimated two thousand well-armed, very aggressive North Vietnamese enemy determined to kill us all. We were in deep trouble! It quickly crossed my mind that an illustrious predecessor of mine, Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer, had been in a similar situation in the Valley of the Little Big Horn in Montana and lost his whole command and his life. But I was determined that would not happen to my battalion of the 7th Cavalary in the Ya Drang River Valley of Vietnam. I pulled a chain to get everything that might help us: field artillery, fighter bombers, helicopter gunships, helicopter rocket ships, and mortars. Still, we were in a hell of a fight! I was determined, however, that we would prevail; and not once during those three days did it cross my mind that we would go down. I knew that we could do it!

After three days and nights of fierce fighting, the surviving enemy withdrew into their Cambodian sanctuary; and we were forbidden by President Johnson to follow them. They lost more than a thousand men killed. We counted more than 630 dead enemies. When I lifted off in that helicopter, the last man off that ground, and looked down at that jungle, scrubbed jungle battlefield strewn with enemy bodies, I felt grief and pride: pride that we had prevailed but grief because all of those men had mothers too. We did what we had to do. I lost 79 of my precious men killed, 121 wounded, but none missing or none a prisoner of war. My proudest accomplishment in my life has been that in two wars I've never lost one man prisoner of war or missing in action. I brought them all home!

The battle was over; and the first major battle of the American war in Vietnam between Americans and North Vietnamese regulars was an American victory. Not once during that nonstop shootout did it cross my mind that we would go down. I believed then that we would prevail, and we did, but we paid the price.

I share this experience with you because to believe that you will prevail in any endeavor means everything. Our country has faced several major crises: the Civil War, World War I, 1929 and the Great Depression, Pearl Harbor, World War II, the Cuban missile crisis, the civil rights era, 9/11, and many more. With each crisis there always seems to be a combination of factors that enables America to prevail eventually. Not every crisis is one where blood spills forth. In many cases, a burgeoning national crisis is one in which our people become gravely troubled within. Here, slow-moving negative forces can become a national plague where the nation cries within. Yet, we often do not pay sufficient attention to this kind of situation.

I believe that America is crying within now in a crisis that does not appear to be widely recognized. Today, September 17, 2007, I speak of a national negative condition, a new kind of insidious enemy that is striking at the public's confidence in most of our national institutions. For example, just three months ago, the Gallup National News Service reported disturbing data about how Americans view their fundamental institutions:

Gallup's Annual Update on Americans Confidence in Institutions shows that confidence ratings are generally down across the board compared with last year. The public's confidence ratings in several institutions including Congress are now at an all time low point in Gallup's history of this measure. These low ratings reflect the generally sour mood of the public at this time. Of the sixteen societal institutions tested in Gallup's 2007 update, Americans express the most confidence in the Military. They have the least confidence in HMO's and the Congress. Americans have much more confidence in small business than in big business. (Newport 2007)

My American Heritage Dictionary defines "confidence" as "Trust in a person or thing." Early in my thirty-two years of active duty, including battle-

field infantry combat for well over two years in two major wars in the Far East, I learned that trust is the mandatory ingredient in a military unit of any size and that it has to work in three directions. First, the leader must have trust in the people whom he leads that they will perform their duties well. Second, the people in the ranks must have trust in their leaders that they will perform their duties competently. Third, the people in the ranks must have trust and confidence in one another that each will perform his duties well as members of the team. If any one of these three elements of trust is missing, that military unit cannot be trusted to succeed in its mission. I believe that these three directions of trust can be applied to all organizations, including government. Public trust in government is achieved by competent governmental practices and policies. Excellence in government cannot be reached without public trust, creating a two-way street.

Today I stand before you sixty-seven years later near the location of that 1940 streetcar track. That track has long been gone, and the Washington, D.C., environment and persons in national leadership have undergone many changes. America, though, remains the leader of the free world. Now, our nation is in a battle for survival against an enemy which is everywhere and nowhere. Who and what is this enemy? It's a mental enemy, an insidious enemy. Simply stated, it's diminishing public trust. Unfortunately, public trust in many institutions is at an all-time low. This national malaise can surely be changed, however!

America has always prevailed; and we will prevail again and again—this time in a reawakening of the public trust. I stand before you as representing the 103 founding fellows of the National Endowment for the Public Trust who also believe that we will prevail. It's why we have signed a declaration for a trust in a principled America and why we're here. We've come to remind America of the fierce urgency of showing up, standing up, and speaking up for the importance of public trust in our nation. It's why we have joined forces with Auburn University and its Center for Governmental Services and The Washington Center in hosting this all important National Symposium.

Although this is just one small step, it can be powerful because of our collective energy and strong will to prevail that brings us here today in partnership to defeat this national negative condition. We have to start somewhere, and may today be the beginning of something very good in bringing better government to America. In this we must prevail. We must all live in trust in a larger sense. Not to do so would eventually debilitate and might even spell the end of the wonderful experiment in self-government that our Constitution so boldly initiated. This most important document has brought unrest to rest, disorder to order, and failures and faults to perfection. It has done so since 1776, and it can do so again in 2007 and beyond. At all times, our Constitution has been the bedrock of public trust and the foundation for

all of us to believe that America is worthy of all that we can give, including our lives if and when necessary.

Why have we and why will we prevail once more? The basic nature of Americans gives us a strong advantage. Americans believe we can turn the worst into the best of outcomes; and we usually do, as many historical examples confirm. Not only do we have a positive attitude, we are a people of action, commitment, and perseverance. Action is an American way of life. Furthermore, when we seem to be in a crisis of the worst kind, there are leaders across America who've stepped up and led us forward through the worst part and into a better way of life. And there are such men and women in this room today. America with its freedoms breeds great leaders in all fields of endeavor.

What is there about our great nation that does not accept defeat? What is there about our great nation that does not condone wrong over right? What is it about our great nation that does not condone self-interest to override the interest of all? I believe the answer lies in the three dimensions of trust which I have described. Some may question the subject matter of public trust and do not see it as a threat to our country. No blood, no crisis. I see it another way. No trust, a grave threat to our nation. As I reflect on those times when we faced major crises as a nation, Americans have always come together as one to tackle the problem head-on. America and Americans have never flinched when we knew what was right. Many of you know that today, the 17th of September, is the very day in 1787 that the Constitution was drafted, not enacted but drafted: a very important start.

Today this National Symposium to advance Excellence in Public Trust in Government is fortuitously very well timed. This is a goal which will require much time and intermediate objectives, but I'm convinced that each success will stack the deck for more public trust in our governmental institutions. Incrementally we shall prevail. May we all consider this national condition worthy of our best possible solutions, where we must all come together in one: *e pluribus unum*. The time is now. America is full of great examples of how one person can change a negative situation or improve a situation to advance excellence in public trust.

I'd like now to pass on to you a personal philosophy which has guided me throughout my life and which may be of use in this symposium and afterwards in local government across America. Periodically, I take time out mentally from ongoing activities and think. First, what is a situation I am in now and what do I want to achieve in this situation? Second, what am I doing that I should not be doing? And third, what am I not doing that I should be doing to influence the situation in my favor? Then, very importantly, what is one more thing I can do to influence the situation in my favor? And after that, one more thing. And after that, one more thing. And more opportunities open up.

I challenge each of you to think about your individual workplace and how you personally might help to advance public trust in your environment, however small or limited. If you do not do this, who will? If not you men and women who are the best governmental minds across America, who? If not now, when? Do not be fearful of advancing new ideas. I believe that we shall prevail. It's my hope and challenge that the group personality of this gathering will emerge early on as being imaginatively aggressive in advancing new solutions and ideas. I believe that we shall prevail once again. As written on our currency, In God We Trust.

REFERENCE

Newport, Frank. "Lack of Confidence," Gallup Daily Briefing, June 21, 2007, www.gallup.com.

Chapter Two

Serving the Public to Restore the Public Trust

Michael B. Smith

So many of you are Washington Center interns. I'm proud to see you all here, and we as an organization are proud to be partnered with Auburn's Center for Governmental Services and The National Endowment for the Public Trust. Why do we feel this seminar's important? You'll hear today that in the next five or six years, 60 percent of the federal work force and almost an equal number of state government employees will be eligible to retire shortly. Many states are worried about brain drain, and the federal government is also worried about brain drain. One of the things that is an option for you, for some of you within the next few months and for others within the next two to three years, is employment in public service. Clearly, the reestablishment of the public trust in the United States will be in the hands of those of you who follow a career in government. It's an honorable profession. That's a central reason we feel it's so important to support this symposium.

The Washington Center has 35,000 alumni spread around the world, approximately 90 percent of them in the United States and 10 percent abroad. That is a very significant number of people, and I'm proud to say that 30 percent of that number have served or are serving in public service. I want to tell you one brief story about one of our alums who has dedicated his career in the past fifteen years to public service because I think it shows how someone with a force of personality, an instinct for good government, and a belief in serving constituents can make a difference.

Rob Consalvo came through our program in 1990. He was a student at Xavier in Ohio and came from a suburb of Boston. He interned through The Washington Center with Senator Ted Kennedy. Upon completing his internship, he returned to Xavier, graduated, and then returned to Washington to

get a paying job with the senator's office. He worked for Senator Kennedy for two years here in Washington and then went back to be the number-two person in the Boston office. When the senator would come home for the weekend and drive around the state, he'd be in the passenger seat, and Rob at the age of twenty-three or twenty-four would be driving the car. It would be just the two of them going to Worcester and Fitchburg, and Rob said it was the greatest primer in politics and government that he ever could have received.

He left the senator's staff to work for his state representative and became the top aide to that state representative who was chairman of the rules committee. At age twenty-eight, Rob decided to run for Boston City Council trying to become the youngest city councilor in the history of Boston. He literally knocked on every door in his district, many of them twice, and his sister and his wife and his father and his brother-in-law did the same thing. He was a newcomer; he had no name recognition; and he had literally no budget. Yet, he only lost by seventy-six votes. He said it was the best thing that ever happened to him because he learned so much from the race and from his constituents. The reason it took so long to get around to see everyone was that he didn't just a knock on the door, shake a hand or two, say I'm looking for your vote, and then walk to the next-door neighbor. He would actually talk to people, something that not all politicians do. When they talk, they don't necessarily listen, but he listened.

When I talked to him three days after the election, I tried to cheer him up. I thought he'd really be despondent, but he said he wasn't down.

"No, I'll win next time. You know I'm already planning. I'm going to work. I've got a full time job. I work fifty hours a week for Representative Scotia. I go to events every night of the week. My wife still loves me. I'm a fortunate guy. I'm going to win. I'm going to run again, and I'm going to win next time."

He did! He's been in office six years now. The past two years he chaired the Ways and Means Committee of the Boston City Council, responsible for two billion dollars. He still is the same guy he used to be, he's the same guy I knew seventeen years ago. When I go to Boston, he takes me to this local neighborhood dive for a fish fry that costs \$4.95, and we each pull out five bucks and say, "Isn't this the greatest meal you've ever had?" But the point is that he hasn't lost anything from the time he was a twenty-two year old working for Ted Kennedy, to now where he's managing or has responsibility for two billion dollars.

The point is you can make a difference. No one ever heard of Rob Con-salvo before he started running for office. And whether you run for elective office or serve in another capacity or end up in the private sector, you will be empowering yourself, your family, and your neighbors if you carry a similar attitude with you. You need to understand how public policy is formulated,

as well as the value of public service. So, I would encourage you to learn everything you can from the Symposium today, because tomorrow you may be able to make a huge difference in people's lives and help restore the trust that makes America a strong democracy.

II

Promoting Transparency

Chapter Three

Promoting Transparency in Local Governments

Don-Terry Veal, William I. Sauser, Jr., and Maria T. Folmar

WHAT IS TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT?

When a container is transparent we can see right through it to observe what is inside. Likewise, when a government is transparent its citizens (and other observers) can see its inner workings—its processes, procedures, budgets, priorities, plans, and decision-making strategies. Transparent government is conducted “in the sunshine” so all can see what is going on. Key decisions affecting the citizenry are not made in darkened corridors or hidden chambers in a transparent government. In a transparent government, citizens can obtain the information they need to understand how important decisions that affect their well-being are made. Facts, figures, records, documents, and other important informational artifacts are made available for public inspection. In a transparent government, the public’s business is conducted in the public view and is subject to review, discussion, dissent, and even corrective action through the ballot box.

Some of the characteristics often associated with transparent governments include websites linking the citizenry to a wealth of information; codes and ordinances; the budget; information about every department and board (including contact information); media packets and information about schools, businesses, and government services; maps, land use plans, and zoning information; agendas and minutes of council or commission meetings; job vacancies; and much, much more. These websites are designed to keep the citizens informed about what is going on in their local government. Citizen surveys and polls (the results of which are also posted on the government’s website)

and “blogs” are other examples of ways local governments can keep in close contact with their citizens and may illustrate that the government considers citizen viewpoints when setting priorities and planning actions. City council, county commission, and committee and board meetings are open for the public to observe, and a time for public commentary is included within each meeting. Transparency is also associated with citizens having knowledge and access to short- and long-term financial history, including inter-fund transfers. As a prerequisite, there should be clear laws that frame the budget. In short, the government actively seeks methods to do its business “in the sunshine” where everyone can see what is happening. In this manner, the local government seeks to keep faith with its citizens and build trust with those it serves.

Trust in government is a key issue in today’s society; and efforts to establish transparency in government are designed to build trust and combat corruption. In this chapter we examine the mandate for trust in government and explore some of the issues involved in establishing trust through transparency. Open meetings, open records, audited financial reports, an up-to-date and informative website, and the use of social networking and citizen surveys are “best practices” any government might use to increase transparency.

TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

Transparency is a fundamental component of democratic government. It concerns the rights of citizens to know about the activities of their government (Weil, 2009). These rights of citizens are often associated with the issues of accountability and the premise that elected officials, by law and by assumption, should be responsive to the citizens’ right to know what is occurring inside of government. In many public organizations, the public-political-administrative “trichotomy” produces an environment that is not always conducive to building trust. Competing and diverse interest groups, political agendas, and bureaucratic inertia may all undermine trust. However, if the level of trust within an organization is high, policymaking and administrative actions can be carried out in a manner that engenders public trust and provides a sense of mutual accomplishment (Mathers, 2009).

The challenge for citizens in determining the merits of secrecy in government are usually centered on questions such as: Is secrecy necessary in order for governmental officials to perform their duties? Does secrecy lead to a lack of accountability? Is secrecy a gateway to abuses of power? When considering such questions from citizens, implementing transparency becomes a balancing act for public officials between responding to citizens and responding to their own professional obligations. Absolute openness in

government, a common expectation of citizens, is not altogether possible considering that officials often use judgment to interpret standards that meet the irregularity or case-by-case nature of statutes. According to some public officials, such as Dirk Kempthorne, “there is a need for due process relating to the time that governmental officials are expected to be transparent when making decisions in government, so that they can generate an atmosphere for quality decisions before giving information to the media.” In other words, “transparency is good for democracy but shouldn’t be viewed as a 24/7 proposition.”¹ The consideration of openness or transparency in government should accompany communication on the constraints of public officials so that media and other observers can understand their environment as well. With transparency comes the possibility of self-correction, so that professional integrity and democratic accountability can fruitfully coexist (Richter and Burke, 2007).

What we know most about how people evaluate governments, politicians, and institutions comes from the national level: from approval of the president to the legitimacy of the Supreme Court to public dissatisfaction with Congress (Durr, Gilmour, and Wolbrecht, 1997; Durr, Martin, and Wolbrecht, 2000; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 1995, 2000; Mondak and Smithey, 1997). However, the system of government in the United States is a federal one, where overlapping spheres of authority provide for state and local action. Consequently, it is appropriate to place more attention on the state and local levels of government as well.

The approach relating to the federal government should often take into account intergovernmental relations as well. Many situations may be confronted in which boundaries blur among governmental responsibilities. This was the case surrounding Hurricane Katrina where local government was the first to respond, and the state and federal government subsequently became heavily involved (Bowman and Kearney, 2008). Table 3.1 illustrates that although Americans are cynical about politics in general and many distrust

Table 3.1. Indicators of Trust in Government

<i>Trust local or national government to do what is right</i>		
	Local (%)	National (%)
Always or most of the time	42	29
Some of the time	46	53
Hardly ever	11	18

Source: Social Capital Benchmark Survey, 2000.

People like me have no say in what local or national government does

	Local (%)	National (%)
Agree	35	41
Disagree	62	50

Sources: National Election Study, 2000; and Social Capital Benchmark Survey, 2000. Public Trust and Efficacy in Local and National Government (N=3,003)

government at any level, they are more trusting of their local governments and less likely to believe they have no say at the local level as compared to the national level (Donovan, Mooney, and Smith, 2009).

With the central concern being trust in governments, and the assumptions of secrecy or abuse being seen as primary problems in government, acceptable degrees of openness in government must occur in order to increase public trust. A 1997 Scripps-Howard News Service poll in conjunction with Ohio University (Marrs, 2001) brought forth the following information:

- 51 percent of those polled believe it is likely that some federal officials were directly responsible for the assassination of John F. Kennedy.
- More than a third suspect that the U.S. Navy shot down TWA Flight 800, either intentionally or unintentionally.
- A majority believe that it is possible that CIA officials intentionally allowed Central American drug dealers to sell cocaine to inner-city black children.
- 60 percent felt that the government is withholding information regarding Agent Orange and causes of the Gulf War Syndrome.
- Almost all suspect that FBI agents set the fire that killed eighty-one Branch Davidians near Waco, Texas, in 1993.
- Even after the U.S. Air Force released a report that the purported “aliens” reported at Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947 were actually crash dummies from tests first begun in 1954, more people than before believed that government was covering up both information and technology from extra-terrestrials.

Reacting to this poll, the executive director of the Washington Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, Curtis Gans, lamented, “Paranoia is killing this country” (Marrs, 2001). Whether or not paranoia is actually running rampant in the minds of citizens, the fact remains that there is a mandate to govern America; and, therefore, there is an urgent need to regain reason-

able levels of trust in government from citizens everywhere. The citizen-government partnership is vital in a democracy.

MANDATES FOR GOVERNMENTAL TRANSPARENCY

The prevailing issues surrounding the need for increased public trust in government are getting much attention from citizens, academics, and government officials in the United States and around the world. This is largely the result of dealing with domestic issues, such as the coordination failure of governments following Hurricane Katrina and the Myanmar cyclone and Haiti earthquake rescue efforts. The need for greater investments in communities and the broad international crisis resulting from challenges surrounding Iraq all helped to crystallize the need for more public trust in government. The discussion of the lack of public trust is often linked to the need for increased transparency in government.² The overall condition is that citizens want to feel confident that government is defending their interests.

Due to these concerns, citizens and leaders worldwide are putting the issue of transparency at the forefront as being a vehicle that is generally credited with putting an end to secrecy in government, improving public trust, and moving in the direction of good government. Governmental transparency is rooted in America's symbolism of freedom, as described in the Declaration of Independence, in which citizens are empowered to act against governmental actions that undermine the fundamental American principles of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Every American presidential administration, from George Washington to the present, has experienced one or another form of corruption which has had negative impacts on public trust (Richter and Burke, 2007). Challenges due to corruption government administrations represent a failure in administrative leadership. However, modern-day methods of transparency have to prove themselves as tools for eliminating such forms of corruption if the transparency movement will have any sustaining impact on increasing public trust.

Democracy in the United States allows citizens to act upon actions by the government with which they disagree, as established through the Declaration of Independence. This principle was established in 1775 and eloquently articulated by Patrick Henry, then governor of Virginia. Henry took his place in history following the Boston Tea Party of 1773, in which American colonists dumped 342 containers of tea into the Boston harbor. The British Parliament enacted a series of acts, or unjust laws, in response to the rebellion in Massachusetts. Henry delivered his famous speech, "give me liberty or give me

death,” which led to favorable votes for resolutions enabling Virginia to join in the American Revolution:

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, “Peace! Peace!”—But there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death! —Patrick Henry, March 23, 1775

Henry’s speech is indicative of the determined spirit and strong will that Americans exhibit when fighting for their country. Freedom has become synonymous with the notion of transparency, and it is commonly understood that citizens have a right to know what is taking place within their governments in democratic societies. Leaders and citizens alike have viewed government as a partnership while moving in the direction of good government or responding to challenges that they face together. During the American Revolution, the military served as an example where civilians and the professional military fight common wars together (Tocqueville, 2000). Some leaders have shed light on the partnership between citizens and government as a means for improving public trust in America’s government.

Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address has impacted the United States’ foundation more than any other address in our nation’s history. Although one of the shortest speeches ever recorded, it was a major statement for the Declaration of Independence, bringing our attention to Thomas Jefferson’s words “all men are created equal” as being fundamental to the American government. Lincoln’s conclusion that “government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth” has become one with our understanding and acceptance of democracy and a further call that citizens are partners with government, which serves as an underpinning argument in support for transparency. Lincoln understood that citizens generally trust government when they feel connected to its goals and objectives.

Grassroots movements in the United States have embraced the partnership between citizens and government. The civil rights movement placed the burden of transparency on citizens when they opposed governmental actions with which they disagreed. In the case of the 1960s civil rights movement, Martin Luther King’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” argued that, when an ordinance is used to preserve segregation and deny citizens the First Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and peaceful protest, it becomes unjust. He stated that one who breaks an unjust law must do it openly (i.e., transparently). King wrote this letter in April 1963, while serving a jail sentence for participating in a civil rights demonstration in Birmingham, Alabama. The partnership between citizens and government is a double-edged sword for

citizens in the case of the civil rights movement. According to King, citizens have to be transparent when dealing with unjust laws. King saw that the burden of transparency should be placed on the citizen to shed light on the unjust law and then to allow his or her actions to be open for public scrutiny (which can sometimes result in punishment) when opposing actions against the government. Unjust laws in government should be brought to the forefront and be open to the general public for assessment and correction. The partnership between citizens and government is reciprocal; both have expectations for transparency.

In an article titled “Coalition-Building to Fight Corruption,” Gonzalez de Asis (2000) argues for a process by which civil society and governmental stakeholders can demand accountability from each other, an approach that generates and sustains a citizen—government dynamic that aids reform. Coalition-building between citizens and government in an effort to fight corruption is in part a context for governmental transparency. When citizens are true partners in the citizen-government relationship, there is greater likelihood that there will be an increase in public trust. Transparency allows for openness in government so that citizens can become aware of how public resources are being used and distributed. Having direct insight or involvement with government allows for a reasonable or common understanding of the limits of government, enabling citizens to grasp better what governments can and cannot do, which eventually increases public trust.

The United States has been viewed as a worldwide advocate of transparency in government in that it was a pioneer in the adoption of freedom-of-information legislation that promoted transparency with the passage of the Act in the 1960s. Enacted in 1966, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) established the public’s right to obtain information from federal government agencies. The FOIA is codified at 5 U.S.C. Section 552. “Any person” can file a FOIA request, noted to include U.S. citizens, foreign nationals, organizations, associations, and universities. In 1974, after the Watergate scandal, the act was amended to force greater agency compliance. It was also amended in 1996 to allow for greater access to electronic information (National Security Archives, 2010).

The desire for an open government is driven by the notion that, as taxpayers, citizens have the right to know what is being paid for and what is being done in our stead (Piotrowski, 2007). A 2002 First Amendment Center/American Journalism Review poll found that 48 percent of Americans feel that they have too little access to government documents (Paulson, 2002). There is an obligation for government and those who work in it to serve our best interest. By gaining insight into what occurs inside of government, we can begin to discover if the obligation is being met (Piotrowski, 2007).

Rubin (2009) has argued that transparency is vital for maintaining democracy and good government. For transparency to work, says Rubin, it must

provide information that is relevant to the lives of citizens. She illustrates this with a discussion of the budget transparency requirements of the financial community, politicians, general citizens, and the press. Transparency, as an effort to improve public trust, has to continue to find ways to show the general public the quantity and quality of service they are getting for their dollars.

Transparency in government must prove itself as a tool for eliminating systemic corruption, such as that following Hurricane Katrina, before it increases public trust by noticeable levels. The partnership between citizens and government is supported in American founding principles, while the burden of transparency is shared by citizens and governmental officials alike. The FOIA further establishes the partnership between citizens and government, as well as promoting the notion that transparency is vital for maintaining democracy and good government. For transparency to work, it must provide information that is relevant to the lives of citizens and all who are affected by the actions of government.

TECHNOLOGY, TRANSPARENCY, AND THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

As transparency in government continues to become an essential component of democracy, the empowering of ordinary citizens is essential so they can take a meaningful part in shaping the decisions that affect their lives. In theoretical terms, transparency is valuable because it makes it possible to overcome what social scientists call “agency” problems. In any large society, principals—such as citizens or shareholders—delegate decision-making responsibility to agents—such as a government or corporate management. Problems arise because the principals are never able to monitor perfectly their agents. The whole point of having agents is, after all, that it is too costly and time-consuming for the principals to keep themselves fully informed (Florini, 2004). Through the use of technology and transparency, citizens can become involved in solving problems in government by providing input to difficult challenges experienced by various governments.

Technology is rising at an accelerated pace in government through the use of Web 2.0. Excitement about the government’s use of Web 2.0 increased within governmental agencies when Barack Obama’s campaign used Web 2.0 technologies—such as the social network, Facebook, and Twitter—to bring millions of citizens to a common goal (Ressler, 2009). Current uses of social networks in governments may become the vehicle that governments can rely on to develop not only an engaged citizenry, but also partners in solving problems in government.

The Digital Divide

Considering that many communities throughout the United States may not have access to the resources and technology required to become an engaged citizenry in the era of transparency means that essential inputs could be left out of the democratic discussion of improving governments. Without the voices of those considered to be disenfranchised and underprivileged, American citizens, particularly the political elite, can more easily ignore issues vital to these marginalized communities (Castells, 2005).

Local and county governments within the United States may also experience challenges because of the enormous digital divide. These governmental entities lack access to basic technologies that allow them to engage citizens in their communities as enjoyed by the governments in the rest of the nation. The national broadband initiative for rural communities is an example of the current efforts to connect communities to the Web 2.0 movement that is leading the nation in the direction of greater transparency. For transparency to increase public trust, citizens in every community must be able to communicate with their governments.

The “Matthew Effect” and the Digital Divide

The Matthew Effect itself speaks to the rise of usage gaps and their basis in current governmental technologies and tendencies of differentiation (Merton, 1968). This concerns the argument that communities and individuals that already have the most resources and best positions in society take the most advantage of a very new resource, such as the possession and use of new technology in government. It is related to the principle of “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.” The concept is derived from an expression in the biblical Gospel of Matthew 25:29 (Pearson, 2009).

Essentially, the Matthew Effect says that those who already have a head start in possessing particular resources benefit more from a new resource than those who are behind and already are at some disadvantage. In the case of information and communication technology, the existing possessions are material, mental, temporal, social, and cultural resources; and the new resource is the potential value of having and using computers and networks. As the diffusion of computer technology into the social system increases, segments of the population with higher socio-economic status tend to acquire this technology at a faster rate than the lower status segments. The assumption that the divide is endemic to new information technology is inherently flawed, however, since steps can be taken to combat it (Pearson, 2009). On February 17, 2009, for example, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) into law, allocating \$7.2 billion in grant and loan funding to expand broadband/wireless access to rural and unserved and underserved parts of the country. Expanding broadband into

rural and unserved communities seems to be the answer for the digital divide and transparency.

Until the broadband initiative is fully implemented within these communities, the goal should be to provide interventions through the use of immediate technology, rather than the long-range goal of broadband. In order to continue to make progress in the direction of democracy for everyone, interventions to connect unserved communities to their governments has to be constant, short-term, and less dependent on long-range solutions. Acknowledging the impact of the Matthew Effect on the digital divide should encourage a greater commitment to connecting technology in struggling communities, which is in keeping with the goals of democracy.

IMPROVED TRANSPARENCY AND LOCAL INVESTMENTS

Worldwide evidence shows that a capable state with appropriate and transparent government institutions produces results in terms of income growth, national wealth, and social achievements. Higher incomes and investment growth, as well as longer life expectancy, are found in countries with effective, honest, and meritocratic government institutions. These have streamlined and clear regulations, where the rule of law is enforced fairly and protects the citizenry and property and where external accountability mechanisms involving civil society and the media are present (Kaufmann, 2002). International and historical experience, as well as ongoing research, also tells us that capable and “clean” government does not first require a country to become fully modernized and wealthy (Kaufmann, 2002). Research on fiscal investments in communities makes it clear that transparency should be a goal for governments as they attempt to increase their bottom line. According to the literature, openness surrounding official information is said to boost the economic potential for a country, as the private sector looks for a host of indicators—such as the availability of information on policies, programs, official rules, and the distribution of resources—before making investments (Malaluan, 2001).

The primary challenge to transparency is corruption expertise within and among governments. Corruption, defined as abuse of public power for private benefit, is a global phenomenon that affects almost all aspects of social and economic life. Examples of corruption include the sale of government property by public officials, bribery, embezzlement of public funds, patronage, and nepotism (Kaufmann, 2002). Once transparency is appropriately achieved, corruption should be reduced, and increased investment in local communities would likely follow.

Corruption distorts the allocation of local resources and the performance of local governments. The consequences of corruption are poor public services, increased social polarization, inefficiency in public services, low investment in a community, and decreased economic growth (Gonzalez de Asis, 2000, 2009). There is a resistance among businesses to locate in communities that are rife with corruption and poor accountability. For example, Atlantic City, with its glistening casinos, economically poor constituents, and ongoing political scandals, serves as one example of the challenges faced by local governments (Elson and Dinkins, 2009). New Orleans is another major city with public disclosure of government corruption in recent years. In fact, the senior member of the city council pleaded guilty to federal charges for accepting approximately \$19,000 in bribes and kickbacks from a local businessman who was trying to maintain a city parking lot contract (Nossiter, 2007).

Transparency in public finance involves the increased flow of timely and reliable economic, social, and political information. Some of the key materials concern monetary and fiscal policy, government service provision, private investors' use of loans, the creditworthiness of borrowers, and the activities of international institutions. Conversely, a lack of transparency results when someone (whether a government official, a public institution, a corporation, or a bank) deliberately withholds access to this information or misrepresents the information or fails to ensure that the information provided is of adequate relevance or quality (Vishwanath and Kaufmann, 1999).

According to Irene Rubin, elected officials are essential contributors in the finance cycle in state and local government. What do they need to know? Rubin says they especially need to know who is receiving tax breaks, and she believes they do not know this most of the time: "They *do* if they have made a particular decision to give a tax break, but they don't know about prior tax breaks or about the cost of these 'tax expenditures'" (Rubin, 2009, 15). Frankly, anything that you cannot see is rife for corruption, implies Rubin. Elected officials, including mayors, have limited discretion over the budget in general. However, there may be a little more discretion provided to the mayor with capital budgets, and an understanding of budget prices is important (Veal, 2008). According to Rubin (2009, 15), council members need to know why they cannot transfer money from here to there. "I've got money over here and I don't have it over there," a council member unfamiliar with fund accounting regulations might say. "Why can't I just move it?" The bottom line, the analogy from business, does not hold here. There is not one bottom line in the public budget. There are probably twenty or thirty, and they all have to balance.

Elected officials also need to know how accurate and reliable revenue estimates are when received from their staffs, but that is not typically the type of information provided in the budget. It can generally be determined if it is

known what you are looking for. However, it is generally believed that elected officials are not fully knowledgeable about budgeting, Rubin (2009) argues. In order to increase transparency in governments, public officials need to be well trained in all aspects of their responsibilities to ensure that appropriate decision-making processes designed to promote a greater understanding about critical issues affecting the public needs and interest are being followed.

Governments with appropriate and transparent institutions have been shown to produce positive results in terms of income and growth. Research on fiscal investments made in communities makes it clear that transparency should be a goal for governments as they attempt to increase their bottom lines. Openness about official information is said to boost the economic potential for a government. There is a resistance to doing business with governments that are rife with corruption and have poor accountability. To improve the culture of good government, elected officials need to know how reliable revenue estimates are when they get them, realize where previous dollars have been spent, and embrace transparency as a means of growing the communities for which they have responsibility.

MEASURING OR EVALUATING TRANSPARENCY

There is no single standardized instrument available that is designed to measure transparency. Measuring transparency is a difficult task due to the varied approaches that could potentially be used to view transparency, and transparency means different things to different people (Vishwanath and Kaufmann, 2001). As it relates to state and local governments in the United States, a complex set of interrelated relationships must exist between citizens, the press, and institutional dynamics.

A statistical measure of transparency is the precision of the information that is obtained, which is, in turn, a function of quality and relevance. Lack of transparency in the case of accounting information, for example, may be measured by a firm's officially disclosed balance sheet information with the assessments of auditing agencies that investigate firms for credit approval (Vishwanath and Kaufmann, 2001). Another approach to increasing governmental transparency in state and local governments might be to construct criteria and frameworks for evaluating the appropriate levels of decisions about secrecy and openness. Furthermore, increasing transparency at the state and local levels with the use of new technology has the potential for creating models and tools that could be transferred to national and global governments.

Improving citizen confidence in government is important in a democracy, and the concept of “governmental transparency” is often associated with “good government” and “best practices.” In terms of the positive implications of transparency, appropriate levels of transparency methods in government can become reference points to best practices for agencies outside of the government (i.e., nonprofits, businesses, universities, etc.). Appropriate transparency also lives up to the ideal of “government of the people, by the people, for the people.” Therefore, developing appropriate transparency and criteria for evaluating it is of the utmost importance for governments that wish to attain and maintain the trust and support of their citizens.

One of the best ways to create accountability is through measurements that track how well an organization is performing against established targets. These measures would provide a means of tracking, reporting, and improving the transparency and openness each initiative is intended to implement. This system of accountability should also include an effort to measure the overall success of an organization. Characteristics that may be considered as foundational measures which can contribute to governmental accountability are identified in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Twenty Ideas for Improving Transparency in Local Governments

1. Implement open meetings and open records policies.
2. Invite the public to attend all commission, board, and council meetings.
3. Include time for citizen commentary and input during every meeting.
4. Pass a budget, make it public, and manage the government’s funds in accordance with the budget.
5. Make available to the public short descriptions of the chart of accounts and all restricted funds so they can understand and interpret financial records.
6. Make audited financial statements available for public inspection.
7. Conduct public bid openings for all capital purchases and contracted services.
8. Make available to the public all records of tax abatements and inter-fund transfers.
9. Conduct polls and citizen surveys to gather public viewpoints and track public satisfaction with government services.
10. Involve citizens in strategic planning sessions.
11. Provide media packets and information about government services, schools, businesses, and health care facilities.
12. Maintain an up-to-date and informative website.

13. To overcome problems with “the Digital Divide,” place dedicated computer terminals in public places (such as City Hall, public libraries, the County Courthouse, shopping malls, and public gathering places) so all citizens can have access to government websites.
14. Post facts, figures, records, policy documents, and other information on the website.
15. Post codes and ordinances, the budget, and information about every department and board (including contact information) on the website.
16. Post on the website maps, land use plans, flood plain diagrams, and zoning information.
17. Post on the website agendas and minutes of council or commission meetings.
18. Post job vacancies, job descriptions, and hiring policies on the website.
19. Use blogs, tweets, and other social networking media to keep the public informed.
20. Hold departmental open houses, citizens’ academies, and “ride-alongs” so members of the public can meet government employees, learn about what they do, and observe them in action.

How do we measure success in transparency? What are the results we are trying to achieve and how will we know we have produced those results? An example of a results measure is the final vote in an election. An example of a possible transparency and openness measure is a public satisfaction index as measured by some type of survey or voting process. The desired result would be to achieve some target percentage of public satisfaction with the transparency and openness of the government. Another example would be the percentage of the American adult population who participate in the government process in some way: engaging in dialogues with public officials, providing feedback on proposed actions, visiting a website where these measures or proposed government actions are published, and so on. (Ward, 2009).

Grades are another indicator for measuring transparency. The great disadvantage of grades, however, is that governments that receive low grades tend to blame the process and the study in order to be able to justify their bad grades (Greene, 2009). Furthermore, because there are different levels of government in the United States, the argument is sometimes made that “transparency means different things to different governments.” In the meantime, governments must continue to make efforts to “shed light” and provide a degree of transparency.

The varied approaches that can potentially be used to view transparency make measuring it difficult. Constructing criteria and frameworks for evaluating the appropriate levels of decisions about secrecy and openness is a

positive approach. Creating accountability through measuring how well an organization is performing against established targets is moving in the right direction for measurement. Grades indicate the levels of quality and help to generate substantial publicity. Finding an agreed-upon measurable approach to assess transparency in governments throughout the United States brings the reality of transparency closer to the rest of the world.

GLOBALIZATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Although there is a need to continue to improve research on transparency in state and local government in the United States, the need for transparency has been supported by governments around the globe. Globalization has stimulated an international movement designed to promote increased access-to-information (ATI) legislation and institutions which, in theory, are designed to advance government information flow and governmental accountability (Armstrong, 2005). The globalization movement has led governments in the world's two most populous nations (China and India) to adopt regulations or legislation to demonstrate and implement various levels of transparency (Relly and Sabharwal, 2009). Again, on the global level, the biggest challenge to the increased support for governmental transparency, however, is that there is not a mutually agreed-upon definition as to what transparency actually is (Florini, 2007).

Transparency is a fundamental component of democratic government and addresses the rights of citizens to know about the activities of their government. Too much secrecy in government often leads to an abuse of power and a lack of accountability. Although "too much" openness can be as counter-productive as "not enough" openness, challenges, such as Hurricane Katrina, make the case that governments are probably not struggling with being too open. A definition of what appropriate transparency actually is seems to be a required discourse for various levels of government.

SUMMARY

The need for increased public trust in government is often linked to the need for increased transparency in government (whether dealing with challenges on Wall Street, potential health crises, or other vital national and international problems). However, citizens want and need to feel confident that government is defending their interests. Worldwide, the issue of transparency has been placed at the forefront as being a vehicle to put an end to secrecy in government, to improve public trust, and to move in the direction of good

government. Democracy allows for citizens to be knowledgeable of and to respond to actions by a government with which they disagree, and freedom has become synonymous with the notion of transparency (i.e., citizens have a right to know what is taking place within their governments in democratic societies).

Abraham Lincoln's conclusion that "government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth" has become one with our understanding and acceptance of democracy and a further call that citizens are partners with government, which is an underpinning argument in support for transparency. Coalition-building between citizens and governments, in an effort to fight corruption, is in agreement with the goals and objectives of governmental transparency. In order to continue to make progress in the direction of democracy for everyone, interventions necessary to connect unserved communities to their governments must be constant, short-term, and less dependent on long-range solutions. Acknowledging the impact of the Matthew Effect on the digital divide should encourage a greater commitment to connecting technology with struggling communities, which is in keeping with the goals of democracy. The Matthew Effect speaks to the fact that individuals who already have the most resources and higher positions in society take the most advantage of very new resources.

Governments with appropriate and transparent institutions produce positive results in terms of income and growth. Research on fiscal investments made in communities makes it clear that transparency should be a goal for governments as they attempt to increase their bottom lines. Openness about official information is said to boost the economic potential for governments.

The lack of an agreed-upon instrument to measure transparency makes the discussion of measurement difficult. However, constructing criteria and frameworks for evaluating the appropriate levels of decisions about secrecy and openness is a positive approach.

Scandals accelerate the need for increased transparency in the minds of citizens. More than anything else, continuous training of local elected officials on transparency mandates, as well as on the principles of appropriate decision-making, is needed. Each year, governments experience scandals that often involve the misuse of taxpayers' funds. A goal of transparency should be to place decision-makers in an open environment; so that only ethical decisions can be made for their constituents, as well as to protect the integrity of the careers of governmental officials. A definition of what appropriate transparency is seems to be the required discourse for various levels of government.

This chapter set out working frameworks regarding the need for increased transparency as a basis for improving public trust in today's changing local and state governments. It examined the complex ways in which governments have mandates to improve the lives of citizens and how they can better use

technology and processes to increase general public trust in government. It then discussed the idea that increasing transparency in local governments has a positive impact on investments in local communities, examined the challenges that Web 2.0 presents to the digital divide, commented on the issue of constructing criteria for appropriate transparency in local governments, and concluded with a discussion regarding the importance of improving trust in governments. The authors recommend that governments seeking to increase transparency adopt open meeting and open records policies, provide audited financial reports for public scrutiny, maintain an up-to-date and informative website, and employ social networking methods and citizen surveys to keep the public informed and involved. These “best practices” characterize progressive, transparent government.

NOTES

1. Dirk Kempthorne provided commentary during a meeting with Don-Terry Veal and Toby Warren on November 3, 2009, relating to the issue of transparency in government. Dirk Kempthorne has varied perspectives in government, having served as a mayor, governor, U.S. senator for Utah, and U.S. secretary of the interior.

2. The challenge of the lack of public trust in government emerges whether dealing with Wall Street, potential health care crises, or other vital national and international problems.

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Chapter Four

Bringing Transparency to Public Budgeting

Irene Rubin

I am a budgeter, which may mean something to people in Washington, but doesn't tend to mean anything to people outside the Beltway. This means that my life revolves around not just the numbers, but also the politics of budgeting. The key thing that you need to know about transparency and budgeting is that budgeting certainly reflects the "real world," but sometimes this is hard to see. Part of the reason we don't know that it is the real world stems from the "laundry list" or "telephone directory" approach to budgeting. They throw everything in the world at you without telling you where the important stuff is or even what it is that's important. Consequently, most of the important stuff in the budget is there, but you can't see it; and this creates a sense of unreality. I don't know how much experience you've had with municipal budgeting, but it tends to be incredibly detailed and also very unrevealing.

Why do we need a budget that's more transparent? Well, for one thing I am a deep believer in democracy. We live in a democratic society. However, the only way that budgets become real is if those who construct them make it happen. If you don't believe in democracy, it isn't there. Don't count on John Q. Public to figure out what's going on. If you don't tell the citizens about the budget in a way that responds to their interests, they are not going to pay attention. You can't just say, "I am not going to make this budget and this audit report interesting because there's nobody out there reading it." They're not reading it because it doesn't answer their questions. If you want them to read it, you have to make it address what they need to know.

Thus, the critical issue here is how do you go from the telephone directory model of accountability, the accounting model of accountability, to a political model of accountability that builds public trust? Moreover, we have a

hope (even if it is not much more than a hope) that if we make budgets accountable, if we make them transparent, we will reduce the amount of corruption. Political corruption flourishes in the shadows; so if you shine a spotlight on it, it will go away or at least go to another corner. In turning a spotlight on the important parts of the budget, the first step is to determine what is it that people need to know. They don't necessarily need to know what is currently in there. Materials and data may be included for legal reasons, but the budget has to be more than a legally compliant document. The first aspect of transparency from my perspective, therefore, is defining and also highlighting the data that are needed for specific audiences. Who are your audiences? Who are you trying to reach? What do they need to know? And then, how do you highlight those things in a legalistic document that provides a whole lot of other stuff?

I would say there are three major audiences for a municipal budget. The first is the financial community; the second, the politicians; and the third, the community, that is, the citizens and the press. I put those last two together because I think it is the press that talks to the citizens; I don't think they talk very much directly to city hall. So what does each of these groups need to know? How do you tell them in a way that is going to engage their interests and also provide the information at the same time? In short, how can you create a public dialogue?

The financial community is interested primarily in whether the budget is balanced, not legally but actually. Often there is a big gap between what a budget looks like and how it will actually come out. Thus, financial people want to know the short- and the long-term financial history and health of a community, be it a city, a county, or another type of local government. What is the community's ability and willingness to pay back debt if it borrows? It may be able to afford it but not be interested in doing so. Much of this information that they need is in the annual financial report, which is not my point of discussion here. So my question is, if it's not in the annual financial report, what do you need to put in the budget document itself, which does tend to get more press coverage? Is the budget really balanced? Or is it only formalistically balanced? What are the legal requirements for balance? When is the document required to be balanced? This is a trick question, because often times the requirement that it be balanced is only when it is presented and not necessarily throughout the year or at the end.

Sometimes the financial community wants the whole ball of wax. What's happening to fund balances from year to year? How are the fund balances being used? If there is a surplus this year, what's being done with it? The financial community needs to know whether that is being spent on one-time expenditures, such as fixing a bridge in Minneapolis, or is it being spent on ongoing expenses, like labor settlements. There's a huge difference between

the implications of these two situations for the financial health of the community.

Another set of questions concerns the efforts that are being made to prevent deficits from occurring. Is there a rainy-day fund? Does the city or county save up a certain amount of money just to deal with the times when revenues are not as abundant, when the economy's not doing well, or when a major employer moves out of town? And if there is such a fund, is it well funded? Many states, for example, have rainy-day funds, but they don't fund them very well, if at all. So, they're there on paper but not there in reality. Thus, the financial community wants to know if it's there and how it works.

Here are some of the less obvious questions. What might obscure whether the budget is really balanced? What are the unfunded or underfunded liabilities? What are the costs that have been incurred but for which money has not yet been set aside? What are the pension obligations, for example? What are the capital repair obligations? The city of Chicago is now wrestling with a vastly underfunded mass transit system. For example, there was a major derailment not that long ago, and it turned out that they hadn't been doing the inspections or the inspectors weren't being listened to because there wasn't any money to fix things. Well, the result was a loss of life! These are the things that ought to be transparent in the budget. How do you do that? You do an inventory of your physical facilities and their conditions, and you then develop a plan for how to get them up to snuff. How much would it cost? How much money have you actually put aside? We have the tools to make all of this transparent, and it ought to be done in every major community. This would have prevented the disaster in Minneapolis.

Another thing that isn't always transparent is the underfunding of services or what I call service deficits. What should we be funding and is not being supported? Or, what are we not funding up to the level of quality that the citizens expect? For example, have we failed to put into place a hazmat program? I believe that we are seriously underfunding domestic security. We have major vulnerabilities, but we are not spending enough to protect ourselves and our citizens.

Transparency problems can also be severe concerning inter-fund transfers. City budgets are set up for accountability based on little pockets of money, each of which is earmarked for a specific purpose. There are legal requirements for the spending of the money when it's in that fund. What happens when it moves to another fund? Or on to yet a third fund? Once the funds have made two hops, they are no longer traceable by an auditor. These transfers could well be used to obscure deficits. Furthermore, are all the relevant operations of the city in the budget or are there off-budget entities? This is very visible at the national level but not at the local level. Sometimes the entities that are not recorded in the local budget are the ones where the financial problems exist, the rug under which the dirt is swept or major

repositories of patronage. So you need to figure out whether what is in the budget should be in the budget. Finally, there is the issue of end-loading, like a dump truck with a backend-loader. We sometimes do that with the budget. We put our obligations for spending way off into the future, and we burden future generations so that current politicians don't have to deal with it. This ought to be transparent in the budget. We know how to do this, but it is often not done.

Elected officials compose the second important audience. What do they need to know? I believe that they especially need to know who is receiving tax breaks. I don't think they know that much of the time. They know if they have made a particular decision to give a tax break, but they don't know about prior tax breaks or about the costs of these "tax expenditures." Many states record their tax breaks, but local governments generally do not. This is an area I would call opaque. We have no idea who is getting the tax breaks. Frankly, anything that you can't see is rife for corruption.

Council members need to know the laws that frame the budget, but typically they don't. They want to know, why can't I transfer money from here to there? I've got money over here, and I don't have it over there. Why can't I just move it? The bottom line, the analogy from business, doesn't hold here. There is not one bottom line in the budget. There are probably twenty or thirty. They all have to balance.

Elected officials also need to know how good and reliable revenue estimates are when they get them from their staff, but that's typically not the type of information provided in the budget. You can figure it out, if you know what you are looking for. However, most elected officials don't know. They don't have the time or the expertise to do so. This is something that can be made very much more transparent quite easily.

In particular, decision-makers need to know what are the consequences of a dollar more here, versus a dollar more there. Ideally, the proposed budgets should present elected officials with choices about the impact of their decisions. If they spend a dollar here, what improvement would they get and, later, what improvement did they get? Simply saying the police department gets a 5 percent increase is not transparent. It is much more transparent to indicate that the funds will be used to add three more officers who will patrol specific neighborhoods, which should reduce the number of kids who are drawn into the criminal justice system. Then, afterwards you can see whether these expenditures really were effective.

Third, what do citizens and the press need to know? Well, the press wants to know the winners and the losers. Which projects were proposed, and which ones got funded and which ones didn't? This often is not transparent. This again would have helped in the Minneapolis case. That was a project that was eligible for federal spending, and the choice was made not to fund it year after year after year. If I were the press, I would want to know what was

funded instead and why! This is what I would want to know in every state and locality. Both the press and the citizenry want to know if a city is wasting its money. They want to know how efficient the city's operations are.

So the key question here is, how can public officials demonstrate that there is no corruption or waste? How can we gain back the public trust that we have lost? Performance budgeting can be critical here by using benchmarks, best practices, and comparisons with other cities that have high ratings from citizens and businesses. More broadly, how does the budget relate to the goals of the community and to the council? Is there a community planning process, and, if so, how do its goals get expressed in the budget? Again, this typically is not the slightest bit transparent for many governments. If a community floods, what in the budget was aimed at flood reduction? Where were those expenditures and what results did they produce? Similarly, how much is a city spending on programs that are of interest to citizens, say pothole filling? How many potholes get filled each year? And what's the trade-off between pothole filling and resurfacing? I know that, but that's only because I have been working with municipal budgets for thirty years. The citizens don't know it, the council doesn't know it, and the financial community doesn't know it.

How do we make this information clearer? One thing we need to use is better formatting. One approach is highlighting—literally what you do with yellow Magic Markers on your textbooks—which could be used on budget documents. More importantly, we need to use the Internet much more than we have been doing. We need to make the budget available in downloadable form for a spreadsheet. Let people make their own analysis of what is going on. We need to do it in a form that allows for questioning. We need budgets to be searchable with meaningful keywords. We need to be able to provide backup documentation through the internet. Cities say, "We can't do this, we can't tell you about the contracts and the contractors and the bidding process because it would take up all of the budget." Well, that's just wrong. Actually, you can put it on a website. Chicago, of all cities, does this; and they did it because of charges of corruption, which were probably justified. As a result, city contracts were exposed to a whole lot of sunshine. Chicago put them all up on the Web in searchable form. In essence, the city said, "Go look!" It's fun to browse through. You need to also put up links to the laws that undergird the budget. What can we do? What is illegal? This should all make municipal budgeting much more transparent and much more accountable. I think such an effort would help build public trust.

Chapter Five

Using the Internet to Create Transparency for State Budgets

Sandra Fabry Wirtz

I handle state government affairs at Americans for Tax Reform. We are based in Washington, but we work with state legislatures and activists around the country. We focus on both state and federal issues. Since in my capacity as state government affairs manager I deal primarily with state elected officials and activists, I will focus my remarks on state government spending transparency. I would like to tell you how we have been working with lawmakers and activists, and I am excited to say that there is some good news for taxpayers in this.

Let me start with putting what is happening at the state level into context. We all know that transparency has always been a catch phrase, be it in political campaigns or issue-related speeches and testimony, but what does it really mean? I looked up the definitions for transparency or transparent; and one conception that I found was something that is characterized by visibility or accessibility of information, especially concerning business practices. Now, while he may not have used the term transparency, one of the founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, was very fond of this concept in order to achieve accountability. He once said, “We might hope to see the finances of the union as clear and intelligible as a merchant’s book, so that every member of congress and every man of every mind in the union should be able to comprehend them, to investigate abuses, and consequently to control them.” (Jefferson 1802)

In other words, to achieve accountability, government expenditures should be transparent and accessible. After all, the consent of the governed from which government derives its just powers is much more meaningful if it’s informed consent.

So if we are looking to implement fiscal transparency as Jefferson implied we should, we have to ask what is the fiscal information that should be transparent and accessible. I believe that in today's environment, we need a new definition or a new standard of access, because much of the fiscal information today is available to the public due to sunshine laws both at the state and federal levels. As we all know, however, being subject to, say, the Freedom of Information Act doesn't necessarily mean easy access. The Internet is making things a lot easier in today's high-tech age, so there really is no excuse for the continuing restrictions on access. Right now there is a movement underway at the state level to increase fiscal transparency. For example, we should seek to make comprehensive information on government expenditures available to the public on a single, searchable website that is free of charge. Furthermore, there is an acknowledgment that access is not enough and that the information has to be user friendly and feedback oriented.

What started this effort at the state level is federal legislation, actually. It was the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, which creates a free, publicly searchable website for all federal contracts and grants, providing access to data on all payments of more than twenty-five thousand dollars with exceptions for classified information and federal assistance payments made to individuals. The federal effort, in turn, inspired elected officials at the state level to work to empower taxpayers to become fiscal watchdogs themselves; and they began to emulate and in many cases actually go beyond the federal legislation. So far five states this year, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Minnesota, and Hawaii, have passed legislation mandating the creation of such searchable, stand-alone websites for their state government expenditures. Thanks to these bills, taxpayers in those states will be able to go in and track government expenditures at a mouse click. Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas provide more comprehensive data than do Minnesota and Hawaii, but certainly all of those bills provide a good starting point.

Governor Matt Blunt of Missouri has actually taken matters into his own hands, as he signed an executive order launching the Missouri accountability portal. Missouri's "Map" is a free database that can be accessed at mapyourtaxes.mo.gov, which allows you to search government expenditures by broad categories and also by specific businesses and individuals. That website, which incidentally was created out of existing revenues at no extra cost to taxpayers, has been very well received and has been accessed more than one million times since its inception just about two months ago!

