

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 12, 2007

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell:

We are writing to notify you that we will seek unanimous consent to enact S.Res.123, the Senate earmark disclosure rule, on Tuesday, April 17.

As you know, this rule was passed the Senate by a vote of 98-0 as an amendment to S.1, the lobbying and ethics reform bill. Unfortunately, the House has not acted on this legislation and therefore, the Senate's new earmark disclosure requirements have not been enacted. With this year's appropriation cycle in full swing and other heavily-earmarked bills being drafted, the Senate must act quickly to implement this important ethics reform.

S. Res. 123 requires disclosure of several types of information related to earmarks contained in committee-passed bills, which must be made available in a searchable format on the Internet. This includes the name of the senator requesting the earmark, the name and address of the intended recipient of the earmark, the purpose of the earmark, and a certification that the requesting senator and his or her spouse have no financial interest in the requested earmark. This is simple information that every senator should be willing to provide the public.

Unfortunately, recent events indicate that the new Congress may be less inclined to shine light on the congressional favor factory than it previously claimed.

For example, the Fiscal Year 2008 earmark solicitation form circulated by the Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development did not require the disclosure of the name or address of the intended earmark recipient, nor did it require certification that the requesting senator has no financial interest in the earmark. The earmark solicitation forms circulated by the Appropriations Subcommittees on Interior and Agriculture also failed to require the disclosure of these items, and the only requirement of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education was that earmark requests be submitted on time. These events clearly demonstrate that it's time for the Senate to stop dragging its feet on this critical issue.

In November, the American people demanded change in the way Washington operates. A central component of that change was reforming the earmarking process that has led to wasteful spending and political corruption. If we are serious about changing the culture in Washington, we must be completely transparent about how we spend American tax dollars.

S. Res. 123 will bring needed transparency to the earmarking process, and we hope you will encourage every senator to support its immediate enactment. No one opposed this rule when it was put to a roll call vote earlier this year and no one should object to it now.

Sincerely,

Jim DeMint

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