

HOUSE DEMOCRATS LEAD THE WAY ON OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

HOUSE DEMOCRATS PROVIDE UNPRECEDENTED TRANSPARENCY IN EARMARKS, SHOWING GOP'S 2006 "REFORM" TO BE FIG LEAF

*"I want to compliment the Democrats for earmark reform that is stronger than the Republicans did. Democrats in this way had more guts than we did to tackle earmark reform in a meaningful way, and I compliment them for that . . . But I appreciate, and again **I want to compliment, the Democrats for doing stronger earmark reform than we did.**" - **Rep. Jeff Flake** (R-AZ), comparing Democrats' January earmark reform with that enacted by the Republicans in late 2006 (1/5/07)*

In January, House Democrats passed strong earmark reform that applies to appropriations bills, authorizing measures, and tax and trade legislation. These new rules also:

- Require Members to disclose their earmarks in bills
- Require Members to certify that they and their spouses have no personal financial interest in the request
- Prohibit trading earmarks for votes
- Require committees of jurisdiction and conference committees to publish lists of the earmarks contained in the reported bills, unreported bills, manager's amendments, and conference reports brought to the House Floor; a Member may make a point of order against consideration of any rule that waives this requirement

Democrats also pledged to cut the dollar amount going to earmarks in half.

USE OF EARMARKS EXPLODED UNDER REPUBLICAN CONTROL

Republicans' recent shenanigans are an effort to cover up **the fact that the use of earmarks exploded under GOP control.** Some examples of their blatant hypocrisy:

- Labor-Health-Education Appropriations:
 - Under Democrats: Virtually none
 - **Under Republicans, two years ago: 3,031 earmarks totaling \$1.2 billion**
- Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Economic Development Initiatives:
 - Under Democrats, FY95: 265 earmarks
 - **Under Republicans, FY06: 1,176 earmarks**
- Highway Authorization Bill
 - From 1956-1990: 739 earmarks
 - **2005 Highway Bill ALONE: 5,000 earmarks, totaling \$24 billion**

REPUBLICANS' SO-CALLED EARMARK "REFORM" LAST SEPTEMBER WAS WEAK, MEANINGLESS, AND INEFFECTIVE

Republicans have been touting the earmark "reform" they passed last year in order to appear less hypocritical when decrying earmarks on the floor. They fail to mention, however, that they did not pass "reform" until AFTER all appropriations bills had passed through the House, so that their "reform" never actually went into effect.

Other provisions of House Republicans' toothless "reform" they forgot to mention:

- It did not apply to unreported bills – so they could skip committee action and bring an Appropriations Bill straight to the Floor without disclosing earmarks.
 - It did not apply to amendments – so they could add any number of earmarks without having to disclose them, or use manager's amendments to rewrite the bill to add unlimited earmarks without any disclosure.
 - It was so narrow it was virtually ineffective – for example, tax earmarks were only disclosed if they applied to one entity, rather than accounting for the fact that some earmarks may benefit a few entities.
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