In Texas, the governor posted his own office's expenditures online; and then the state comptroller, Suzanne Combs, created a web portal called *Where the Money Goes*. The legislation that was recently passed in Texas should further enhance those efforts. We're working with law-makers in all states that have not yet addressed the issue and also with those states where

efforts did not go anywhere this year. There are at least a dozen other states trying to create such websites in the coming session.

I believe that this is a tremendously important movement because it has the potential to illuminate fraud, waste, and abuse. It has so much potential because transparency is a neutral concept, a transpartisan concept, that isn't embedded in our current political polarization. For example, in many cases these bills have been passed with unanimous support. In short, it's not a left-right, right-left issue. It's a right-wrong issue! We all want accountable government, and regardless of a person's political creed, there is an agreement that taxpayers who fund government deserve to know how their tax dollars are being spent.

We think that taxpayers will be best served when all levels of government are required to disclose their expenditures in such a clear, searchable format, and we think that the actual contracts and expenditure agreements should be made available as well. We also think that feedback functions are very important. One thing that Texas does in its legislation is to require that every state agency have a website link to its comprehensive database. This will serve to foster a better understanding of the ways in which government operates and will help illuminate impropriety in dealing with taxpayer dollars, be it perceived or real, thus helping to identify cost savings. At this point, we are at a very early stage. Already, though, we have been given specific examples of such cost savings, and we're sure that we will be seeing more of those. This movement goes beyond being the right thing to do, because the public has a right to know and because it provides true practical value. We at Americans for Tax Reform are excited to be a part of it!

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Chapter Six

Transparency in the Contracting Process

Suzanne J. Piotrowski

I am on the faculty of the School of Public Affairs at Rutgers University-Newark. Most of my past work has centered on transparency, particularly revolving around the United States Federal Freedom of Information Act. My current work is on transparency at the local government level, particularly towns and municipalities in New Jersey. I am a board member of both the Citizen Action Project at the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information at the University of Florida and the New Jersey Foundation for Open Government.

I have been asked to speak about how transparency and government contracting intersect. This is an important and timely topic because at increasing rates, traditional government work is being done by contractors. Unfortunately, we know that this work is not always done well and that these contracts are not necessarily obtained in the most ethical manner. My home state of New Jersey is particularly ethically challenged (Franzese and O'Hern Sr. 2005). For example, there just were eleven new indictments of government officials regarding roofing and insurance contracts (Whelan 2007). This is clearly an omen that we need more transparency with respect to contracting.

Governmental transparency, sometimes referred to as openness, is the degree to which access to government information is available. Openness is not a new issue. The German sociologist Max Weber wrote in the 1920s about the overwhelming tendency of bureaucracy toward secrecy (Weber 1968). In a personal correspondence in 1822, James Madison argued:

A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or, perhaps, both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own Governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives. (Madison 1999)

Francis Rourke contended that “the tradition of disclosure might wither in the shade of administrative evasion or inertia were it not for the continued exercise of outside vigilance” (1960). Discussions of transparency have not been limited to government. Before he became a Supreme Court justice, Louis Dembitz Brandeis addressed the need for sunshine in the banking industry (Brandeis 1933).

Governmental transparency enables individuals to find out what is going on inside a government through five different ways or avenues of access to information (Piotrowski 2007). The first involves freedom-of-information type requests. The federal government has the Freedom of Information Act, commonly referred to as the FOIA. Every state has a freedom-of-information law, and many of them predate the federal FOIA. However, they are not all called Freedom of Information Acts. For example, New Jersey’s freedom of information law is called the Open Public Records Act. Regardless of what they are called, these laws all allow individuals to request documents from government; and at least in theory, if they are not exempt for specific reasons, these documents should be released in a timely manner.

The second avenue to access government information is the proactive dissemination of information through mechanisms such as performance measurement reports, government archives, and websites. Governments are increasingly posting information on websites or putting information in public archives. The third avenue of access is open meetings, which are used by all levels of government. At the federal level, there are provisions for open meetings in the Federal Advisory Committee Act; every state has open meetings laws, known as sunshine laws, which govern meetings at the state and local level. We should begin to think about open meetings not just in terms of citizen participation, but also as a means for the public to learn about what is going on inside government. The fourth and fifth avenues for gaining access to information are whistle-blowing and leaked information, although these are more informal and potentially problematic. Leaking information, as we know, can be illegal.

The proactive dissemination of information is arguably the most important avenue of access concerning the intersection of contracting and transparency. Proactively posting information about contracts on websites should be done at every feasible step of the contracting process. Governments can start with posting the request for proposals online. After the contract has been awarded, all the bids can be posted online, as long as proprietary information and other exempt materials are redacted. If proprietary information is re-

moved, I cannot think of any defensible reasons why winning contracts should not be posted online. While very small governments may not have the capability to do this, large municipalities and state governments most certainly do. Taking this line of reasoning even further, any final report that came out of a contract could be posted, as well as the databases that private entities develop to fulfill a government contract.

Serious consideration would need to be given to issues such as personal privacy or proprietary information that should not be made public. Still, there are numerous documents associated with the contracting process that could be proactively released by government. Such information certainly should include evaluations of the contract or performance reports. Furthermore, databases about government contractors should be developed and published. The public needs to know the value of the contract, where the money is going, who is really getting it (i.e., who owns the contracting companies), what specific services were provided, the length of the contract, and maybe even the government official whose responsibility it is to monitor the contract. There is now a searchable online database of federal contracts which makes some of this information available (see www.USAspending.gov).

The second avenue of access to government information is freedom-of-information type requests. Contractor documents are largely not covered by freedom-of-information-act laws in the United States, though there is variation among the states (Feiser 2000). Consequently, if you have a function that is performed by the federal government which is outsourced or contracted out, it is usually no longer covered by freedom-of-information acts (for a full discussion of this argument, see Rosenbloom and Piotrowski 2005). For example, if a state administers a prison, documents associated with the prison are likely covered by the state's freedom-of-information law. However, if the same facility is run by a private prison company, those documents typically are not covered under freedom-of-information acts. Therefore, contracting out a function clearly diminishes accountability. This is an area that needs more attention because the issue of records is particularly important with respect to long-term accountability.

The third avenue of access involves open meetings. Similarly to access to public documents, there are legitimate reasons to limit the openness of meetings, such as protecting the privacy of public employees (Open Meeting Statutes: The Press Fights for "Right to Know" 1962). Other valid reasons for closed meetings include pending litigation or ongoing contract negotiations with employee unions. Even so, we need to put more pressure on governments to limit the number of executive, or closed, sessions regarding contractors. Many times, governments go into closed session out of convenience, not because of a valid need to protect sensitive information. Much

information regarding the contracting process should be public, and open meetings provide an excellent way for informing the public.

Critics of open meetings argue that very few people actually attend these meetings and, therefore, that their utility is diminished. I do not believe that the number of people who attend a meeting necessarily relates to the import of the meeting. For example, one person may attend a meeting, collect information, and then post it on their blog or website. It is not necessarily the number of people who are in attendance, but how the information from the open meeting is disseminated. Increasingly, open meetings are carried by local cable TV networks, which provides much broader publicity. Local governments could request that contractors attend and report on their progress at open meetings. General explanations about why particular contractors were chosen could also be addressed.

The fourth avenue of access is whistle-blowing, and there are some recent developments in technology happening in this area. Local governments are setting up hotlines and whistle-blowing websites. One company, Ethics Point, sets up websites for towns so that individuals can anonymously report perceived wrongdoing or government waste and fraud. This is an important mechanism for promoting accountability driven by technology. Follow-up on reported violations is the key. Trained people need to evaluate the complaints, because, while many whistle-blowers really have the best of intentions, some may have personal vendetta. Finally, leaks provide the fifth avenue of access. I would hope that if we do improve transparency in the first four ways, the prevalence of leaked information and the perceived need for it regarding government contracts would diminish.

In sum, this framework is bound by available resources, and most governments are resource-scarce environments. With that said, better access to contractor records is essential. This can be done by including provisions in the contracts themselves, stating which documents and government records are subject to freedom-of-information-type requests. Transparency needs to be added to the entire contracting process, especially surrounding the bid and selection process. Governments need to hire more trained professionals to monitor these contracts. Our inspiration here may be an international one (Magrini 2005). For example, in South Korea websites are being used to open up the contracting process (Cho and Choi 2004). In conclusion, we are not talking about the role of transparency in the contracting process enough, but it is absolutely necessary!

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Chapter Seven

Higher Education as Transparency Challenged

Keenan Grenell

I have been in administration at two top-one-hundred institutions of higher learning in the rankings of *U.S. News and World Report*. One was a major land grant in the Deep South, and the other one is a private Jesuit institution in the frigid tundra in the Midwest. I also have served as an MPA director and taught classes on leadership and ethics. Overall, I think that I'm going to come across as a centrist, but there is certainly lots of controversy about my topic. Higher education is really a multibillion dollar industry. I think that it also lives by the old motto, "Do as we say but not really as we operationalize and as we do." A good title for a book on this subject would be "There are No Limits to the Transparency Issues in Higher Education!"

As I was getting ready for this presentation, perhaps I should have been reading the tea leaves and noticing all of the things that were written across the sky. I was in Milwaukee having coffee with someone in the media there. The moment I mentioned that I was going to the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., to talk about transparency in higher education, he said, "Good luck!" I also had lunch with a former university provost. When I asked for help on a presentation about transparency in higher education, he said, "Let's move to another table, so we can sit and talk." Finally, when I was lunching with an activist faculty member, I asked, "Can you share with me some of the things that would be near and dear to your heart about the issue of transparency in higher ed?" That person just started rambling and rambling; and then at the end of our discussion he leaned over and said, "Good luck." So I'm wondering this morning if this is not a big-time setup for me!

For me, one of the most important issues in higher education concerns strategic planning. When we look at strategic planning in the academy sometimes we don't know who's really doing it. The issues should be vital to our mission: How do we teach? Who do we teach? How do we repackage a vision and mission? Where and to whom should we reach out? For most higher ed institutions, strategic planning seems to be a status quo activity because it reflects a philosophy of doing what we are currently doing but doing it just a little bit better. Very few universities and colleges strategically plan in terms of going in different directions. In other words, those strategic plans are really wrapped around grants, taglines, and marketing pieces. Most university presidents, for instance, spend more time with the vice president of marketing and public affairs than they do with the provost who's supposed to be in charge of the academic affairs.

In my opinion, most universities miss a great opportunity by failing to build bridges to two-year schools. Many two-year institutions do a wonderful job in building character and in preparing young people for the transition to more advanced higher education. There are several reasons for this. One is that our two-year schools have a tendency to service more underrepresented communities than our four-year schools. Furthermore, colleges and universities have a degree of arrogance in that they don't believe that a certain technical school or junior college has an adequate math or biology or English curriculum for preparing students for their own more advanced courses.

A major problem for transparency about strategic planning in higher education is that it is sometimes hard to figure out who in the institution is doing the strategic planning. That person is often someone who is very hidden and very close to the upper administration. Thus, you can never really see the inner workings of the strategic planning process. Of course, they talk about touching bases with all the constituent groups on campus, but who's really doing the planning?

Another vital transparency issue concerns presidential characteristics. University presidents are quite similar to other chief executives of businesses, governments, and nonprofit organizations. Like other top executives, we want them to have certain characteristics. We want them to be trustworthy, we want them to be competent, we want them to be caring, and we want them to be accessible. However, the most important characteristic in higher ed in terms of transparency is that we want them to be honest. Yet, it is very hard to get people at the top to be completely honest with you.

What do we want them to be honest about? They should be honest about their decisions, both those that they make independently when they close the door and those that are shared when they actually reach out and ask others about their opinions. They especially need to be honest about institutional direction, that is, where they are planning to take the college or university. They also should be honest about institutional finances, both revenues and

expenditures, because institutional finances often get a little cloudy. In the current situation in America, they especially must be honest regarding crises and emergencies. The series of campus tragedies that we've faced over the past couple of years is going to cause many institutions across the country to rethink how they communicate emergency information and how they use information about students, such as mental health status and previous campus incidents.

We also want our university leaders to be honest as it relates to institutional relationships, and when I say institutional relationships, I mean both internal and external ones. In terms of personal business dealings, what kind of boards do they serve on? What kind of commissions do they serve on? Do those particular relationships determine what kind of decisions they make? The personal dealings of boards of trustees can also be critical. We've gone to corporate models now in higher education, and the board of trustees really runs many institutions, whether public or private. Consequently, their personal dealings with donors, contractors, and alumni must be accessible if transparency and accountability are to be maintained.

Accountability, furthermore, is not just an issue at the top. Transparency issues arise at all levels and especially among the faculty. The issue that I'm concerned about the most in higher education is that of faculty diversity. You cannot hold a president accountable unless you hold the faculty accountable! Search committees very often make closed-door decisions regarding whether a person of color would be a "good fit." I know what I am talking about, because I've been on political science faculties at two different institutions, and I've heard the conversations that have taken place. This certainly affects the institution's performance and ethics.

Pay attention to what's going on in higher ed! There are a lot of recent scandals. Of course, just mentioning the word athletics opens up a whole Pandora's box, regarding boosters, paying athletes, gifts, and the whole nine yards. I served on a university committee for intercollegiate athletics. Five minutes into that committee's work, we had already discussed \$15 million worth of expenditures. That's the operating budget of some small colleges and universities!

Then, there is the recent financial aid scandal that has received massive publicity lately. Financial aid officers received incentives or rewards from student loan providers, including stock options, gifts, and luxurious plane trips and boat trips to tourist havens. The New York State attorney general started an avalanche of reform not only in that state but nationwide as well. So, what does this really mean? It means a new set of national concerns for university and college leaders. It also means a set of national concerns for students and parents who put their trust in university and college financial aid officers.

Also, there is a whole issue of supply relationships. Well, guess what? I look at institutions of higher learning as actually being economic development engines, especially if they're in an urban area. Who they do business with should be the business of the public. How they do business is equally essential. These institutions really have an opportunity to create wealth, and transparency is necessary to hold them accountable in this very important area.

Now, what would be some questions or concerns I would say you should raise with particular colleges and universities? One, is the university really interested in showing you all that it does? Another question concerns university leadership. Does it believe in shared governance? What are the institutional priorities? What about athletics? That's a whole transparency issue all by itself! Finally, what about accreditation? One would think that the accreditation process is the one time when an institution of higher learning has to be transparent and show everything. Be mindful, though, that accrediting bodies don't have the kinds of resources that colleges and universities have. They don't have major lobbyists, they don't have access to major corporations to provide them with resources, and they don't have powerful alumni to guide them through the political maze. Consequently, when it's time for accreditation, universities show you some of what they do, but there's still room for extreme concern.

Chapter Eight

Transparency and Cleaning Up Local Governments

Sheila Smoot

I had never been in government before being elected to the Jefferson County Commission. I had covered governments in Michigan and Alabama as a journalist. I covered the Michigan legislature, the city of Lansing government, and the city of Birmingham government, as well as getting involved with a local television station. Transparency is certainly a big issue. When I was still in Michigan, I visited my parents in a small town in Alabama. I saw some plant going in, but no one had an emergency preparedness plan for the town. I made a big deal about it, but my aunt pulled me aside and said, “Sheila, you know you can go on back to Michigan, but we’ve got to live down here and we’ve got to deal with the guy who’s next door.” I really wondered, who is this guy, this mayor, who hasn’t told you anything? You know, it really was disturbing to me.

What made me run for office was corruption. For example, there was a gentleman who is now indicted, a great guy, a civil rights icon everybody looked up to. None of us could believe this could happen. There certainly was plenty of corruption in Jefferson County. Jefferson County is the largest government in the great state of Alabama, with a budget that rivals the entire state’s. We are called a donor county because our taxes subsidize other governments in the state. I am now in my second term, and no one ran against me the second time. I think this is because I do believe in sharing with the public, giving them documents and information.

There’s a problem, though, with getting people to read and use this information. They only want it and read it when it affects their personal lives. When it doesn’t affect them, they just go on with their daily lives. People become engaged when they’re getting their Social Security cut or their

meals-on-wheels cut, or their children don't have a playground. However, to be effective you have to get engaged at the front end, not at the back end, of the policy process. By the time policy has been decided, as many of them have said and I have seen it, people have been bought and sold, bought and sold, and bought and sold. They have sold you out so many times, it's disgusting!

I have had the FBI come to my office. I actually led them to my office because I had nothing to hide. The former administration was under investigation. Jefferson County, as you may know, is under investigation by the SEC, the Securities and Exchange Commission (not the athletic SEC) because of our bond deals and debt, debt that's used to build county facilities, from stadiums to sewers. You know why people assume debt? They don't have to pay for it for twenty, thirty, or forty years. So, now I have to deal with \$3 billion in debt to build a sewer system. All of the contractors have been indicted.

If this doesn't make the people want transparency, nothing will! I have just asked that the budget be placed online. We are supposed to have a \$30 million deficit. I have researched and researched, and I have had CPAs outside of government researching as well. Yet, we can't find the \$30 million deficit. It is not there. It might be \$15 million, which we'll make up in December. But it is not there! So, why are these elected officials telling the general public that we have a \$30 million deficit, that we are going to have to cut jobs, that we have a crisis? Why are they doing it? Let me tell you why this group is doing it, because they want to go back and move more debt. People, you've got to watch what politicians say when they are running for office, because then you can hold them accountable! So, ultimately when you elect officials, you need to make sure that you elect those people who look out for your quality of life and then challenge them to do just that!

Chapter Nine

Measuring Government Performance and Officials' Qualifications

Kenneth Penn

As an accountant, measuring and being able to quantify is predominantly what I do. I think that what we have to do is find a way to measure or quantify qualitative aspects of governmental performance that will make the public sector more transparent and contribute to the public trust. We need to consider not so much how much information we're giving the public but what is the relevant information that they want and need. I think that we need to take a bottom-up approach and focus on the level of local governments. A cross-section of the population could be surveyed about their concerns. Data could then be collected on government performance, perhaps on a statewide basis, and then the information that we feel is the most important or pressing would be provided to the public for each municipality or county. To make this viable, though, you should probably try to get buy-in from the League of Municipalities or the Association of County Commissioners. I think you are going to have a hard sale on the federal level, however.

Consider what happened when corporate trust was a huge issue a few years ago with MCI and Enron. The federal government stepped in with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which tried to make companies' financial statements more "warm and fuzzy." So, they set up several points for audit, and a lot of those points are qualitative, focusing more on internal controls than on the actual financials themselves. I think that we should create something similar to that for government oversight. For instance, the federal government could create something similar to the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB) for municipalities, and counties and measure these types of points at the local level. I think we should start on county or city governments and the move our way up to the state and maybe to the federal level.

While it certainly would be difficult, I think that it should be possible to apply the Sarbanes-Oxley Act model to fit the governmental sector.

Another issue concerns the information that is being doled out to the public about political figures. At the local level, many times the most qualified people shy away from public office just because they know they are going to be put under a microscope. Thus, we might give some thought to what kind of data should be available on government officials. What makes them qualified to be leaders or elected officials? Is there any way to measure ethics and morality? Morality, obviously, is something that's quite subjective. Still, I think you have to find a way to measure or quantify as much of this information as possible.

Chapter Ten

A “Bottom-Up” Approach to State Transparency

David M. Anderson

There’s a standard way to proceed in promoting transparency in government, but I’d like to suggest an alternative approach. The standard method would be to create a task force, spend six months, bring back some of the experts, write a report, and set up criteria that could be used to judge the transparency of state and local governments. A very different way to proceed, however, would still be to create a task force, but to have it draw up a set of guidelines or best practices that could be given to the fifty states. These best practices would put the states in a position to develop their own systems both for promoting transparency and for evaluating how transparent their new systems really are.

Now, as we learned today, there already are six states which are out in front in terms of creating well thought-out, systematic e-government efforts to make their states transparent to the citizens. Five of them were legislated, and one of them was Governor Blunt’s executive order. In addition, some other states are taking a very vigorous approach to transparency, and most of the states have some e-government effort underway. I think that it would be very advantageous to encourage the states to develop their own strategies for transparent government in a “bottom-up” manner, as opposed to a top-down approach in which the criteria are stipulated by some nonpartisan group. A nonpartisan alliance could provide the guidelines or best practices, but the states would develop their own systems. This idea comes from my own work when I was executive director of youth04 and when I was task force director at the Institute for Politics, Democracy and the Internet. I believed that students, young people, and citizens in general should play an active role in political decision making. Only then can we build trust into the process that a

state uses to arrive at its open-government system and at the evaluation that's used to determine how well the government is performing in this regard.

The standard way is to have an organization render judgment from Washington or Indianapolis or wherever it's headquartered and give a grade to every state. The other way to do it is to empower the citizens and the legislatures and the universities, for that matter, in Alabama or Texas or California. Let the citizens of Alabama working in conjunction with nonprofits and the government be the ones who decide whether the Alabama government gets an A, B, C, or D. Let the citizens of Indiana decide what their state should do. And if the citizens in Alabama and the citizens in Indiana and the citizens in California don't come up with the same systems, well, fine! That's part of American federalism, right? If we thought this was a federal issue, we'd try to get it mandated by Congress, but it's not. In fact, it's not really a legal issue at all. Rather, government transparency to the citizens is more of a civil society issue. It's still an ethical issue, it's just not a legal issue. I am really on the side of trying to involve the citizens state by state and not giving them a kind of top-down set of criteria. I think that this bottom-up approach will also energize people and get many more citizens involved, especially if you use the Internet.

Thus, the system of evaluation should come from within the individual states rather than from some centralizing organization. The funding for these transparency efforts has to come from the government, but the big question is who should evaluate the state? It obviously shouldn't be the government, because it would almost inevitably give itself very high grades. Probably, this should involve educational institutions and non-profit corporations. So, I could see a state board of thirty citizens, representing major demographic groups, who would be coordinated by a university or the National Endowment for the Public Trust or the League of Women Voters. This should give you a buy-in and sense of ownership by the citizens in each state. Otherwise, they just read in the newspaper that their state got a low grade, but it really doesn't mean much, if anything, to them.

It also might be desirable to provide materials on best practices, as long as this didn't represent mandates by some central organization or the federal government. You could create a taskforce or a working group to develop a document or website. They could gather information on at least half a dozen states that are out in front on their transparency and e-government effort. The National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) could be a great help here. This would bring together the best practices from states like Kentucky and Missouri. Other states could then see these successes stories, but they wouldn't be pressured to adopt specific practices.

Chapter Eleven

Issues in Transparency and Restoring the Public Trust

George Amedee

I think that in order for public trust to exist, there has to be some moral authority. Now, I don't want to sound pious or pompous, but a political figure or an institution has to have credibility and some moral basis from which trust can emanate. In particular, there's a major problem if trust is not developed in an across-the-board fashion but, instead, is tied to race, gender, class, party, or ideology. As you know, to some extent the media tend to come down on one side or the other sometimes.

Thus, they deal less with reporting the news than with slander in the news. For example, based on media coverage you might believe that right now in New Orleans the only folks you can't trust are black politicians. Consequently, unless the discussion of public trust is sincere, fair, and equitable in respect to party or race or gender or class, it almost inevitably will fail because of a lack of credibility.

A very good example of why there's a lack of political trust in the United States comes from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The very agency that was in large part responsible for the disaster in New Orleans, the Army Corps of Engineers, has now been brought back for the reconstruction. What does that tell the average citizen? The corps was responsible for ensuring that the levees were sound, and the levees collapsed! This certainly undermines the public trust, when those who were associated with a catastrophe are brought back in to clean it up. The horrendous abuses of insurance companies following Katrina also sends a message to the average citizens that their governments, national, state and local, are not serious about fairness, which certainly diminishes their trust in public authorities.

More broadly, I wonder about the decentralized or state-based approach to restoring the public trust. There's always the danger that the very same people who have undermined the public trust can't be trusted to make sure that their government operates responsibly and honestly! Most of you have heard of Daniel Elazar's model of the different state political cultures: the individualistic, the moralistic, and the traditional. In individualistic cultures, most people believe that individuals should come into government and get what they can for themselves and for their people. That's certainly a recipe for massive abuse!

Thus, while I like the idea of states and the localities having ownership of their reform efforts, I do think there's a need for a central guiding focus or set of standards, even if it shouldn't be dictatorial. Thus, it might be a very good idea to have a national movement promoting transparency and accountability. More decisively, the national government might require transparency reforms as a prerequisite for federal funding, as is done in some other areas such as highway transportation safety. This could force those cities and states that don't want to collect certain data or expose certain information, because they have something to hide, to be much more open.

We also need much better leadership training, not just at the local, state, or national levels, but for the international realm as well as for people from other countries who want to come to America to learn about democracy. This training should start fairly early, probably in junior high, so that people can become involved in their formative years.

Furthermore, if we are going to have private and nonprofit involvement in government, then of course transparency must be extended to these new participants. They should no longer be able to hide under the umbrella of being private. They have decided that at least some portion of their business is governmentally related. Therefore, we should have a right to the same information and transparency about them that we have for regular public agencies. Otherwise, there's no way to hold them accountable, and the public trust will suffer even more.

We're developing a civic engagement module at Southern University in New Orleans based on a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development which seeks to provide John Q. Public with the tools to become effective in community and political affairs. The people inside government have a very strong advantage over average citizens, which makes it hard to make government accountable. So, in this module we're going to make available on the Web information for citizens, not just about voting but also about what they can do to make government more responsive and accountable.

III

Performance Measures and Reform

Chapter Twelve

Measuring Government Performance to Promote Transparency

Richard Greene

My wife, Katherine Barrett, and I have written a great deal about state and local government. Along the way, one of our areas of specialty has emerged in the realm of evaluation. How can you tell how effectively a government does any number of things? I'd like to talk about the use of performance measurement and how the analysis of performance measurement can be used as a means for creating better transparency. Governments obviously don't have profit-and-loss statements. One of the things that people want to know and should be able to know about governments is, if you don't know if it's making a profit, how do we know if it's doing a good job? A company does not need to be as open and transparent as a city or a county or a state, because at the end of the day it made money or lost money. There is at least one final, bottom-line determinant of success or failure.

So over the course of the past fifty or sixty years, there has been a movement toward measuring the success of what governments do in a variety of ways. Ideally, people talk about outcomes and results: How does this particular program make things better or worse? This focuses upon actual results for the citizenry, as opposed to just hiring more people or spending more money because they are not really a measure of performance, just a measure of what you're putting in to try and get performance.

Exploring the development of performance measures has obviously been central to the research we've done into government management. The first question is whether people are creating this kind of transparent information. We've now reached a spot that I would not have imagined fifteen years ago. Just a decade ago at a conference in Washington, I was talking about performance measure with a gentleman who told me:

You know what? People have been talking about that forever and ever. It's never going to catch on. In fact, it's a fad that is going to die one funeral at a time.

He was so wrong!

I can tell you that at least at the state level where I can give you reasonably good statistics, there is now not a state in the union that doesn't calculate and provide at least some performance measures, whether it's in the executive branch, the legislative branch, or in a very few cases in an elected auditor's office. There is some place in every state government that advances the notion that the public and public officials have the right to know how well or how badly specific programs are actually doing. That's been a big success. There is a ton of information.

How much there is depends on the state. Utah and Oregon provide lots of information and data. Somebody in the *Wall Street Journal* once said that even the benches in Oregon have benchmarks. Quite a few states have come a long way, and all of them have made significant progress. It goes in fits and starts in certain states, but it's been pretty much a steady flow throughout the nation.

The second question is who's doing what with this material. How much is actually being used by the legislature to make budgetary decisions? How much is it really being used by the departments to make managerial changes? This is where the story gets a little bit less positive. You can see a fair amount of good progress on the managerial level where the agencies, who are buying into this, find ways to use the information. However, when you look at the legislatures, the bodies as opposed to a few individual legislators, those who genuinely use performance measures and take advantage of this transparency to make the world better, it's minimal. There are states that are doing a terrific job, but in the majority of them you are hard-pressed to find much of an impact.

Theoretically, legislatures should be able to say that we measured this and found that this program was doing badly, so, as a result, we gave it more money or less money. It could go either way. Maybe it's doing badly because it didn't have enough money, so you increase its funding. Maybe it's doing badly for other reasons, and you should kill the program entirely. It is hard for states to link budgetary actions to performance measures, and the use of performance measures in policy making is even more rudimentary at the city and county level.

So what concerns me is that while the idea of transparency itself seems to be universally lauded, this begs the question of who is using the information for what purpose. It doesn't do you any good to have a nice clean window if nobody looks inside. We ought to worry more about who is actually going to look at the stuff we are letting them see and what good they are going to get

out of it. Otherwise, you've just got a lot of trees falling, but nobody is hearing them fall.

This can be seen when we evaluate the role of new technologies in promoting transparency. On the one hand, technology presents, in many ways, the greatest opportunity for heightened transparency that we've ever had, because it is just so much easier for us to share information, so much easier for things to be open. On the other hand, however, I would argue that technology presents one of the greatest threats to genuine transparency that we've encountered because if you can give people everything, you might as well give them nothing.

I can tell you that throughout my career as a journalist, a researcher, and a policy analyst, the scariest thing for me is when somebody takes me really seriously when I say "send me everything you've got." So, suddenly, without deciding what's really important to be transparent about, what people really need to know, you just give them everything, like an endless smorgasbord that goes on and on and on until you look at all the food and feel a little sick to your stomach. This type of transparency really doesn't help very much.

More broadly, relating transparency and performance to the restoration of the public trust in America is quite complex. A slightly dated example from the Veteran's Administration demonstrates how complex the issue of trust in government agencies can be. The VA has used performance measures, surveys of patients, for a very long time. Based on these results, they concluded that they were doing a great job. For example, patients were asked, "Did the nurse come soon enough after you rang the bell beside your bed?" Almost everybody said yes, which looked pretty good. Then somebody noticed that this seemed odd because people outside the VA hospitals were always complaining about how they couldn't get an aide. Consequently, they revised the survey indicating that patients should receive help within a prescribed number of minutes of using the buzzer. On that basis, the performance measures plummeted because people now understood that a two-hour wait should not be acceptable because they had a better context for evaluating the VA hospitals.

We also should try to understand much better what it is that people do not trust about their governments. I bet that if you ask New York City residents, "Do you trust your city to keep you safe?" people, particularly those who have lived there for some time, would say, "Yes. We trust New York City to keep us safe." The crime rate now is one of the lowest of any large city in the country. However, if you ask, "Do you trust your city to teach your kids well?" you're going to get a much different answer. It's all trust, but I think that before we can fix the public trust, we have to figure out what people really don't and do trust about their governments.

There are at least two potential strategies for promoting transparency. One focuses upon evaluations, and the other emphasizes best practices. I've used both, and I have a good sense that there are times when one works and

times when the other does. Evaluations tell who's better and who's worse. An important positive aspect of this approach is that evaluations generate substantial publicity. That's why the long-running Government Performance Project was graded. It's not that we necessarily thought grading was the best way to communicate the information we had to offer, it's that sometimes you can't get people's attention until you put your hands around their necks. Grades do that!

The great disadvantage of grades is that, no matter how well you've constructed the evaluation process, the governments that receive low grades will blame your process and study because they need to justify the bad grades. Still, sometimes bad grades work the way they should. Alabama is the best example. We talk about Alabama all the time. Alabama historically received pretty dismal grades from the Government Performance Project. Yet the state has embraced that work and said, "Hey, here is something we can learn from." That's exactly why we talk about Alabama all the time, because we want to encourage other states to take the same approach and say, "Gee whiz, Virginia did a lot better than we did. What can we learn from Virginia? What can we take away from it?" The issue with the best practices is that sometimes what are set forth as best practices at one point in time have failed over the longer term. Thus, they need to be evaluated repeatedly.

Establishing credibility is certainly a major issue. I've found that there are three ways to build credibility for many evaluation or measurement processes. First of all, you have to make sure that you get the support of the right people. You can get an awful lot of creditability from the people who buy in to your project and process. However, problems can certainly arise in getting membership organizations involved in evaluation projects. I warn you that if you're doing evaluations, an organization whose members are being evaluated is going to do one of two things. Either they'll want to make sure everybody is about average, or they'll try to affect your methods and measurements so that they don't look bad. It's a hard thing, believe me!

The second method for building credibility, which is almost tautological, is ensuring the transparency of the exercise. People have to know how you developed and measured whatever it is that you are presenting them, whether it's grades or whether it's in best practices. Any place where there is a "black box" that isn't transparent and understandable leaves you vulnerable to attack, which may or may not be fair. Actually, it's lovely if you are transparent when people criticize you because you can learn something. If you are not totally transparent about exactly what you are doing, you are going to run into some rough times!

Third, whatever you produce has to match the realities that people see. Consider, for example, condition assessments for infrastructure. The federal government requires some, but there's a great deal of variation in the frequency with which states look at the conditions of a variety of their assets.

However, at the end of the day if everybody knows that you can't drive ten miles down any state road without falling into a pothole, a positive assessment just won't hold up.

Likewise, concerning transparency, if people can't pick up the phone and find out what the latest assessment of their community is, you can't say that this is a very transparent community without losing all your credibility. You have to make sure, therefore, whatever principles you use match the real world. Furthermore, this also implies the more fundamental point: We need to be very sensitive to reality if we are to use transparency to help restore the public trust. The linkage between greater transparency and improved public trust seems pretty reasonable, but we still need some hard evidence that the association is really there.

A final important point about matching measurement and reality concerns the level of government that should be our primary focus. On the one hand, the comparability of the governments that are being analyzed should be quite important. For example, states are much more comparable than counties and cities. That said, many people seem to relate more easily to the cities because they understand the services the cities provide best, which suggests that the local level of government is extremely important as well.

Ultimately, the more transparent a government is, the easier it is to find basic information about it, whether it is a program, a policy, or a specific measurement. If I can look up something, it is a lot easier than calling somebody. In addition, I can say, "Here is where I found it," instead of having somebody say, "You misunderstood me" later on.

Chapter Thirteen

Transparency and Measuring What Governments Do

John Thomas

I don't think that the problem of the public trust is just a government problem. Rather, it's a societal problem. I remember, as a teacher in the public schools, when half the city of Toledo seemed to have a bumper sticker proclaiming, "Trust no one." Another bumper sticker said, "Don't trust anyone over 30." No wonder we now have two generations whose levels of trust are so low! Transparency may be a way to improve this situation. Thus, the central question is not whether you can trust public officials but, rather, whether you can make the governmental process more transparent than it is. I'm not that old, but I remember when you couldn't be sure that governmental audits were accurate or honest. Today, in contrast, they are accurate, fair, and complete. There is a legal structure that assures that by creating a baseline you can't violate without going to jail.

Still, we need to ask the question, "How can we be more transparent?" I do not believe that there are any good national answers to this question. The good answers, frankly, come from local government. They bubble up through state government, and when everybody agrees it's a good answer, the national government says everybody has to do it. Look at *Governing* and its effort to document what it means to be a well-managed government and develop indicators of good performance. So, what are some indicators that would tell us if a government is transparent? For example, I have the good fortune of living in Virginia, which not only has a long history of outstanding government at the local and state levels, but also in many instances has a very transparent government. If you live in Fairfax County, you can go online and know more about any question that you have than the relevant department head because a department head has twenty or more issues for which he or

she is responsible. If you go to a public hearing in Fairfax County, you will find that the best informed people in the room are citizens who cared about that issue so much that they went online. They are fully prepared to do battle with anybody in the room, whether a government official or someone representing an opposing private interest.

I think that it's also vital to get citizens to be more interactive with their governments. Not very many people have necessarily had direct dealings, but they may have heard people talk about it. I was in Virginia when the state did a major transformation of our Department of Motor Vehicles, and suddenly, people were talking in a very constructive way about the fact that it was a whole different organization. So, I think the issue is, can we find those places in which people who are interacting with their governments can begin to speak about their positive experiences?

