

## Principles of Earmark Reform

- 1) To cut the cord between earmarks and campaign contributions, Congress should limit earmarks directed to campaign contributors.
  - *Limiting total contributions from the earmark beneficiary and its affiliates to no more than \$5,000 would help restore public confidence.*
- 2) To eliminate any connection between legislation and campaign contributions, legislative staff should be barred from participating in fundraising activities.
  - *The attendance of legislative staff at fundraisers suggests a connection between campaign donations and earmarks. Further, it is awkward for staff members who might prefer to forgo such after-hours functions to decline to participate.*
- 3) To increase transparency, Congress should create a new database of all congressional earmarks.
  - *Information about lawmakers' earmark requests is scattered across hundreds of web sites in a variety of formats with differing levels of details. The funding levels for each earmark award are listed in a chart at the end of each spending bill. While the data is technically available, it is virtually impossible to collect, understand and analyze all of the earmark information. Congress should create a unified, searchable, sortable and downloadable database on a public website.*
- 4) To ensure taxpayer money has been spent appropriately, the Government Accountability Office should randomly audit earmarks.
  - *Because oversight is essential to maintaining integrity in the earmarking process, the Government Accountability Office should develop and implement a system to audit and report to Congress regularly on programs and projects funded through earmarks.*
- 5) To promote Congressional responsibility without stifling innovation, Members should certify earmark recipients are qualified to handle the project.
  - *Requiring certification would increase accountability for earmarks, insuring they are awarded responsibly and to entities with appropriate expertise and capability.*

**Melanie Sloan, Executive Director, *Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington*; Tom Schatz, President, *Citizens Against Government Waste*; Steve Ellis, Vice President, *Taxpayers for Common Sense*; Craig Holman, Legislative Representative, *Public Citizen*; Former Congressman James Walsh (R-NY), *K&L Gates*; Rich Gold, *Holland & Knight*; Manny Rouvelas, *K&L Gates*; Dave Wenhold, *Miller/ Wenhold* (Lobbying firms are listed for identification purposes only; the views expressed of the lobbyists included are their own and should not be attributed to their firms or clients)**