

## Republicans Should Lead on Earmark Reform

Dear Republican Colleague:

According to today's *Congressional Quarterly*, the opposition is beginning to wake up to the political merits of a one-year moratorium on earmarks. Due to our actions, the Democrat Majority now feels pressure to act on earmark reform—they may be moving toward our idea in an attempt to project an aura of fiscal responsibility in an election year certain to be strongly defined by it.

If the Democrats impose such a year-long moratorium, we will commend them for adopting the right policy but it will certainly be a huge missed opportunity for Republicans. Rest assured that the party who acts first (regardless of whose idea it was) will be the party that receives credit for earmark reform, and as a result, the mantle of fiscal responsibility.

Furthermore, our Republican Presidential nominee is now determined. Senator McCain is focused on the issue of earmark reform and fiscal responsibility. He has pledged to veto any bill that reaches his desk containing earmarks. Our Republican Conference should work with him.

It is time to take meaningful steps to reclaim our rightful mantle of fiscal responsibility by owning the mantle of earmark reform. It is time to prove to the American people that we are faithful in the seemingly small things entrusted to us so that we might be given an opportunity once again to be faithful in the large things. In short, it is time to lead. And if we don't, the Democrats will.

Sincerely,

  
JEB HENSARLING  
Member of Congress

  
MARK KIRK  
Member of Congress

  
MIKE PENCE  
Member of Congress



## Pelosi May Trump GOP on Earmarks (Excerpts)

By Alan K. Ota, CQ Staff

House Democrats are discussing a plan to hijack a signature issue of the opposition party: earmarks.

Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer and senior Democratic aides said that Speaker Nancy Pelosi, other party leaders and their staffs were examining a moratorium on appropriations earmarks.

“I don’t know that that is going to happen. But we are discussing it,” said Hoyer, D-Md.

An earmark cutoff would be a dramatic change to business as usual. Incumbents would no longer be able to point to such directed spending to demonstrate a local benefit to sending them to Washington.

But it would also co-opt a GOP campaign theme and, despite the potential political handicap to Democratic incumbents, Pelosi is considering the move as a demonstration of fiscal responsibility...

### ...**Not Just for Republicans Anymore?**

Until recently, earmark moratorium talk came only from the Republican side of the aisle. Budget watchdog groups have noted that the number of earmarks grew exponentially while Republicans controlled Congress. The GOP leadership’s get-tough approach to earmarks is relatively new, and the party is still grappling with internal dissension over how far to go with it.

Conservative champions of the idea, such as Reps. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., and Jeb Hensarling, R-Texas, were joined in recent weeks by unlikely liberal allies such as Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Henry A. Waxman, D-Calif.

Waxman said he told the Democratic Caucus last month that it should get on the right side of the earmarking issue. “Earmarks are completely out of control. I told everyone that I thought Democrats ought to take the position of forgoing earmarks. I took that position for myself,” he said.

The idea of curbing earmarks has been strongly opposed by some senior Democratic appropriators, including Reps. John P. Murtha of Pennsylvania and James P. Moran of Virginia.