

Waste Action Alert

A publication of the RSC Sunset Caucus from co-chairs Kevin Brady (R-TX) and Jason Chaffetz (R-UT)
Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH), RSC Chairman

Eliminate Congressional Earmarks

March 7, 2012

Program or Item Targeted: Congressional Earmarks.

Cost of Program or Item: In the last year that the House rules did not prohibit earmarks (FY 2009 alone), Citizens Against Government Waste found [\\$19.6 billion](#) of pork spending.

Background on Program or Item to Be Sunseted: Congressional earmarks are provisions within a bill (or entire bills themselves) which allocate funds for particular projects or organizations, usually in the Members' home district, other than through a statutory or administrative formula-driven or competitive award process. In November of 2010, House Republicans adopted a ban on earmarks in the 112th Congress. However, this ban only applied to the House for the 112th Congress, and is not a permanent ban.

Why This Item Is Wasteful: Earmarks are wasteful because they direct federal taxpayer dollars for specific home-district projects. Their existence contributed to the growth of the federal government by incentivizing Congressmen to allocate additional spending above and beyond what was strictly necessary. There is no better example of a practice in Washington that shows the American people that their elected Members of Congress are out of touch.

What is more, many Americans view earmarks as a symbol of wasteful and unnecessary government spending. As the Cato Institute's Daniel Mitchell [argued](#), "Earmarks are utterly corrupt. The fact that they are legal does not change the fact that they finance a racket featuring big payoffs to special interests, who give big fees to lobbyists (often former staffers and Members), who give big contributions to politicians. Everyone wins ... except taxpayers."

MEMBER ACTION ITEM: Rep. Jeff Flake has introduced H.R. 3707, the Earmark Elimination Act. This would provide a statutory-based permanent ban on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, and limited tariff benefits in the House of Representatives. It would do so by prohibiting the House from considering legislation containing such provisions, and by stripping these provisions from proposed legislation considered by the House. For more information or to cosponsor, please contact Chandler Morse at Chandler.Morse@mail.house.gov.

If you would like to participate in eliminating wasteful programs with the RSC Sunset Caucus, please e-mail Rick.Eberstadt@mail.house.gov.

Note: Not every item featured in the Waste Action Alerts is necessarily endorsed by the RSC. These Alerts highlight the individual initiatives of members of the RSC Sunset Caucus.

*"The RSC Sunset Caucus uncovers government waste and seeks to eliminate it,
working to sunset programs that taxpayers shouldn't be paying for."*

