



January 24, 2018

Support the Earmark Elimination Act, S. 2330

On behalf of our activist community, I urge you to contact your senators and ask them to support the Earmark Elimination Act, S. 2330, introduced by Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.). The bill is co-sponsored by a bipartisan group that includes Sens. Mike Lee (R-Utah), Ted Cruz (R-Texas), Rand Paul (R-Ky.), and Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.). The Earmark Elimination Act would make permanent the temporary moratorium on congressional earmarks put into effect in 2010 by creating a point of order against any provision within a bill that matches the definition of an earmark, and when raised would be stricken absent a two-thirds majority to override.

Earmarks, called by then-Rep. Flake in 2006 as the “currency of corruption,” are specific line items in a spending bill, such as an appropriations or transportation bill, for a project or program. Not only corruptive in nature, they are also, as then-Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) astutely put it, “the gateway drug to spending addiction.” Two things that Washington does not need is more corruption and more spending.

After Republicans faced widespread backlash to their rampant use of earmarks through 2010, the House Republican Conference signed off on a ban of all earmarks. At their peak in the mid 2000s, total earmarks reached nearly 14,000 in a single year (2005), costing upwards of \$30 billion (2006).

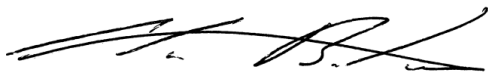
Proponents of earmarks argue that these extra spending provisions funding often-useless projects “grease the wheels” for legislation by persuading individual members to come on board for the sake of earmarked spending for their districts, and come at a small monetary price to taxpayers. They refuse to acknowledge the corruption and spending addiction that comes with earmarks, not to mention the public opposition to the pernicious practice.

The House Rules Committee held hearings last week on the potential of bringing earmarks back into the congressional process by ending the 2010 moratorium. FreedomWorks submitted written testimony in opposition to ending the moratorium to the hearing, and has signed onto coalition letters in opposition as well. Sen. Flake’s bill, with a bipartisan group of ten original cosponsors,

represents the correct path forward on earmarks – banning them outright – certainly not bringing them back.

As Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah), an original cosponsor of the bill, said, “Earmarks can’t bring back the trust Congress has squandered. Only transparency and accountability can do that.” Earmarks, instead, are the antithesis of transparency and accountability, and must not be brought back into the congressional process. For these reasons, I urge you to contact your senators and ask them to support the Earmark Elimination Act, S. 2330.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Brandon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks