

The following is a transcription from Rep. Mike Quigley's interview with [Politics Tonight](#) on Friday, April 27, 2012

Anchor: Well, whenever you buy something, you get a receipt. But when you pay your taxes, the government doesn't tell you exactly how it's spending your money. Representative Mike Quigley plans to change that. He's joining us live on the phone tonight, from Washington. Representative Quigley, welcome back to Politics Tonight.

Rep. Mike Quigley: Thanks for having me, Paul.

Anchor: Glad you're with me. So the amendment that you introduced, I know it's an amendment, it's an act about tax payer receipts for federal spending; tell us what it would do and why it matters to us in Chicago.

MQ: Look, I'm trying to do it two different ways, through a bill or an amendment. Like in Chicago, we suffer from a deficit of trust; it's very hard to lead without the public's trust. The best way to respond to that is to make government more transparent, more accountable, so we can earn this public's trust back. The way to do that here, I think, is to let people know how their tax dollars are being spent. So the taxpayer receipt act actually gives folks a breakdown of their individual contributions to social security, defense spending, medicare and other programs. It also tells them their percentage of the federal debt and how much money the federal government had to borrow per citizen.

Anchor: Congressman, how is that different- I know there's White House websites and other websites that allow us access to see estimates of how money is being spent in budget areas; how is your bill different from that?

MQ: First, it codifies it, so it makes it permanent; second, it's far more detailed and it's far more accessible. I mean, I applaud the White House for moving toward transparency, it's a good idea, but it's something we should do on a permanent basis.

Anchor: Now, the amendment failed in committee today, you did get some Republican support, so I have to ask you, is there hope?

MQ: No, I think there's hope. I think there's some miscommunications between members about what this bill would actually do. And actually there's almost negligible cost, so once we get this message across, I think we'll be okay. A lot of legislation has a few false starts before it passes; we think this one will eventually pass.

Anchor: So, obviously the reason you've been spending a lot of time with transparency and openness in government, how does this impact the budgeting process? The spending of Washington? Is it sending a warning to your colleagues of 'we're watching'?

MQ: Well, I think it does that, but think about it this way: it gives, like a grocery receipt, it helps the consumer, the taxpayer, make a more informed decision. We do some interesting things that most Americans think that we spend, for example, about half of our budget on foreign aid, when the real number is closer to 1.5%. It's much easier to communicate with your lawmakers in a representative democracy if you know exactly what the situation is and how your tax dollars are being spent. You can make preferences that way. Right now a lot of taxpayers are doing what we do in DC, and unfortunately, that's flying blind with their tax dollars.

Anchor: So, again like I said, you've focused a lot in your first couple of terms here on transparency, on accountability, it's very important to you; you even had an op-ed piece appear yesterday in print. But also I've got to ask you about something close to home in Chicago- this is your district- and I'm sure you're very familiar with Rahm Emanuel's infrastructure trust fund; it passed City Council. But in the world of transparency and openness, I've got to tell you, he doesn't seem to be following the Quigley lead; that is what has been a big concern for a lot of Aldermen here; he's not showing the openness or the process and where things are going, as you might require. I'm just curious to know what your reaction to this is and whether you're satisfied with the transparency we're seeing.

MQ: Well I have faith that it will be there; I'll remind folks of something: when Rahm Emanuel was Chief of Staff to the President of the United States, he met with me two times for several hours, we talked on the phone for several hours, and it was all about, if you'll recall, tax increment finance reports I wrote, and how transparency can be improved. And it's something he's already done in his administration, to make that process far more transparent. So look, I've got to worry about North Korea, Iran, Syria, and getting the economy on track. I have every faith that my mayor will get this package going to create jobs, rebuild our city, and the Aldermen will be satisfied as it becomes more transparent.

Anchor: Alright, well I hope so. And I hope he'll follow the lead you're setting in Washington. U.S. Representative Mike Quigley of Chicago's fifth district; as always, I sure appreciate when you join us. Thank you, sir, have a great weekend.

MQ: Thank you, take care.