There are ways that we can become far more transparent in government. In my organization, we do a tremendous amount of work with public officials, both elected and appointed, and with citizens groups. I am convinced, unfortunately, that you can't teach those people that trust and ethics are great things. I am convinced, however, that there is truth in the old adage in the private sector, "You will do what you measure; and if you can't measure it, people are going to fudge it." So, I look for inspiration to *Governing* and to Harry Hatry who has given his life to saying that you can measure things in the public sector. I think that if we looked closely, we would discover that there're some fantastic communities doing some really great stuff. Really, I don't think our issue is the lack of information. Rather, the issue is the controversy over the decisions that get made using some or all or selected portions of available information.

An excellent example is Virginia's website called virginiaperforms.gov. It identifies key indicators over a wide array of public services. Rather than grade them, it gives three arrows: Either things are getting better, or getting worse, or staying the same. There's also a narrative that, if you're a real junky, will take you all the way to the operations of the agency so you can see who's doing what in the various parts of the government. It's a really nice way of saying to the citizens, here's an agency that continually is doing better, or here is an agency where we have problems. All you have to do is look at the arrow!

Chapter Fourteen

Targeted Transparency

David Weil

I am a professor of economics at Boston University, and I am also the co-director of the Transparency Policy Project at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government that I cofounded with Archon Fung and Mary Graham about five years ago. We recently published a book called *Full Disclosure* about the growth of transparency as a government policy. Today, I would like to discuss what's been called targeted transparency. This is the use of publicly required disclosure in order to achieve some clear public policy purpose. So, it goes beyond the disclosure of information because, to quote the great Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis, "sunlight is the best disinfectant." Thus, we analyzed the specific use of transparency in order to achieve public purposes.

Over the past ten years at the federal, state, and even international levels, many public crises have been answered not by regulatory responses but instead by a decision to apply transparency. A recent example of this is the SUV rollover problem that emerged around 2000. Historically, the federal government would have treated this by regulation, directly going to the auto-makers and seeking to regulate the design of cars. Instead, Congress chose to require auto companies to report the Highway Traffic Safety Administration's assessment about the probability of a rollover and to post that with their SUVs. So, instead of telling Ford or GM to make specific changes to their design, the government required them to post a number of stars based on the probability that the SUV would roll over during different kinds of maneuvering. Well, that's a radically different approach to regulating or achieving public purposes, which has become much more common. In fact, even counting conservatively, we found 135 federal measures that used this type of regulatory transparency in the past ten years.

What drew us to the topic of transparency was the need to go beyond its halo image. No one can publicly come out and say transparency is a bad thing, either in the pursuit of its “sunshine” effect or of its regulatory objectives. We believe, however, that the most important question concerns, When does it work? What are the factors that actually lead to the decision to require disclosure to change actual behavior in a way that pursues public objectives? If the objective is restoring the public trust, unfortunately that is not going to be an easy thing to achieve. After reviewing major cases of transparency policy, my conclusion is that more often than not transparency policies do not work. They do not work sometimes because they are political compromises that were never intended to work. More often they don’t work because they haven’t been designed terribly well, and people haven’t really thought out what they want to accomplish through transparency.

Let me give you two examples to suggest what makes transparency work or not work for public management. For the first example, how many of you occasionally use nutritional labels, including the nutritional labels on your bottle of water in front of you on your table today? As the hands show, a lot of you actually use this. This represents federal transparency policy down to font size that is dictated for nutritional labeling. If you have some hours to kill, go look at the actual legislative debate about font size and some of the standard setting behind that.

In contrast, how many of you use your federally mandated disclosure on drinking water in your local community? How many of you know you have the right to a disclosure on drinking water? Well, that was also an act passed around the same time in response to a major, major public problem in Milwaukee which included the death of a number of citizens because of drinking water contamination. However, both random surveys and most groups with whom I talk say, “People don’t even know there is such a law.” I can assure you, if you get this quarterly report from your local water authority, it will be totally unfathomable. My wife is an environmental risk assessor who spends her life thinking about the impact of exposures to low-grade toxins on health. She can’t make head or tail of this thing, and I can assure you most people who use it can’t either.

This indicates the dilemma and the problem but also the opportunity for transparency policies. Transparency policies only work if they give users the information they need, at the time they need it, and in the form they need for making an effective decision. If those conditions aren’t met, transparency policy falls on its face. Let’s look at two examples, one where transparency policy works and one where it doesn’t work.

Southern California has this wonderful law. They always say that you never want to look at what happens in a sausage factory, and you probably don’t want to know what goes on in a restaurant kitchen either. In Los Angeles in 1997, a film crew decided to do that, and they took a hidden

camera behind a couple of restaurants and photographed absolutely atrocious things happening back there: rats and all kinds of fun stuff. This led to a big outcry, and the Los Angeles County Commission quickly passed a transparency law that requires every restaurant in southern California to post a letter grade A, B, or C based on public health inspections. The size and shape of the sign are mandated, and it has to be at the front window right next to the menu—A, B, or C. If a restaurant doesn't get a C, the county Public Health Department shuts it down.

In short order, this system has had a phenomenal impact on public hygiene, as documented in a number of careful studies comparing restaurants with bad grades versus good grades. The bad grade restaurants lost significant revenue, while the A's gained significantly. More importantly, hospitalizations related to food poisonings went down significantly. So, we have this very powerful example. If you think about it, it makes a lot of sense. When do people need information about a restaurant? It's when they are walking in the door. If you look at the menu and see a C staring you in the face, you spin around and go somewhere else, and in fact that is actually what happened.

Now, contrast this with the example I already gave you about the drinking water standard which gives you highly complex information. It's a quarterly report that comes to you by mail, along with all your other junk mail. Consequently, people probably just throw it away 90 percent of the time. It contains incredibly detailed, difficult scientific data. Moreover, if that's not bad enough, the information is a year old, so it's telling you nothing about the current quality of your drinking water. Not surprisingly, studies of this policy show that it's had very little effect.

I want to conclude by asking, what do these examples tell us about an adequate transparency policy? I think that what is most important is to understand how information affects the decisions of users and how, in turn, changes in user behavior affect disclosures. The Los Angeles County grading system works because consumers changed their behavior and restaurants saw that, giving them a huge incentive to clean up their act. And that's exactly what you see happening. It didn't happen in the drinking water case because the information was so opaque.

Consequently, in thinking about the challenge of using transparency policy to reduce corruption and build public trust, we must understand how citizens and other parties can assimilate and use the information that is provided to them. I am a great skeptic about dumping tons and tons of data on the Web and thinking you've done something. We need to pose the question, What data do citizens need? Do people need financial data? Do they need outcome-based data? I think that's something we can only understand by reaching out to the communities, not only to the individual citizens but also to civic groups, the media, and all the people whose behavior might affect the

public trust. There's one final point that I'd like to make. We need to go beyond just uploading information to the Web and thinking that we're being up-to-date. We need to use the new technologies, such as MySpace and blogs, which are on the cusp of how a whole new generation interacts with information. This is really the key to engaging citizens, potential users, and, for that matter, future public servants in information sharing, thereby making it relevant to improving the public trust.

Chapter Fifteen

Transparency in the Broader Context of Governance and Civic Engagement

Christopher Hoene

I come from an academic background and thought of myself as a researcher. However, over time through the work I've done, I have been dragged kicking and screaming into the policy world, which happens to you whether you like it or not if you stay in Washington long enough. It's an important realm to be in, and to straddle the research and policy worlds has been exciting for me. I lead the research and policy efforts that we have at the National League of Cities, a membership association for elected officials. This involves working on the policy positions that we take on federal issues. Perhaps more importantly, I work on the research and training about "best practices" that we do for local government.

In terms of transparency, I'd like to emphasize that it's not enough to just consider transparency in a budgeting sense. It's more important to plan and set priorities and then to make the budget fit accordingly. Our system of public finance in this country is broken. We're making choices about services that everybody needs, using revenue and finance mechanisms that are based on twentieth- and nineteenth-century economies. We're in a twenty-first-century economy that is creating wealth in many new and different ways, such as the Internet, but we are not figuring out how to tap that wealth and make it contribute equitably. Thus, we face a major challenge to make our economy and fiscal system fit a bit better. Reform is needed. Everybody who does any analysis of this on either side of the political spectrum always comes to that conclusion. Most people are now coming to the conclusion that reform is coming whether or not we like it. The choices ahead of us are about what types of planning we do for that: whether we make choices in small increments to put off the crisis or whether we make some choices now that

start to prepare the public and our governments to be ready for what's coming.

Reform is more difficult, however, because talking about government and talking about taxes are essentially only acceptable in this country right now if you are opposed to both of those things. Consequently, the big issue, this negative national condition, is to me the place where transparency and issues of trust and governance are central. Various national polling agencies have shown that since the early 1970s trust in government has been on a steep decline that has now leveled off at historically low levels. The larger challenge that this lack of trust has for governments is that it undermines the system. For local governments, an ongoing tax revolt against property taxes has devastated the primary source of local government revenue. For example, we are at a point where now forty-five or forty-six states have limited local governments' ability to use the property tax to balance their budgets, reflecting how the lack of trust is hampering government activities.

Transparency on the surface seems to be a fairly benign issue. It is usually presented as an antidote to the trust problem. From my vantage point, however, I think we often come at the issue from the wrong direction. Most of the work on transparency concerns a couple of arenas. One focuses on the mechanics of budgeting and finance, in particular on financial reporting and on standards and measures. My apologies to any accountants in the room, but essentially this amounts to making accounting more transparent to other accountants. That's important. It is nice to be able to see what the others do and know what that means. However, this has little to do with the national problem concerning the discourse about government and taxes.

Second, we put too much emphasis on the revenue side of the equation, on where governments get their money. Here, the role of transparency becomes somewhat convoluted. Revenue sources are usually evaluated on a series of criteria: efficiency, adequacy of providing revenues, administrative ease, fairness, and the simplicity of the source. Transparency can add another dimension that is sometimes problematic. For example, a sales tax is much easier to administer than a property tax is. A property tax is much more burdensome. You have to assess property and then deal with appeals which costs local governments a lot of money and heartburn. The sales tax is paid on the site where we purchase something, and the businesses remit to it government. It's much simpler and less costly to administer than a property tax.

Consequently, the sales tax might win out on administrative efficiency, but the property tax might win out on transparency because you get a bill once or twice a year. You know what you are paying! Nobody really adds up the sales tax you pay for a year. So you have competing principles here that make it hard to choose among revenue sources, in terms of which one is best. Furthermore, concerning the property tax issue, transparency can actually be

a part of the problem. The property tax is considerably more unpopular than sales and income taxes, the other two major sources of revenues. The major reason for this almost certainly is that it is the most transparent. You get a big bill, often around the holiday season, which is the worst time to be sending people a bill for a large chunk of money. It's very transparent, here is what I pay, this goes to the government. However, this transparency makes the property tax unpopular, so it feeds the tax revolt that I had mentioned earlier. Thus, it seems to me that the discussion of transparency puts far too much emphasis on the mechanics of the budgeting process. In contrast, I would like to expand the application of transparency to governance and service delivery, in other words, on governmental outcomes, not just the revenue side of the equation. We should focus on what people are getting for their money.

Another problem is that some of the major mechanisms for achieving transparency do not work very well. For example, open meetings don't tend to work because folks know how to get around them at all levels of government. For the most part, they are all about getting a public buy-in. If you see an open meeting notice in your community, probably most of the important decisions have already been made. So, the officials are really holding the meeting to get a public buy-in and make sure they've met all of the things that they are required by the law to do. That is not an effective way to govern, or an effective way to get people to buy into government, or an effective way to change the discourse about government in order to promote citizen trust.

For me, therefore, this comes back to civic engagement and broader democratic governance. What government must do is involve the public in the decision-making process from the beginning to the end and not wait until all of the important decisions have been made. The good news is that I think that local governments are getting a lot better at this out of necessity. They are bringing people into the budgeting process from the get-go, and throughout government they are using the public more effectively in decision making. Many places are actively promoting civic engagement and getting very good results.

There is a movement within the academic and policy literature called participatory budgeting, which focuses upon how to include the public throughout the entire budget process. The local governments with whom I have worked tell me that in their civic engagement efforts they usually find that the public is not interested in the dollars and crunching the numbers. Rather, people are much more concerned about what the priorities for their community should be and how the budget fits within this broader vision. That is, they are concerned about the things within the budget that promote their desired policy outcomes. Consequently, I think that the important thing for transparency is to focus on priorities for the community and getting the community involved in setting those priorities.

To close, I want to come back to overcoming the negative national condition by providing an alternative to the antigovernment and antitax perspective. There are two opposite images of government: one is a vending machine and the other is a barn raising. Government as a vending machine means that I put in my dollars and I get out a candy bar, and that is all I need to do. I never really have to engage with it. This image is very pervasive in terms of how we talk about government. It certainly reflects the arguments that we should make government more like the private sector to ensure greater efficiency. I do not believe that this is an effective way to govern, however. We need to move to a barn raising sense of government, which focuses upon what can I do to help raise the barn, that is, to set the priorities about what candy bars are in the machine. This raises the question of what's my civic responsibility as a public official? Or, if I work with elected officials, what can I do to make sure that local governments include the public in their priority setting? It seems to me that this is an image of government that might change the national discourse.

IV

Transforming General Governance

Chapter Sixteen

Making a Difference in People's Lives to Regain the Public Trust

Juan Williams

The issue of how we go about breaking through the skepticism that permeates so many minds when it comes to our system of government is very challenging. One of the difficulties here is that even as I'm speaking to you, if you were to look at polls, you would see that most Americans believe our country is on the wrong track. If you were to start to have a sense of how much this is the case, you would go back many years, but I am struck by recent developments. This morning I was talking to people about the Alan Greenspan book, in which he says that the reason we went to war in Iraq was because of oil. You might think about this as a conspiracy theory, but you know he's no Cindy Sheehan; he's no left-wing wide-eyed politician. Here is Alan Greenspan, the former head of the Federal Reserve, saying oil was one of the key issues on the table when we went to war in Iraq. This adds to the doubt about the war, given there were no weapons of mass destruction, given that the effort to depose Saddam Hussein succeeded and yet the war continues, and given the problems with establishing democracy in the Middle East. These doubts exist, I might add, not just here in terms of American citizens, but you see it internationally as well.

This is just one example of the kind of assault that takes place on the notion of the public trust on a daily basis. There are many other examples that you should know well. Obviously, the Jack Abramoff scandal challenged the public trust and may well have cost the Republicans their majorities in Congress in 2006. To show that the problem cuts across party lines, it's chilly today, but I don't think it's as chilly as it is inside Congressman Jefferson's refrigerator where the ninety thousand dollars was hiding out. In addition, it's easy to cite everything from Larry Craig to the behavior of

Congressman Foley with interns over the Internet. These are the kinds of things that undermine the American people's sense of trust not only in politics but in the politicians whom we elect to serve us in this country.

This is what's going on today, but I think that it just scratches the surface in why trust in government has eroded so badly in America. For several decades after World War II, there was a tremendous sense of trust in the government to deliver, given what the government had done in terms of defeating Nazis, imperialists, and fascists. America stood as a shining beacon on the hill for the world. We were a superpower that was in fact standing for ideals, ideals of democracy but also ideals of government serving the people for the better. Of course, the economy was also growing robustly, which made people happier with their personal lives and with their government.

In the 1960s, however, the Vietnam War started to erode that trust. Those of you who are fond of journalism may remember the popularity of books like *The Best and the Brightest* by David Halberstam. He argued that we had a secretary of defense, a secretary of state, and a president who were in denial of basic facts taking place on the ground, which put American lives at risk. If you come forward a few years, you find the journalists Woodward and Bernstein of the *Washington Post* who took the lead in exposing the Watergate scandal. Here, the president of the United States, who should have been the very epitome or personification of the U.S. government, had to stand before the American people and say, "I am not a crook." This certainly represented another severe assault on the public trust! The next two presidents were not scandalous but were subject to mockery, from the humor about Gerald Ford stumbling and bumbling, unable to chew gum and walk at the same time, to the image of Jimmy Carter being attacked by a rabbit while he was in a row boat. This promoted the idea that if you belittle the president, the government is not worthy of your trust.

In the 1980s, President Reagan attempted to not only reassert the power of the presidency but to restore the trust of the American people by creating a strong media machine that allowed the American people to feel directly connected to him, the "Great Communicator." But the Reagan administration also ramped up negative politics, attack politics, polarizing politics. I remember the 1988 election with the famous Republican ad of Dukakis as looking totally ridiculous as he rode around in a tank wearing a helmet, not to mention the Willy Horton ad. Certainly, these continuous derogatory attacks of parties and politicians against each other promoted cynicism and distrust toward all political figures, as well as the growing American belief that what politics really amounts to is an attack on the other guy and a grab for power rather than doing the people's business. I think the best example would be the impeachment of President Clinton in the late 1990s.

Now you have to remember who's giving this speech. I'm a journalist. In reading polls about the trustworthiness of journalists, my goodness, I am

always so glad for morticians and used-car dealers because otherwise journalists would be at the bottom. So you have to understand that when you hear this from me, I'm part of this structure, part of this system. I must say, though, that when I look at it as a journalist, people sometimes surprise me in their lack of confidence in not only what I do but in what their government does.

There was one tragic incident in the 1990s that really brought this home to me. This was the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City by Timothy McVeigh. McVeigh was one of these folks who were angry at the government in part over what had taken place in Waco under Attorney General Janet Reno. After the bombing, there were questions concerning whether the American people sympathized with him about whether the government was lying about what had taken place in Waco and many other issues. Polls indicated that something like 60 percent of the American people said they understood why Timothy McVeigh was so angry at the government and doubted the government's credibility. It was a nice way of saying, "Yes, the government lies." Now, at first I thought to myself, oh well these must be people who are right-wing sympathizers for McVeigh. But then I thought, wait a minute, those numbers are just too big for that.

