



**AMERICANS FOR
PROSPERITY®**
WEST VIRGINIA

February 13, 2020

Dear Lawmaker:

On behalf of Americans for Prosperity-West Virginia activists across the state, **I urge you to support House Bill 4717. This vote may be recorded in our 2020 session legislative scorecard.**

House Bill 4717 establishes common-sense reporting requirements to shed needed light on West Virginia's concerning practice of civil asset forfeiture. This practice too easily endangers the property and due process rights of Mountaineers and poses too much of a potential conflict of interest for seizing agencies not to be well-documented.

West Virginia's civil asset forfeiture policies particularly need transparency given their D-minus rating from the Institute for Justice. Unfortunately, our state currently has zero public reporting on this practice.

H.B. 4747 will create a central, publicly available database of forfeitures, providing much-needed data on individual seizures and details such as the alleged offenses connected to forfeitures, whether owners were charged or convicted of any crimes, and how proceeds from forfeiture were spent. Currently West Virginians know none of this information, which should be publicly available as a common-sense good government measure.

Passing basic transparency measures should be an uncontroversial step, regardless of one's views on civil asset forfeiture. Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, and New Jersey have all passed similarly robust reporting requirements, and several states are considering similar legislation this year, including neighboring Kentucky.

A process with as many potential pitfalls as civil asset forfeiture needs public scrutiny in order to protect the due process and property rights of West Virginians. **For these reasons, I urge you to support House Bill 4717.**

Sincerely,

Jason Huffman
West Virginia State Director
Americans for Prosperity