



March 24, 2009

The Honorable Devin Nunes
United States House of Representatives
1013 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Nunes:

On behalf of the 362,000 members of the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), I write in support of H. Res. 276, your earmark reform package. This innovative resolution would greatly strengthen earmark disclosure while also establishing sensible limits on the practice. As you know, several former Members of Congress have been sentenced for crimes of public office in part because of the corrupting influence of earmarks written behind a veil of secrecy. H. Res. 276 would help to lift that veil and prevent always-precious taxpayer dollars from being wasted on egregious earmarks.

While the 110th Congress did improve earmark disclosure, there remains a large loophole that has been exploited to keep taxpayers in the dark. Currently, Committee Chairmen are required to certify that all earmarks in a bill have been disclosed (or that it contains none). Unfortunately, nothing prevents Chairmen from simply giving their nod to legislation they know to be infected with undisclosed earmarks anyway. H. Res. 276 would put the certification process into the hands of the House Clerk, a more objective and nonpartisan source.

The innovation from the resolution comes in the form of its individual and committee limitations. It would restrict earmarks to two per Member on one bill and no more than 10 in one session of Congress. This would not only prevent one Member from receiving vastly more than another, but would also have the important effect of compelling them to curtail their *requests* to only the most deserving projects. Furthermore, it limits Members of the committee of jurisdiction for a given bill to no more than 200 percent of the earmark budget authority for non-Members.

In this economic recession, it is especially unfair to force American taxpayers to foot the bill for more Bridges to Nowhere because of a broken earmark process. The time for real reform has come. **Any roll call votes on H. Res. 276, in stand-alone or amendment form, will be significantly weighted in our annual Rating of Congress.**

Sincerely,

Andrew Moylan
Director of Government Affairs