



Thomas A. Schatz  
*President*

January 31, 2012

U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator,

You are considering S. 2038, the Stop Trading on Congressional Knowledge Act of 2012. On behalf of the more than one million members and supporters of the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW), I urge you to support Amendments #1473, 1474, and 1475 offered by Senator Tom Coburn (R-Okla.).

Amendment #1473 would prevent the creation of duplicative and overlapping federal programs. On March 1, 2011, the Government Accountability Office published a report titled "Opportunities to Reduce Potential Duplication in Government Programs, Save Tax Dollars, and Enhance Revenue," identifying 34 agencies, offices, and initiatives that provide similar or identical services to the same populations, along with 47 programs that are either wasteful or inefficient. It includes 18 nutrition and food assistance programs, 47 job retraining programs, and 80 economic development programs, along with \$77 billion in waste at the Department of Defense and \$125 billion in improper payments by government agencies, among many others. While it is gratifying to have a nonpartisan government oversight entity endorse so many of the cuts and consolidations that Citizens Against Government Waste (CAGW) has long supported, Congress can no longer claim ignorance of these duplicative, bloated programs.

Amendment #1474 would require that all legislation be placed online for 72 hours before it is voted on by the Senate or the House. Lawmakers have rushed major bills through Congress this year without allowing time for the public to read and consider the proposals. Even worse, members admit they do not have time to read bills before they vote, and many do not seem to care. Amendment #1474 would increase transparency and ensure that both lawmakers and taxpayers have ample access and time to review bills before they come to a vote.

Amendment #1475 would establish a permanent prohibition on congressional earmarks. When the earmark moratorium was announced for the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, taxpayers were hopeful that it would be effective. Of the 16 fiscal year (FY) 2012 appropriations bills that CAGW has analyzed thus far, twelve contain earmarks totaling 251 projects worth \$9.6 billion. The FY 2012 Senate version of the Department of Defense appropriations bill includes 49 earmarks worth \$2.9 billion and the House version added 72 earmarks worth \$3.9 billion. Taxpayer dollars should be awarded on a basis of merit, not political power. At a time when the national debt has grown to more than \$15 trillion, the nation simply cannot afford to waste money through the funding of pork-barrel projects.

Senator Coburn's commonsense amendments have long been promoted by CCAGW as measures that will provide increased transparency and help protect taxpayers from unnecessary and wasteful expansions of government. All votes on Amendments #1473, 1474, and 1475 will be among those considered in CCAGW's 2012 *Congressional Ratings*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Schatz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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