



Don't put Homeland Security in the Hands of Lobbyists- Continue the Moratorium on DHS Earmarking

May 10, 2005

The Honorable Judd Gregg
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Gregg:

On behalf of the organizations signed below, we urge you to continue and formalize the moratorium on earmarking in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) appropriations bill. Though lawmakers have managed to slip a handful of earmarks into past DHS appropriations despite the moratorium, earmarking levels in DHS bills have been low in comparison to other bills, demonstrating the success of the ban. The Department of Homeland Security serves a critical role in the national defense of our country and as such, should retain the freedom to award funding based on pressing national security needs and on the merit of each project they oversee. Moreover, earmarking adds millions of dollars in spending to appropriations bills, an expense we can scarcely afford in the midst of our current fiscal challenges.

Congress provides an important oversight role in the appropriations process by adjusting overall funding levels for DHS activities and imposing reporting requirements on the department. However, when Congress plays favorites in allotting funds to particular projects, bypassing independent review by DHS, it runs the risk of playing politics with the defense of our country. Opening the DHS appropriations bill to congressional earmarking will release an onslaught of special-interest lobbyists and will result in legitimate security needs losing out to well-represented parochial concerns. Finally, prohibiting earmarking is just good fiscal sense; the moratorium cuts out the thousands of expensive congressional extras that tack on billions to the spending process every year.

Again, we strongly urge you to continue the ban on earmarking in the DHS appropriations bill and to formalize the ban so that Homeland Security spending will remain relatively earmark free for the foreseeable future. Matters of national defense should be decided on by trained experts charged with judging projects on their merits, not lobbyists looking for a buck. For more information please contact Austin Clemens at (202) 546-8500 x106 or austin@taxpayer.net, Pete Sepp at National Taxpayers Union at (703) 683-5700 or pressguy@ntu.org, or David Williams at Council for Citizens Against Government Waste at (202) 467-5400 or dwilliams@cagw.org.

Sincerely,

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