



March 2, 2021

Support the Earmark Elimination Act, S. 501

On behalf of our activist community, I urge you to contact your senators and ask them to cosponsor the Earmark Elimination Act, S. 501, introduced by Sen. Steve Daines (R-Mont.) and nine of his colleagues, Sens. Toomey, Lee, Paul, Johnson, Lankford, Ernst, Cruz, Portman, and Rubio. The bill would make permanent the temporary moratorium on congressional earmarks by creating a point of order against any provision in a bill that matches the definition of an earmark.

Earmarks, called by former Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) 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 the late former Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) astutely put it, “the gateway drug to spending addiction.”

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). When Democrats took control of the House last Congress, earmarks did not make a return. Now, however, Democratic leadership is [seriously considering](#) bringing back earmarks.

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.

This bill represents the correct path forward on earmarks – banning them outright – certainly not bringing them back. As Sen. Daines [said](#), “Earmarks do nothing but add to the toxic, swampy culture that DC’s known for. These back-room deals promote pay-for-play behavior that make lobbyists rich on the taxpayer’s dime. It’s time we get rid of earmarks once and for all.”

Earmarks 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 cosponsor the Earmark Elimination Act, S. 501.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Brandon', with a stylized, flowing script.

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks