



**Rodney Alexander** / Louisiana's 5th District  
UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN

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## **Congress' Constitutional Right To Appropriate Funding Must Be Exercised With Integrity**

For four years now, I have served as a member of the House Appropriations Committee, and despite the scrutiny and false conceptions the word “earmark” conjures for some, I continue to regard my appointment as an opportunity to not only ensure the needs of the 5th Congressional District are represented in Congress but also as a duty to the American people to ensure the House committee responsibly exercises the power over appropriations granted to Congress by the U.S. Constitution.

Let no one forget that Congress' right to appropriate federal funding is exactly that – a Constitutional right. However, as with any right, it has the potential to be misused, and in recent years some members of Congress have abused this power.

Yet, to do away with this process because some in Congress have taken advantage of the system would be to abandon those we serve and also the purpose for which the appropriations process was established.

Rather than give up on a system that has proven to be effective when exercised correctly, Congress should do a better job of holding itself accountable and ensuring this right given to us by our forefathers upholds the standards they intended.

The resolution for the earmark debate should not be to obliterate the system but to reform it – to ensure all earmarks meet guidelines and regulations that will prevent misuse.

In the past, I have supported measures to reform the appropriations process, including voting for a moratorium on earmarks until proper reform is accomplished. I support reforms such as banning so-called “airdropped” earmarks that are slipped into bills after committee hearings.

As a member of the House committee, I have been dedicated to preserving the integrity and the efficacy of the federal appropriations process.

The federal funding I have secured for Louisiana has been for legitimate projects – projects that were requested by local officials or organizations such as mayors' offices,

chambers of commerce, universities, and the Corps. of Engineers.

As such, each project I have supported has been one that the people of Louisiana have stepped up and said: This is where we want our portion of our taxes returned so that our economy, our education system, and our health care can be improved.

They are also projects that have been openly debated in full committee hearings and have been printed in black and white.

I understand that Americans lost a great deal of trust in the system when some members of Congress were convicted of abuse of power. Punishment for these individuals is now being carried out, as it rightly should be.

What would not be right is to force the people of Louisiana and all other 49 states to share in their punishment by taking away a state and its representatives' right to have a say in how the people's taxes are spent.

**U.S. Rep. Rodney Alexander, R-Quitman, represents the 5th Congressional District and serves on the House Appropriations Committee and the House Budget Committee. He can be reached at the Monroe District Office (318-322-3500), the Alexandria District Office (318-445-0818) or Washington, D.C. (202-225-8490.) Visit Alexander's Web site at [www.house.gov/alexander](http://www.house.gov/alexander) or write him at 316 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.**

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