



March 29, 2018

## **Support the Earmark Elimination Act, H.R. 5369**

On behalf of our activist community, I urge you to contact your senators and ask them to support the Earmark Elimination Act, H.R. 5369, introduced by Reps. Jim Cooper (D-Tenn.) Ted Budd (R-N.C.), Ralph Norman (R-S.C.), and Kathleen Rice (D-N.Y.). The bill 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.

This legislation has an identical companion bill in the Senate, introduced in January by Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.), and has 13 cosponsors, including Sens. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Ted Cruz (R-Texas). 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.”

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 in January 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. This bill, with a bipartisan group supporting it and an identical bill

in the Senate with bipartisan support as well, represents the correct path forward on earmarks – banning them outright – certainly not bringing them back.

As Rep. Budd said of the bill, “It represents a permanent solution to the earmark problem, and gives the current ban the force of law...I’m grateful to my bipartisan colleagues, Reps. Cooper, Norman and Rice, for their support on this important legislation.”

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 support the Earmark Elimination Act, H.R. 5369.

Sincerely,

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

Adam Brandon  
President, FreedomWorks