



September 28, 2005

The Honorable James Talent  
United States Senate  
493 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Talent:

On behalf of the 350,000-member National Taxpayers Union (NTU), I write to endorse your Constitutional Amendment to permit a Presidential line item veto to eliminate or reduce appropriations in bills passed by Congress. NTU encourages all Senators to actively work toward its passage and ratification.

NTU has long supported the line item veto and other structural mechanisms that would reduce the budget process's built-in biases towards higher spending. If the last several years have proven anything, it is that Congress is simply unable or unwilling to curb its insatiable appetite for pork. For instance, the recent highway bill contained nearly 6,500 earmarked projects worth more than \$24 billion, while countless additional bills are laden with extraneous or unnecessary spending.

Since 2001, the federal government has undergone an expansion of 33 percent – the largest overall increase in inflation-adjusted federal spending since the massive outlays associated with Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. Clearly, a Constitutional solution is required to restrain wasteful spending.

During its short existence, the line item veto proved itself an effective weapon against out-of-control spending. Unfortunately, in *Clinton v. City of New York*, which reached the United States Supreme Court, the statutorily-passed line item veto was ruled unconstitutional by a 6-3 margin. The need for a line item veto is greater today than ever before. Your proposed Constitutional Amendment would return this valuable power to the President and help restore fiscal responsibility to the federal government.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Berthoud", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

John Berthoud  
President

cc: Senator George Allen