

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

## Mark on Earmarks!

By: Mark McIntyre

So, we've now established that [earmarks don't add a dime to the federal budget](#).

However, two key debates remain about earmarking:

First, who gets to spend our taxpayer dollars? Second, are earmarks wasteful?

Practically speaking, our Founding Fathers settled the first debate when they gave the Congress, not the executive, the sole power of the federal purse under Article I of our Constitution. (I'll weigh in on the second debate in a future newsletter.)

Presidents, OMB Directors, Cabinet secretaries and agency bureaucrats criticize earmarks because they limit their budgetary discretion.

Yet, as Jonathan Rauch argues in the [National Journal](#), "The Founders' notion was that accountability to local voters was the best safeguard for the people's money."

In spite of this fundamental principle, the executive branch has sought ways to increase its influence over the federal spending process.

Presidents from both political parties have requested the "line-item veto" to make unilateral cuts to federal spending. The Supreme Court has ruled the line-item veto unconstitutional.

President Obama recently asked Congress for "[rescission](#)" authority, an updated version of the line-item veto to propose cuts to earmarks and other spending. Yet, many Senators and Members of Congress are loath to cede their constitutional spending authority. As [Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia notes](#), "The elected representatives of the people know a lot better than any bureaucrat in Washington as to what are our spending priorities should be."

Amen.

**Next e-newsletter (June 29): Why the earmarking process can feel like a rollercoaster ride.**

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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