



March 1, 2021

The Honorable Ralph Norman
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ted Budd
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Norman and Budd,

On behalf of National Taxpayers Union (NTU), the nation's oldest taxpayer advocacy organization, I write to express our support for your legislation, H.R. 1086, the "Earmark Elimination Act." This important legislation would make permanent a ban on earmarks by prohibiting the consideration of legislation containing any earmarks and creating a point of order against those provisions. With the federal debt reaching new heights weekly, lawmakers must use every tool at their disposal to crack down on wasteful spending. We therefore support H.R. 1086 and urge its swift consideration.

According to Democratic leadership, earmarks will soon return to the legislative process - unwelcome news to taxpayers who have long fought against this type of wasteful pork-barrel spending. Congressional leaders use earmarks to divert federal funds to specific pet projects in a particular state or congressional district. Taxpayers may remember the infamous "Bridge to Nowhere," a \$223 million project for a remote island in Alaska. Other examples include \$500,000 of tax dollars for a teapot museum in North Carolina, a \$3.4 million tunnel for turtles in Florida, and \$50 million for an indoor rainforest in Iowa. Citizens Against Government Waste have identified 111,417 earmarks costing taxpayers over \$375 billion since they started keeping track in 1991.

Earmark supporters have argued that reforms can fully insulate earmarks from the corruption and wasteful spending that had become hallmarks of the practice. But the inherently parochial nature of earmarks makes these risks impossible to avoid and puts them fundamentally at odds with the enumerated powers that require Congress to act on behalf of the general welfare of Americans.

The regular legislative process, through budgets, authorizations and appropriations, is the best way to increase accountability, oversight, and Congressional input when it comes to spending taxpayer dollars. The appropriations request process, though in need of reform and transparency, is far preferable to earmarking because it provides opportunity for Members to make recommendations that then require both Committee and chamber consideration.

NTU is pleased to endorse the "Earmark Elimination Act." We encourage all Representatives to support this timely legislation and work towards its swift enactment.

Sincerely,

Thomas Aiello
Director of Federal Affairs