

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

November 18, 2008

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H 218, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert Byrd
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S 131, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Obey and Byrd:

As we are sure you are aware, on October 27, 2008 a jury found Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska guilty on federal corruption charges. These charges included failing to report gifts received from Bill Allen, the former chief executive officer and part-owner of the Alaska-based oil-and-gas services company VECO Corporation. Mr. Allen, along with VECO vice president and chief lobbyist Rick Smith, pled guilty to charges of bribery, extortion, and conspiracy in federal court early last year.

In spite of being the focus of a federal investigation and trial related to corruption, Senator Stevens was permitted to request earmarks in Congressional spending bills this year. In fact, the Senator received a total of 39 earmarks, worth nearly \$240 million, in the Fiscal Year 2009 Continuing Resolution. Worse yet, nearly all of the earmarks that Senator Stevens secured were defense earmarks that received scant scrutiny during the legislative process.

In light of Senator Stevens' conviction, we write to ask that you conduct a review of the earmarks received by the Senator before they are awarded. The convictions of former Congressmen Cunningham and Ney, as well as lobbyist Jack Abramoff, have illustrated how the earmark process can be abused and exploited for the personal benefit of others. Before taxpayers foot the bill for more than \$238 million in earmarks requested by Senator Stevens, we believe it is the duty of Congress to re-examine these earmarks and ensure that they were secured under a justifiable process and for legitimate purpose.

Given his recent conviction and the continued issues associated with abuses related to the earmark process, we urge you to halt funding for Senator Stevens' Fiscal Year 2009 earmarks until their appropriateness can be scrutinized. It is the least Congress can do in order to provide taxpayers with openness and transparency.

Sincerely,



JEFF FLAKE
Member of Congress



JOHN CAMPBELL
Member of Congress