

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

Mark on Earmarks!

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“Who are those guys?”

In the 1969 movie, “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid,” starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford, there is a classic sequence where Butch and Sundance are trying to evade capture by a posse of lawmen hired by the railroad company that the outlaws have made a living by robbing.

Despite using their best evasive maneuvers, Butch and Sundance simply cannot shake the posse. Each time the determined posse reappears on the horizon, Butch and Sundance turn to each other and ask, “Who are those guys?” with frustration and grudging admiration.

In the context of pursuing federal appropriations dollars, we want congressional staff to ask themselves the same question about our clients: “Who are those guys?”

The way to accomplish this is by securing excellent support letters. Ideally, these letters are signed by people who are respected by the congressional staff who receive them, such as:

- local elected officials
- community leaders
- corporate executives
- board members
- major donors to your organization

Letters of support show that a nonprofit's appropriations request enjoys significant regional backing. Therefore, when a Member of Congress and his/her staff review the request, they see it as a community-based request, rather than a request from a single entity.

Letters of support should highlight the same benefits of the project that you list on the appropriations request forms: job creation... improved quality of life... better education... improved infrastructure.

We've learned from both Members and staff that letters of support can distinguish appropriations requests, and lead to funding.

Indeed, you want to impress Members of Congress and their staff with quality support letters. You want your potential congressional champions to ask themselves, “Who are those guys?” In time, they'll know.

Next e-newsletter (June 1): I will examine the relationship between earmarks and the federal budget deficit.

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.

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