



TCS Earmark Reform Recommendations

Excerpted from: TCS FY2010 Earmark Analysis: Apples-to-Apples Increase in Earmark Totals
available [here](#)

We have made many strides in reforming the earmarking process over the last few years, but there is much more that needs to be done to democratize the budget and make the spending decisions of elected officials transparent and accountable to the American public.

For several years, TCS has made a series of consistent recommendations for reform. Most of the recommendations that appear below have appeared in our past calls for reform. As incremental reforms have been adopted—most notably the required disclosure of earmarks and the required disclosure of earmark requests on individual member sites—we have updated our recommendations for reform. We believe the following additional measures should be adopted to increase transparency and accountability of government spending:

1. Reduce the number and cost of earmarks and the types of projects eligible for earmark funding.

- ☐ Reduce earmark spending levels by 50 percent a year for the next 5 years.
- ☐ Disallow earmarks in competitive or merit based funding programs.
- ☐ Ban earmarks for private or for-profit entities.
- ☐ Establish earmark “term limits” – no project should be funded year after year through legislative earmarks.

2. Improve existing mechanisms for making the earmark system more transparent and accountable.

- ☐ One stop shopping: Centralize disclosure of all earmarks request and awards and provide data in a common format that can be downloaded, searched, and sorted. It is also critical that any user can tell the difference between requests submitted for consideration by members and those that actually end up as earmarks.
- ☐ Provide amplifying budgetary information on congressional earmarks, similar to what is provided with the President’s budget, including historical funding levels, economic analysis and justification, and descriptive information.
- ☐ Make all legislation (including earmarks) available for public review at least 72 hours in advance of floor consideration.
- ☐ Create viable enforcement mechanisms that enable members and the public to challenge compliance.

For more information contact Taxpayers for Common Sense at 202-546-8500 or visit us at www.taxpayer.net