

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY:

Charting the Path to Earmark Reform



"The 'Bridge to Nowhere' was the straw that broke the camel's back. Adding more transparency and accountability to any spending process is a strong step to helping ensure that taxpayers' hard earned dollars are used effectively and appropriately."

**-Congressman Jack Kingston
First District of Georgia**

☑ BIPARTISAN AND BICAMERAL

There are two parties and two houses of Congress for a reason – H Con Res 263 is the **ONLY** bipartisan and bicameral proposal for earmark reform. It would create the Joint Select Committee on Earmark Reform composed of 16 members, evenly split between the House and Senate majority and minority parties charged answering the call for reform.

☑ COMPREHENSIVE

Earmarking is practiced by a variety of Congressional committees, the study will examine earmarking at all levels – authorizing, appropriation, tax and tariff measures.

☑ TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE

Earmark reform should not happen in smoke filled rooms – the committee would be required to hold at least five public hearings with earmark proponents and opponents represented. The committee would also be required to report back within six months – the time to act is NOW.

☑ EFFECTIVE

No earmarks may be considered while the committee conducts its investigation and reports back its recommendations for reform.

THE PATH TO REFORM

H CON RES 263 IDENTIFIES SEVERAL AREAS FOR REVIEW. IN ORDER FOR AN EFFECTIVE STUDY, ANY EARMARK REFORM PROPOSAL SHOULD ADDRESS:

- Existing earmark disclosure requirements and the existing definitions of earmarks

- Earmark transparency at all levels of the legislative process

- Evaluating requirements that Members be permitted to remove earmarks throughout the legislative process

- Evaluating requirements that earmarks be certified by bill sponsors and committee leadership

- Evaluating the Administration's earmark practices in their annual budget submissions

- Evaluating earmarking in amendments

- Considering whether new categories for earmarks should be established, possibly to include projects of national scope, military projects and local/provincial projects

Congressman Jack Kingston
First District of Georgia