So I started looking at the breakdowns of who sympathized with McVeigh. Surprisingly, these included people who were anti-Vietnam War supporters, the protestors. They still don't trust the government; and even though they were at the opposite end of the political spectrum from McVeigh, they shared his views about the American government. Similarly, there were people who had been disillusioned by Watergate, or by taxes, or by a sense that the schools or the health-care system don't work. All these people were willing to say even at that moment of trauma and horror, "Yes, I don't trust my government. I understand why someone might be driven to such a crazed act."

We are also in a period of great change and uncertainty in the United States, which certainly helps to unsettle people and make them suspicious of those in charge. Things come at us so quickly that they are hard to comprehend. Just in the past ten years, we've impeached a president; we had an election that wasn't decided for several months, in which the person who got the most votes didn't end up in the White House, and, of course, we had the horrors of 9/11, which inspired considerable fear and led to controversial wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Less dramatically, we've had important changes on the political scene in the past two years. Democrats have gained control of Capitol Hill, and there are two new members of the U.S. Supreme Court. So, where we're going is uncertain, which can be threatening at a time when most people feel that their country's headed in the wrong direction.

There's also major demographic change afoot. I'm stunned when the Census Bureau reports that a quarter of the American population is eighteen

or younger. So when I was citing all that stuff to you a few minutes ago about Vietnam, Watergate, the Reagan administration, the Willy Horton ad, forget it! For a quarter of the population, those events are ancient history with little meaning. They have experienced the recent intense political shifts and polarization in the country, however, and they have a very distinct view of what's going on. Their perspectives really strike me as a journalist. Sometimes I ask young people, "Where do you get your news?" They don't say, "Oh, Juan we're listening to NPR, we're watching Fox news or CNN, we're reading the *New York Times*, or the *Washington Post*, or *USA Today*. No, they tell me they're listening to Jon Stewart. And, sometimes they'll mention the old talking heads and say, "Jay Leno keeps me up to date, David Letterman fills me in at night, you know?" Or they'll say that they really rely on their husband, wife, or friends, or that they get some headlines in the midst of their laugh-a-minute radio show in the morning on the way to work.

If you look at the viewership for the nightly news, however, it's going steadily down. And the audience; well, you can tell a lot about the audience by the commercials. The commercials are for things that will lower your cholesterol or for adult diapers or things like that. They are not for a young audience, because the young audience is not watching. When we have a hit on cable in terms of cable news, you know it's a hit these days if you get a million people to watch any show on cable. And what are they typically watching? It could be something about O. J. Simpson or something about Britney Spears or Lindsay Lohan, but it's not news in the way that I define news. It's infotainment. It's not information. It's not news that would lead you to think that people want the information to be informed citizens, so they can act in such a way as to make government deliver on its promises to them. As a reporter, I'm just fascinated by the skepticism, the cynicism, and the lack of trust that so many people in a society demonstrate.

As part of an effort to look at the changing realities of the American population, I went to Washburn High School in Minneapolis to talk to young people about what it's like to be young in America today. They weren't very articulate, to be quite honest. The students had the same kind of T-shirts and hats turned backward and pants hanging off their butts. I asked why they all dressed alike. They said, "We don't dress alike; you know, we're quite individualistic." Yet, everybody in the room looked like a copy of the other.

I remember talking to a woman there who had gone to the school in the 1960s, sent her children there in the 1980s, and was now working as a counselor at the high school. I asked her, "What's the big difference in Washburn High between 1960 and today?" And she said, "Oh well, you should know because you asked to speak with the students who have the highest SAT and ACT scores." I asked her what she meant, and she said, "Well, what did you notice?" I said, "They're nice people, what do you mean?" And she said, "Whoa, hold on. You asked to speak to the people who

are the student leaders who run student government and student organizations around here; what did you notice?"

You know, it's really embarrassing that someone would try to make a reporter look bad, because we're supposed to be smart and all-knowing. At this point I am getting frustrated with this lady, so I said, "I don't know. What are you driving at?" She said, "No, no wait. You asked to speak to the student athletes, what did you notice?" And I said, "Look, I give up. You've beaten me down. What should I have noticed?" Then she let me know what I saw but didn't see: "Well, you should have noticed that eight out of the ten who are the very top students with the top scores on standardized tests were young women; and you should have noticed that when it came to student leaders, seven out of the ten were young women; and when it came to the student athletes going off to play sports at Division One schools on scholarship, you should have noticed that five out of ten were young women." Then it really struck me like a lightning bolt! I hadn't noticed. Again, this is one of these changes that come so quickly, that it's easy to miss. If you talk to university presidents these days, though, they'll say what we really have here is affirmative action for boys, because if we just admitted students on the basis of merit, we wouldn't have enough boys on campus; and the girls want some boys around here. If you're talking in the minority community, my gosh, the dropout rate of boys is absolutely alarming.

One of the major phenomena in American society is the success of young women. In fact, if you talk to people at graduate and professional schools today, they'll tell you that young women dominate. With the exception of a few majors, like engineering and physics, they are the majority of all graduate study programs in the United States. That's unbelievable! I am fifty-three years old and I've been in Washington now for more than thirty years. For most of the time I have been here, when I went up on Capitol Hill to deal with politicians, I was dealing with people like Dan Rostenkowski: older, white males. But today when I go to see the speaker of the house, I go see Nancy Pelosi. There are sixteen woman, an all-time high in the U.S. Senate. There's an all-time high in the House of Representatives as well. It's just an incredible shift! If I want to go see the secretary of state, she's not only an African American, she's a woman. Again, the idea of women playing central roles, and roles in which they exercise power, is unprecedented in American life.

Another major change is that there are more than 300 million Americans, and what is really stunning is that they say we are going to be a country of 400 million in just twenty years. So, we're not only bigger than ever, we're growing faster than ever. If you look at our birthrates, they don't seem to be causing this tremendous growth. Some of it comes from people living longer. The other big factor, of course, is immigration. As a percentage of the population, immigration is about the same as it was at the start of the twentieth

century. In terms of absolute numbers, though, we've never seen such a wave of immigration. The source of immigration has changed dramatically as well. In previous eras people were coming from Germany, Italy, Ireland, and Great Britain. They were white people. Today, the immigrants are coming from Mexico, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union. They're coming here, speaking other languages and becoming what the demographers call "hyphenated Americans."

Their sense of trust in our government is directly impacted by the fact that they're so recently removed from governments that they viewed as tyrannical or corrupt, where bribes are standard. You know the scandal going on right now with Norman Hsu, the guy who was giving so much money to Democrats. It's fascinating because what Norman Hsu says in interviews is that he came to this country as a young man about eighteen, went on to our very best schools, graduated from Wharton, and was making big money. However, he assumed that America was like China: If you're a rich man, you have to buy some politicians! You have to have the protection, the patronage of major officials. No one ever disabused him of this notion. Thus, Norman Hsu thought that he would buy protection from just the kind of situation that he's in today. And, arguably, that's the immigrants' view of our political process. There's no trust, because they extrapolate from the experience they had in their home country.

In addition, there are clearly growing tensions from the presence of so many immigrants in this country. There's lots of distrust and people who are discomfited and unsettled by the idea there's no one down at the 7-11 or the gas station who speaks English and by the guys standing around waiting for day labor. All of a sudden immigrants have become an easily demonized group in American society, and, again, that does not play to trust on either side of that divide. So, immigration is a key part of this trust story in this era.

One last thought from the demographic viewpoint. We're almost at the point where 25 percent of the population will be over the age of sixty-five. The AARP already has a "2011 Council" because 2011 is the first year when the baby-boomers will begin to turn age sixty-five. Then it will be just like Niagara Falls because there're so many people coming into that group. In fact, the *Washington Post* over the past two days has been running a series on the front page about the aged in our society and the changes that our society is going to have to go through to accommodate so many elderly people. To learn more about this topic, I visited Florida with its great concentration of people over sixty-five.

I went to a senior citizen's center in Orlando and was shocked when I got out of my car to hear loud and raucous heavy-metal music playing. I thought, man, this music must be keeping these old people up, this is terrible! So, I said to the lady who had come out from the center to shake my hand, "Oh

lord, where is that awful music coming from? Is it bothering you?" She started to laugh, grabbed me by the arm, and pulled me into the courtyard of the senior citizen's center where there were a bunch of people who looked to me to be in their mid-seventies really rocking, just playing the wildest music. She could tell that I was stunned. She told me that this group gets so many gigs that they can't keep up with them. People just love them. She could tell I was speechless; she said—this was two years ago—"Do you know what the top grossing rock-and-roll act was last summer? Well, it was someone in their mid-sixties, Tina Turner." Then I thought about it for a minute: the last Super Bowl had Prince who is in his late fifties; and the previous one had Mick Jagger dancing across the stage in his mid-sixties; and I think the biggest album in 2006 was *Say it So* by Bob Dylan, who's in his sixties but looks like he could be in his eighties or nineties.

This generation of older people, in particular, is very politically active. They tend to be affluent, they are more white than the general population, and they are huge viewers of cable news. They're the folks who watch *Bill O'Reilly* and *Larry King*, and they're the ones who still watch the nightly news on NBC or CBS. They are influential because they vote in large numbers and contribute lots of money to politicians. I also thought that to understand the impact of these folks, I should see how they're viewed in their community. So, I went to talk to the people at Disney, in the mayor's office, and in the congressional offices. They all said very nice things because they have some political awareness about what they should and shouldn't say. At the end of the conversation, however, sometimes after the TV cameras were turned off, they would say to me, "You know what's different is that when you have this many people over sixty-five in the community, their issues tend to dominate." So, what do they think about the privatization of Social Security? They don't like that idea; what they're interested in is viability of Social Security and making sure that the system stays in place. That's their issue. What about the high cost of prescription drugs? That's their issue; it's really key for them. Making sure there's a first-rate hospital in their community is very important for them.

But the flip side is public education. They don't have grandchildren in the public schools. In fact, sometimes they're scared by the black and the Hispanic kids in those schools. They think the kids are thugs and threatening. Second, when it comes to highway improvements or mass transit, they really don't want to put any more money into them. They wish that no one else was going to move to Florida. In fact, they want the "old Florida." Just as importantly, they don't really trust government to really deliver on improved transit. They say that all the time. Similarly, when it comes to economic development, they don't want anybody else coming in; they don't want Disney expanding.

What strikes me is that it would be easy to see this in racial terms, because the younger people in a place like Orlando are overwhelmingly people of color, disproportionately Hispanic but Hispanic and black, while the older people are white. Obviously, they're having a clash of cultures, because those younger people want things like empowerment zones, more jobs, more economic development, and better schools. Consequently, they don't think government's delivering for them. In contrast, the older generation is paying politicians, supporting politicians, campaigning for politicians, and telling them, "We're not interested in those issues. We have other priorities."

It would be easy to see this as racial conflict. However, I think that it is really important for all of you young people in the room to recognize that this is generational conflict. This generational conflict also speaks to the trust issue, because the younger folks have the sense that government is not serving them or meeting their needs. They believe that government is not really helping their lives but is much more responsive to the older folks, the older folks who are involved in civic and political activism. They have the sense that they have to get out there and make it happen, but they also have expressed a deep distrust of politicians who ignore their issues.

To conclude, there are fundamental economic shifts taking place in America today, and I believe that they will be very important in the current political campaign. The key issue in every campaign boils down to kitchen table dynamics. Who do you trust to really look out for you in terms of making sure your family can afford to live and make it in the United States? If there's one person who personifies this in the campaign, it's a suburban, white housewife. Previously, we went through "soccer moms" being important, especially in the 1996 campaign, and then after 9/11 it was "security moms" wanting to make sure their kids and husbands were safe from terrorist attacks. Now, it's back to a mother, a suburban mom, whose concerned about making sure that the family can pay the bills, get health insurance, send the children to college, and often take care of an elderly relative at the same time. That anxiety is driving much of the American population in terms of their politics; and they don't see a politician, much less a government, who's helping them to cope by addressing these central issues in their lives. I think that the person who gets elected president next time ideally for them would be someone who's speaking to them in a language that suggests that he or she understands the depth of anxiety that a young woman, someone who is in her thirties and is a suburban housewife, is feeling over economic issues today.

I believe that we need to understand the population we're trying to serve because only then can we go about building credibility. Credibility and trust and transparency can be abstract. But what's not abstract are the people in need of having government delivering services in such a way as to improve their lives. That's what's key at this point. That is the challenge that faces the

United States at this moment. It's not an abstraction. It's quite hard, concrete, and real to say that people want to know that their government is truly serving them, that their government is looking out for them, that their government is not lying to them, that their government is not wasting their money, and certainly that their government is not abusing their trust!

I wrote a book about the civil rights movement called *Eyes on the Prize*. Sometimes people will say to me, "Juan, why would you call a book about a political and social movement *Eyes on the Prize*; what does that exactly mean?" I tell them that it comes from an old gospel song that goes,

Keep your eyes on the prize,
Hold on, hold on.
I know the one thing I did right
Was the day I started to fight.
Hold on.

This afternoon, I would suggest that restoring the public trust is not simply an intellectual exercise, not a matter of simply coming up with a solution to a theoretical problem. This is a very real problem in American life. We are really involved in a fight for the trust that people have in the very concept of democratic government in the twenty-first century. If people don't trust the politicians, if they don't trust government, then they withdraw. They don't believe that they can make a difference or that their voice has any value. If these feelings continue to grow, of course, trust in our government will diminish as well. This is a critical challenge to our democracy to restore the credibility of our government.

Chapter Seventeen

The Need to Establish the Purpose of Government

Paula Gordon

My doctoral dissertation was on public administration in the public interest; and one of my major areas of interest has been the relationship among public administration, public service, and ethics. Currently, I'm focusing upon specific problem areas and challenges that are facing the nation, in particular Hurricane Katrina: the way the country responded to it, and the leadership questions that arose. More broadly, I'm involved in extensive research on emergency management and homeland security since 9/11. I sometimes think of my work as representing a 70,000-foot perspective in which I'm trying to identify the fundamental concerns that face our country today.

What strikes me is a need to be concerned about leadership. My master's thesis was on leadership behavior and task-oriented workgroups, and I developed a model of leadership based on Abraham Maslow's concept of "meta-motivation." Meta-motivation refers to being as concerned for the welfare of others as one is for one's own self. I believe that this meta-motivational leadership model was in place at the time of the founding of our nation and that the challenge before us now is to move back to the same kind of selfless service of America's founders. I attended a six-week symposium about public administration directed by Martin Diamond, a noted scholar in constitutional law at Northwestern University. The discussion and controversy there focused upon the basic nature of government. I don't think that we can get very far until we've dealt with these fundamental issues. I recall that at the time that the reinventing government reports came out, I was at ACIR working for John Kincaid. At a meeting, he asked what I thought was the most striking question, "What do the results of this report have to do with the question about what is the mission of government?" And, the person who

was the key writer of the report admitted (and I thought very graciously and humbly) that they really hadn't dealt with that issue. Well, I think that is a major oversight!

Take the impact of 9/11. In my view, the controversy that still continues concerns whether or not there has been a fundamental change. Some people don't seem to have changed their understanding of the nature of government and the nature of the challenges that confront us since 9/11. For others (and I personally agree with them), it's an entirely different world that we live in now. They believe that the future of civilization is in balance in a way that it never had been before, because anything can happen at anytime using any tactic or weapon. It may be hard to confront this, but if this is the case, those who are put in positions of responsibility in government must be able to understand this crisis. They also must be able to lead our nation so we can survive as the beacon of liberty and freedom and justice to the world and help the rest of the world in a quest for the survival for humankind and our civilization.

Let's talk for a minute about Hurricane Katrina. I don't think that the nature of the problem concerning what happened in Hurricane Katrina and concerning the government's response to it was well understood. Unfortunately, people blamed each other for things that are beyond any individual's or any government's capability to handle. So, there's very little forgiveness. Many people have the sense that all you need to do is put the proper processes in place, and you'll be able to survive anything, including a level-five hurricane. Well, this isn't necessarily the case! There are catastrophes that can happen that are beyond our control.

Katrina was one of the greatest catastrophes that happened in a populated area in the United States. General Honore seems to be one of the few people who, I think, fully understood this, unlike the government reports that came out. His statements were pithy and insightful: for example, that you can't win a football game in the first quarter. When all of the major elements of the critical infrastructure in the state fail and all the lines of communication are down, no one is going to be able to do anything. You can't fly in planes or helicopters, and you can't network and coordinate efforts. You can't even establish what the status of the situation is.

One of the things that should have resulted from Katrina, but has not as yet, is a heightened level of understanding of the importance of preparedness, not just for a hurricane or tornado but for the whole range of disasters that could befall us. So, to make a long story short, I would like to suggest the possibility of a national alliance for the transformation of our government, which would focus upon the need for transparency and upon the fundamental role of trust for government. Without a strong sense of purpose and direction, however, you're not going to get very far.

Dwight Waldo, a luminary in the field of public administration whom I got to know over the years, has written extensively on this subject. He and Herbert Simon had a falling-out in the 1950s and 1960s concerning the nature of trust in the field of public administration. While Simon emphasized the process of government, Waldo argued that the purpose of government was what had been overlooked. He had a famous article called “Terra Incognita.” The “unknown territory” concerned the purpose of government and where it should be going. He argued that government at the time did not have any underlining philosophy of change. In effect, there was a metaphysical nihilism underlining the whole approach that people took to government.

Thus, I believe that we need to achieve a consensus about the direction of change for our government before we talk about transparency in government. We need to return to the values of America’s founders, as embodied in the preamble to our Constitution. What this suggests to me is acting in the public interest is acting in such a way as to advance the values of the life, health, and freedom of our people. We must recognize that we are in a time of chaos and turbulent change, where measurement does not really help, because by the time we have measured something, the entire situation has changed. We should be doing what we did with the Marshall Plan for reconstructing Europe after World War II. There, we focused on the nature and the scope of a huge problem and took the action based on our understanding, experience, intelligence, and skills. That’s what we should be doing now. It’s more of a practical strategy of doing what we know to be right and what our experience has trained us to understand to be the right course of action. I believe, therefore, that instead of focusing primarily on transparency, we put the challenge facing America into a larger framework in terms of the concept of transformation.

