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October 11, 2007

Cosponsor the Earmark Reform Act of 2007

Current Cosponsors: Akin, Bachmann, Barrett, Bilbray, Bishop (UT), Blackburn, Chabot, Coble, Cole, Everett, Fallin, Feeney, Furtuño, Garrett, Hensarling, Sam Johnson, Kline, Kuhl, Linder, Miller (FL), Musgrave, Pitts, Poe, Ryan (WI), Shadegg, Walberg

Dear Republican Colleague:

Each of us is working to once again brand the Republican Party as the party of fiscal discipline, and help position us to regain the majority. To that end, I have introduced legislation that would place a cap on the total amount of discretionary spending that can be allocated to Congressional earmarks.

During Fiscal Year 2006, when Republicans controlled Congress, we saw the amount allocated for earmarks balloon to \$29 billion. H.R. 3738, the Earmark Reform Act of 2007, is a fiscally sound and realistic way in which we can reform the practice of earmarking. The bill limits the total amount allocated for earmarks to \$14.5 billion for the first year – half of the amount spent in FY06 – and limits the amount allocated for earmarks in each subsequent year to no more than 1% of discretionary spending.

Unfortunately, abuse has found its way into the system of Congressional earmarks, leaving a dark cloud over Congress. H.R. 3738 addresses this matter by equally dividing the amount allocated to Members of the House and Senate for earmarks. In the first year alone, Members would be allocated approximately \$27 million for important Member-driven initiatives in their districts. This bill also provides safeguards to allow Members to raise a point of order on earmarks that exceed a Member's allocated amount.

I understand that that there are Members of the Conference who choose not to make any project requests from the Appropriations Committee. For each of those Members, H.R. 3738 reduces their allocated amounts from the overall 302(a) amount given to the Appropriations Committee, thereby resulting in direct savings of taxpayer money.

I hope you will join me on this legislation, which I believe can help our party again carry the torch of fiscal discipline that will lead us back to the majority. If you have any questions about the bill or would like to become a cosponsor, please contact Michael Calvo in my office at 5-2931 or by email at michael.calvo@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Phil Gingrey".

Phil Gingrey, M.D.
Member of Congress