

Welcome to Russ Reid's third biweekly e-newsletter,

## Mark on Earmarks!

By: Mark McIntyre

As the saying goes, there are two things you should never watch being made: sausage and legislation. However, in recent years, earmarking has become the most pristine wing of the sausage factory.

Earmarking has become, arguably, the most open, transparent, accountable aspect of the entire federal legislative process.

As Jonathan Rauch argues in the National Journal, "earmark spending today is, if anything, more transparent, more accountable, and more promptly disclosed than is non-earmark spending."  
(Read the full article [here](#).)

In January 2007, the Congress passed several disclosure rules to make the earmarking process more transparent:

First, Members of Congress must put their names next to the earmarks they place in appropriations bills. Second, Members of Congress must provide a written statement describing the purpose of each earmark. Third, requests for earmarks must include certifications that the provisions will not benefit lawmakers or their spouses. Finally, the bills must be available to be read 48 hours before they are to be voted upon.

In 2009, the Congress passed additional reforms, requiring Members to post any earmark requests they make, regardless of whether those requests ultimately get funded. (This sequence of meaningful reforms prompted one senior appropriations staffer to tell me recently, "We've reformed the process more than any (earmark) opponent would have ever imagined.")

Each of these rules helps to ensure that the Congress invests our taxpayer dollars in worthy projects.

This level of transparency doesn't exist anywhere else in the legislative process. Can you imagine if Members of Congress publicly posted every policy recommendation... every tax break (or hike)... every regulatory reform they propose?

If the rest of the legislative process operated like the earmarking process, we might have better laws.

As it is now, the earmarking station is the cleanest part of the sausage factory.

**Next e-newsletter (May 18): I will discuss the importance of securing support letters.**

If you have a question about the appropriations process that you would like me to address in a future newsletter, or if you would like to learn more about how Russ Reid can help your organization secure significant federal funding through the appropriations process, please contact me via phone or e-mail at 202-912-8622 or [mark.mcintyre@russreid.com](mailto:mark.mcintyre@russreid.com).

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