Chapter Eighteen

Civic Engagement and Transparency for Regaining the Public Trust

Christa Slaton

My interest concerns not just transparency but also promoting excellence and developing trust in the public sector. I teach the ethics course in the public administration program at Auburn University and also help facilitate the development of the code of ethics for elections and voter registration officials in the United States.

I think some historical context might be relevant. Today, there is not much public trust in our government. That's not always been the case, however. I'd like to start off with a quote from Ralph Clark Chandler, who wrote *A Guide to Ethics for Public Service*: "Public administration is a professed obligation informed and constrained by the constitutional principle to maintain the public interest against all competing interests." I think that really sums up the three themes for this symposium.

Data from the National Elections Studies conducted by the University of Michigan show that the public trust has been eroding since about 1964. A question that has been asked since 1964 is whether government is run for the benefit of all. In 1966, 64 percent of Americans said, yes, it is. By 1974, right after Watergate, it plummeted to 25 percent; and it's stayed around 20 percent to 25 percent since then. Similarly, in 1964 only 29 percent of our citizens thought that government officials were crooked, but this jumped to 45 percent in 1974 and has remained in that range ever since. A third question about public trust queried, "Do you trust government to do the right thing most of the time?" In 1964, half the population responded, yes, they did. Again, this dropped substantially during Watergate to 30 percent in 1974. This low level of trust has even decreased and is now under 20 percent.

Now, how did all this happen? One very important reason is the growth of government secrecy. There was a very famous case in 1971, the *New York Times* vs. the United States, about publishing classified documents, the so-called *Pentagon Papers*. The Supreme Court ruled that the government did not have a right to withhold information about activities in Vietnam, particularly since these activities had happened in the past, and were not current operations. Justice Black in his decision for the court made a couple of very valid comments. He said that the press should serve the governed, not the governors. The press is protected, so it can inform the people about the secrets of government.

In my view, far from deserving condemnation for outrageous reporting, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and other newspapers at that time should be commended for serving the purpose that the founding fathers saw so clearly. In revealing the workings of government that led to the Vietnam War, the newspapers nobly did what the founding fathers hoped and trusted they would do. Only a free press can prevent the government from deceiving the people. The guarding of military and diplomatic secrets at the expense of an informed citizenry provides no real security for the republic. In the words of Justice Douglas concerning the case, "The dominant purpose of the First Amendment was to prohibit the widespread practice of governmental suppression of embarrassing information." Justice Stewart argued:

Moral, political, and practical considerations would dictate the very first principle of wisdom would be an instance upon avoiding secrecy for its own sake. For when everything is classified, then nothing is classified; and the system becomes one to be disregarded by the cynical or the careless and to be manipulated by those who intend on self promotion.

Even the solicitor general, who had actually argued for the government that releasing the classified Pentagon Papers would be a threat to national security, evidently had some second thought. In a 1989 opinion piece about the case for the *Washington Post*, he concluded it quickly becomes clear to anyone who has considerable experience with classified material that there is a massive over-classification and that the principle concern of classifiers is not with the national security but rather governmental embarrassment of one sort or another. This is the lesson of the Pentagon Papers, and it may be relevant now!

We went from the Pentagon Papers to the Watergate scandal. If you look at Watergate, this is an example of corruption that led to the erosion of trust in government. After Watergate, we saw President Richard Nixon resign from office. Vice President Spiro Agnew also resigned and pled no contest to tax evasion; and forty government officials were indicted and many of them went to jail, including White House Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman and

Attorney General John Mitchell, as well as John Ehrlichman, John Dean, and Charles Colson. Consequently, Watergate led to a number of revisions in ethics legislation around the country.

Another problem we've had is what has been called misplaced patriotism, which is ignoring the Constitution when it gets in the way of pursuing a policy that the government believes is necessary. The Iran-Contra controversy was part of that legacy. In that particular incident, the government felt that the best defense is a good offense, that the shredding of documents was a way to conceal the truth, and that it could apply the concept of "plausible deniability" so that a president would not be held accountable for his actions. Moreover, we saw government officials and military officers and former officers lying to Congress to try to preserve the cover-up.

More recently, we've had another major problem that accelerates the erosion of the public trust: accepting error rates that should be unacceptable. In the 2000 presidential election, Florida got national attention because the victor had a lead of well under one-half of 1 percent in the popular vote. The voter error in states now ranges from one to four percentage points at all times, but we didn't know that until the Florida election. There were myriad other problems in Florida as well: The press made errors with its exit poll projections, poor ballot design almost certainly affected the outcome of the election, the punch-card system had an extremely high error rate, there were no statewide standards for a recount, voters were disenfranchised because of how the registration rolls were maintained, and police roadblocks even discouraged voting.

W. E. Deming points out that even 99.9 percent is not good enough for us or any other profession. He said if we had a 99.9 percent reliability rate, each day there would be 12 unsighted plane landings at O'Hare, 16,000 pieces of mail lost, and 32,000 checks deducted from the wrong bank account. The United States has also suffered from the failure to accept responsibility on the part of government. Hurricane Katrina is a classic example. We saw all three levels of government let down the citizens. There was massive buck passing and no accountability. There still are tens of thousands of people in New Orleans who cannot live in their own homes.

It's my view that we must get beyond the view of public office that to the victor go the spoils. We must be able to embrace the idea that government is us and that it should represent all of us regardless of party preference, economic status, gender, and racial or culture differences. We need to return to the quote by Chandler,

That public administration is a profession with an obligation to serve the public interest against all other competing interests. Administrators are obligated to be informed about the Constitution and about the laws and to be constrained by the Constitution and by the laws.

Governments function best when there is transparency, when there is honesty, when you strive for excellence and not just accept mere performance, when you create partnerships with citizens rather than impose decisions from on top, and when government has a commitment to serving those who have the least as well as those who have the most.

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website has also been incorporated into the Homeland Security Digital Library at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. Dr. Gordon's current concerns include a focus on enhancing and building the skills and capabilities of those in roles of public responsibility and preparing to enter roles of public responsibility; so that they will be in the best possible position to organize effectively and advance national homeland security and emergency management efforts.

Richard Greene is a nationally known authority on state and local management and policy and is a principal at Barrett and Greene, Inc., along with his wife and collaborator, Katherine Barrett. He is a correspondent and columnist at *Governing* magazine, is founding editor of the bi-weekly B&G Report, and writes a daily blog about the stimulus act for the IBM Center for the Business of Government. Along with Barrett, he founded the long-running Government Performance Project. His work has been quoted and referenced in a variety of state, city, and federal documents. Greene has also written a number of books and magazine articles and is the recipient of multiple journalism awards.

Dr. Keenan Grenell is vice president and dean of diversity at Colgate University. He also serves as president of the Keenan D. Grenell African-American Entrepreneurship Summit, Inc., and as president of the Grenell Development Group. Dr. Grenell previously served as associate provost and director of diversity and race relations and as director of the Master of Public Administration Program at Auburn University and as associate provost for diversity at Marquette University. Grenell has been appointed as a senior research fellow at the Institute of Innovation, Creativity and Capital (IC²) at the University of Texas at Austin, an internationally recognized think tank. He is a national and international speaker and consultant, having recently been engaged in events such as the following: coordinated an international entrepreneurship conference in Cape Town, South Africa; served as keynote speaker for election officials annual summer retreat for the Government of the Virgin Islands; and as an expert on the panel session "Competitive Advantages of Minority Enterprises" for the U.S. Department of Commerce's MED Week. Dr. Grenell earned a BA in political science at Tougaloo College, a master of public policy and administration (MPPA) from Mississippi State University, and a PhD in political science from Northern Illinois University.

Dr. Christopher Hoene is the director of the Center for Research and Policy at the National League of Cities. His areas of expertise include public finance, federalism, and local government structure. He also oversees research projects on performance measurement, demographic change and development, and local civic engagement. He leads NLC's CityFutures Program, comprised of committees of city officials that focus on addressing the challenges facing cities in various areas, including public finance, land use

and regional development, equity and inequality, and democratic governance. Previously, he was a policy analyst with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington, D.C., and a research fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California in San Francisco, California. He received an MA in public policy (1996) and PhD in political science (2000) from Claremont Graduate University.

Lt. General Harold G. Moore retired from the U.S. Army with thirty-two years' service after which he was executive vice president of a major Colorado ski area for four years. He consistently achieved exceptional results while serving in leadership positions. A Kentucky native and 1945 graduate of West Point, he completed advanced studies at George Washington University and Harvard University. General Moore led two infantry companies in the Korean War. In Vietnam, he led an infantry battalion and brigade in numerous battles. His senior level leadership experience includes commander of Ft. Ord, California; an army division of 17,000 men in Korea; and policy-making and management in the Pentagon for all U.S. Army personnel actions. General Moore earned several awards for valor, the Purple Heart, and two combat infantry badges. He is a master parachutist who pioneered skydiving in the late 1940s. In two wars he never lost a man as a POW or MIA. Moore is also coauthor of the book *We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young*, which was made into a movie.

Kenneth Penn is a partner in Hudson Penn CPAs of Montgomery, Alabama. He serves on the Accounting Advisory Committee of the School of Business of the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Dr. Suzanne J. Piotrowski has appointments as an assistant professor at Rutgers University-Newark in the schools of Public Affairs and Administration and in Public Health at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Piotrowski earned a PhD in political science from the American University, School of Public Affairs in Washington, D.C. Her dissertation dealt with governmental transparency and the national performance review. Dr. Piotrowski is the author of the book *Governmental Transparency in the Path of Administrative Reform*.

Dr. Irene Rubin is professor emeritus of political science in the Division of Public Administration at Northern Illinois University. Her research interests include public budgeting, qualitative methodologies, and contracting, especially for water and wastewater treatment. She is also interested in budget implementation, especially inspector general systems. She is the author of several books on public budgeting, including a popular textbook, *The Politics of Public Budgeting*, and a history of municipal budgeting, *Class, Tax, and Power: Municipal Budgeting in the United States*. She was editor of the *Public Administration Review (PAR)* from 1996 to 1999, the first woman editor in its history; Editor of *Public Budgeting and Finance* for two years; and Book Review Editor for *PAR* for three years. She has served as a municipi-

pal finance adviser, a member of a board of the NIU Annuitants Association, and a consultant to various organizations. Her current interests include preservation of pension funding and health-care benefit issues. She holds a master's degree in East Asian studies and a PhD in sociology.

William I. Sauser, Jr., PhD, is professor of management and higher education at Auburn University. He earned his BS in management and MS and PhD in industrial/organizational psychology at the Georgia Institute of Technology. His interests include organizational development, strategic planning, human relations in the workplace, business ethics, and continuing professional education. He is a Fellow of the American Council on Education and the Society for Advancement of Management, a former president of the Alabama Psychological Association and the Society for Advancement of Management, and a former chair of the Alabama Board of Examiners in Psychology. Sauser was awarded the 2003 Frederick W. Taylor Key by the Society for Advancement of Management in recognition of his career achievements.

Dr. Christa Slaton is dean of arts and sciences and professor of political science at New Mexico State University. She previously served as associate dean for educational affairs of the College of Liberal Arts and director of the Elections Administration Program at Auburn University. Dr. Slaton was the 2007 Recipient of Excellence in Outreach, Auburn University—the award granted annually to a faculty member who has sustained high achievement in fulfilling the outreach mission of the university, and was the 2007 Recipient of the American Association of University Professors' Academic Freedom Award. She has won teaching awards from Pi Sigma Alpha, the Panhellenic Society, and the American Political Science Association. Slaton is the author of three books, including *Televote: Expanding Citizen Participation in the Quantum Age*, and several book chapters and articles. Her research has focused on ways to engage the public in America's representative democracy and the means to create greater collaboration among citizens, elected officials, and public administrators. Dr. Slaton earned her MA and PhD in political science at the University of Hawaii and her BS (magna cum laude) in psychology from the University of Tennessee, Nashville. She has been the director of Auburn University's Election Administration Program since 2002. This program offers the only national certification program for election and voter registration officials in the United States and has certified more than five hundred election officials throughout the country. Slaton has been teaching ethics to election and voter registration officials since 1994 and facilitated the creation of the code of ethics for the profession in 1997. As a member of the nucleus faculty of the Masters in Public Administration Program at Auburn University since 1993, she taught the required ethics course in the program and has examined a wide range of issues that have led to the erosion of public trust.

Michael B. Smith is president of The Washington Center. Smith joined the staff of six professionals in 1976 when The Washington Center was serving three hundred students from thirty colleges annually. He has served in a series of progressively more responsible positions for twenty-nine years while The Washington Center has grown to serve 1,600+ students annually with a staff of 60 and an annual budget of \$17 million. He most recently served as executive vice president, a chief operating officer function. He was named permanent President of The Washington Center in December 2004 after serving as acting president. He also served in the armed services and is a veteran of the U.S. Navy (1969–1971). He received his master's degree in education from the University of Massachusetts-Boston and his bachelor's degree in history from Ohio Northern University. An active alumnus of Ohio Northern University, Smith has served on the College of Arts and Sciences Board of Advisors since 1989.

Commissioner Sheila Smoot is the first African American female to serve on the five-member Jefferson County Commission in Alabama. She is also the youngest person elected to the position. Smoot currently oversees the Departments of Information Technology and Environmental Protection. She was named the 2006 National Black County Official of the year. Commissioner Smoot sits on the Metropolitan Development Board, the Metropolitan Planning Organization, and the Metropolitan Arts Council. Smoot is a graduate of Michigan State University. Before entering politics, Commissioner Smoot worked as an award-winning anchor and investigative journalist. She is a former Alabama Associated Press board member and former regional director for the National Association of Black Journalists.

Dr. John Thomas is the director of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia. He began his public service career as a teacher and administrator in the Toledo, Ohio, public school system. Since then Thomas has served as director or executive director for a number of public service organizations including the National Association of Counties (NACO), the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), the Florida Association of Counties (FAC), the Toledo Ohio Metropolitan Area Council of Governments, and the Illinois Department of Public Aid where he was assistant to the director. He has served in a consultation capacity to a number of governments and organizations. Thomas earned his doctor of public administration at the University of Southern California. He is a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, a congressionally chartered organization composed of four hundred leaders in the field of public management.

Dr. Don-Terry Veal is director of Auburn University's Center for Governmental Services. He serves as the chief administrator of several state-wide governmentally mandated and professional credentialing associations. Dr. Veal is founder and chairman of the Auburn University annual National

Conference on Governmental Excellence and Best Practices. He is also executive director of the Global Transparency Alliance for Governments (GTAG). Dr. Veal recently made the keynote address on Transparency in Government and Community Development in the city of Gangwon-do, South Korea, for the International Local Government Symposium. Veal was director of the African-American Entrepreneurship Summit and serves as the editor-in-chief of the *Entrepreneurship Policy Journal*. Veal served as director of an international conference held in Cape Town, South Africa, Empowerment Through Entrepreneurship. He served on the Rural Entrepreneurship Initiative Advisory Board of the Kellogg Foundation. Veal has published several articles and books on issues dealing with public finance. Veal holds a PhD from Northern Illinois University with a concentration in public administration and finance. He earned his master's degree in public administration from the University of Mississippi and his bachelor's degree in political science from Southern University at New Orleans. Veal is a founding member of The National Endowment of The Public Trust. He was a congressional candidate in 1998 in the Second Congressional District in Louisiana and serves on the Advisory Board of the Algiers Economic Development Foundation of New Orleans.

Dr. David Weil is professor of economics and Everett W. Lord Distinguished Faculty Scholar at Boston University's School of Management and codirector of the Transparency Policy Project at the Taubman Center, Kennedy School of Government. His research spans the areas of labor market policy, industrial and labor relations, occupational safety and health, and regulatory policy. He has published widely in these areas and has also served as an advisor to the U.S. Department of Labor, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and other government agencies on a variety of projects. His research in this area has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. In addition, Weil has been a principal investigator for the Center for Textile and Apparel Research at Harvard University since its founding in 1991. Findings from this multiyear research project can be found in his recent book, *A Stitch in Time: Lean Retailing and the Transformation of Manufacturing—Lessons from the Apparel and Textile Industries*, coauthored with Fred Abernathy, John Dunlop, and Jan Hammond, all of Harvard, and published by Oxford University Press. Weil received his bachelor of science in industrial and labor relations from Cornell University, and his masters and PhD degrees in public policy from Harvard University.

Juan Williams, one of America's leading political commentators and writers, is the author of the *New York Times* best seller *Enough—The Phony Leaders, Dead-End Movements, and Culture of Failure That Are Undermining Black America—What We Can Do About It*. He is also the author of five other books including *Eyes on the Prize—America's Civil Rights Years*. Mr.

Williams is a top political analyst for Fox Television and a regular panelist for *Fox News Sunday*. He is a former award winning *Washington Post* columnist, White House correspondent and NPR senior news correspondent. Mr. Williams began his professional journalism career at the *Washington Post*. In a twenty-three-year career at the *Post*, he served as an editorial writer, op-ed columnist, White House correspondent, and national correspondent. He has won several awards for investigative journalism and his opinion columns. He also won an Emmy Award for TV documentary writing and won widespread critical acclaim for a series of documentaries including "Politics—The New Black Power." Williams spent eighteen highly successful months as host of NPR's afternoon talk show, *Talk of the Nation*, taking the show to its highest rating ever. He is a frequent guest on television programs including *Nightline*, *Washington Week in Review*, *Inside Washington*, CNN's *Crossfire* where he has served as cohost, and *Capital Gang Sunday*.

Sandra Fabry Wirtz is the state government affairs manager with the organization Americans for Tax Reform. Wirtz joined Americans for Tax Reform in November 2003 and has been working on state tax issues for the organization. As state government affairs manager, one of her project lines focuses on transparency in government finance. She is a contributing editor for *Budget & Tax News*, a monthly publication issued by the Heartland Institute. She has appeared on various local radio programs and her op-eds and letters to the editor have been published in various national and local publications. She holds a master's degree in political science from the University of Bonn, Germany.