

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 10, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy and Chairwoman DeLauro:

Recent news reports have suggested that you both plan to announce the return of earmarks in the coming weeks under the term “member-directed spending.” We are writing to strongly oppose resurrecting what is widely considered one of the most wasteful and corrupt practices in Congressional history.

As you know, the 2000s were marred by infamous earmarks like the Alaskan “Bridge to Nowhere,” an indoor rainforest in Iowa, a Teapot Museum, and absurd research projects like one analyzing goth culture. The wide-spread practice of earmarks was corrupting. Earmarks were used to buy and sell votes and reward favors. Earmarks brought discredit on the House and Senate and ultimately led to several Members of Congress being convicted on corruption charges. In order to restore public trust in Congress, the practice of earmarking was officially put on a moratorium in 2011 under Republican leadership.

Nothing epitomizes what is wrong with Washington more than pork-barrel spending in the form of congressional earmarks. According to the taxpayer watchdog group Citizens Against Government Waste, Congress has doled out more than 111,000 earmarks worth more than \$375 billion since 1991.

Earmarks also help enable Washington’s spending addiction. They have been used as a quasi-legalized form of bribery to entice members of Congress to approve large spending packages that increase our deficit and explode the national debt. In an era of trillion-dollar deficits and a \$27 trillion debt, it is hard to imagine how we will ever be able to restore any form of financial responsibility if big spenders in the halls of Congress are able to use earmarks to keep spending money we don’t have.

We cannot imagine a worse way to build back trust in Congress than to resurrect a system that has been roundly rejected as corruptive and wasteful for decades. After four years of a president who promised to “drain the swamp,” Democrats seem intent on filling it up with pork-barrel spending in the form of earmarks. Bringing back earmarks would be a grave mistake for Congress and future generations of taxpayers.

Sincerely,



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Ted Budd
Member of Congress



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress



Joni Ernst
United States Senator



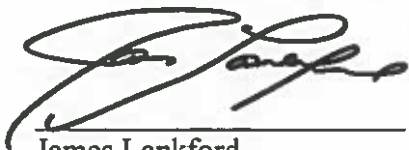
Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



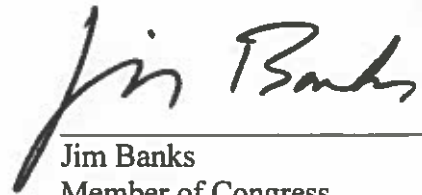
Rick Scott
United States Senator



Chip Roy
Member of Congress



James Lankford
United States Senator



Jim Banks
Member of Congress



Mike S. Lee
United States Senator



Scott Perry
Member of Congress



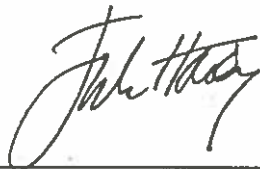
Pat Toomey
United States Senator



Ron Johnson
United States Senator



Mike Braun
United States Senator



Josh Hawley
United States Senator



Yvette Herrell
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.D.
Member of Congress



Dan Bishop
Member of Congress



Mary E. Miller
Member of Congress



Marjorie Greene
Member of Congress



Bob Good
Member of Congress



W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress

Mo Brooks

Mo Brooks
Member of Congress

Tom McClintock

Tom McClintock
Member of Congress

Ralph Norman

Ralph Norman
Member of Congress

Mark Green

Mark Green, M.D.
Member of Congress

Matthew Rosendale, Sr.

Matthew Rosendale, Sr.
Member of Congress

Lance Gooden

Lance Gooden
Member of Congress

Russ Fulcher

Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress

Ronny Jackson

Ronny L. Jackson
Member of Congress

Jody Hice

Jody Hice
Member of Congress

Warren Davidson

Warren Davidson
Member of Congress

Jim Jordan

Jim Jordan
Member of Congress

David Schweikert

David Schweikert
Member of Congress