

To: Editor, Puget Sound Business Journal
Re: Accountability for Nonprofits

The Puget Sound Business Journal is to be commended for its upcoming February 22 breakfast seminar on accountability and transparency for nonprofit executives and board members (Mike Flynn's Publisher's Notebook, "*Event to explore nonprofit rules*," December 16). I am confident that the local nonprofit community will welcome former Enron executive Lynn Brewer and any insights she may have to bring to us regarding good stewardship.

However, I believe it is an error to assume that the nonprofit community "needs to be educated" by the business community about good stewardship. It would be a similar error to assume that leaders in our business community "need to be educated" by the nonprofit sector about giving back to our community.

In our community, we have the good fortune to have strong contributors from all three sectors: business, government and nonprofit organizations. We also have the good fortune of having leaders throughout our community who understand the vital importance of all three sectors, respect the valuable contributions that each makes, and work together for the benefit of all.

As a board member of Executive Alliance, an association of many of the most-respected nonprofits in our community, I have had the privilege of observing up-close many of the outstanding nonprofit senior executives we have in our area, and the significant actions that they have been taking over the past several years to promote effectiveness, accountability and transparency within the nonprofit sector.

Executive Alliance helped to host Independent Sector as it conducted regional panels throughout the U.S. in drafting proposals for Senator Grassley's legislation. As a result of these discussions, the proposals currently before Congress are more meaningful, effective and sensible. We have also been working actively to communicate with the Secretary of State's office on their recently proposed changes to the Washington Charitable Solicitations Act and the Washington Charitable Trusts Act. Prominent local accounting and consulting firms have partnered with Executive Alliance to present trainings on Sarbanes-Oxley and other programs, providing current information on state and federal issues regarding accountability and transparency. Working together with Seattle University and the Evans School of the University of Washington, Executive Alliance is the coordinator for the April 5 Washington State Nonprofit Conference, a premier gathering of nonprofit leaders, supporters, and board members dedicated to enhancing the vitality of the nonprofit sector. Executive Alliance also coordinates Nonprofit Partners for Prosperity, a key component of the Prosperity Partnership economic development initiative. Over the past year, This PSRC initiative has served as a model of collaboration between business, nonprofits and government.

In addressing the serious issues – and proposing legislation – about transparency, accountability and good stewardship for nonprofits, it is vital that all parties participate in the discussion. Let's continue to work together to share information, and recognize the integrity, knowledge, experience, cooperative spirit and years of hard work that all of us, including the Puget Sound Business Journal, local business executives, government officials and nonprofit executive leadership, bring to the table.

Roy A. Hamrick, CFA
Seattle