



May 14, 2010

## **An Open Letter to the U.S. Senate: Support Earmark Transparency!**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the 362,000 members of the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), I urge you to cosponsor and work quickly to pass S. 3335, the “Earmark Transparency Act.” This legislation, introduced by Senators Tom Coburn, John McCain, Russ Feingold, and Kristen Gillibrand, would create a single, searchable database of all Congressional earmark requests.

More specifically, S. 3335 would do the following:

- Create a searchable database that enables citizens to *easily* search and download earmark information;
- Provide details on projects not currently available, including the amount of the request, amount that was approved, and sponsor information;
- Make all documents related to the project, such as a Member’s earmark request letter, available to the public; and
- Make information available more quickly.

Even though we have made substantial progress toward reform, it seems as though some lawmakers continue to view earmarking as some sort of taxpayer-funded political piggy bank. The last omnibus appropriations package, for example, passed with 5,224 earmarks worth \$3.8 billion. S. 3335 seeks to rein in this unbridled and superfluous government spending by holding leaders more fully and directly accountable to their constituents.

At a time of economic uncertainty when every dollar counts even more than before, it is especially imperative for the American people to know where their money is going. This bill would enable them to become more active in the legislative process and better equipped to distinguish what actions their elected representatives are taking on their behalf. We give S. 3335 our enthusiastic support.

**Roll call votes on the Earmark Transparency Act will be significantly weighted in our annual Rating of Congress.**

Sincerely,

Jordan Forbes  
Federal Government Affairs Manager