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## **Nation's Largest Taxpayer Group Honors Rep. Cliff Stearns with "Taxpayers' Friend Award"**

WASHINGTON – Rep. Cliff Stearns (R-Sixth) today was recognized for his outstanding pro-taxpayer voting record last year. The 362,000-member National Taxpayers Union (NTU), a nonpartisan citizen group, has announced that Stearns is among only a few dozen 2008 "Taxpayers' Friend Award" recipients out of the entire House of Representatives and Senate.

"Given today's economic climate, fiscal discipline is more important now than ever," NTU President Duane Parde said. "Fortunately, taxpayers have a staunch ally in Cliff Stearns, to whom National Taxpayers Union is proud to present a 'Taxpayers' Friend Award.'"

The award is given to Representatives and Senators who achieve an "A" grade in NTU's annual Rating of Congress. The Rating, which is based on every roll call vote affecting fiscal policy, assigns a "Taxpayer Score" to each Member of Congress that indicates his or her support for reducing or controlling federal spending, taxes, debt, and regulation. For 2008, a total of 182 House and 104 Senate votes were selected.

"Stearns pro-taxpayer score of 82% percent was one of the best in the entire Congress," Parde said. "By voting time and again to reduce federal spending, taxes, and debt, Stearns has led by example in the fight to defend overburdened taxpayers across the country."

Between 2007 and 2008, the average "Taxpayer Score" in the House rose slightly from 35 percent to 36 percent. The Senate's average dropped by five points, from 37 percent to 32 percent. In 2008, 48 lawmakers attained scores sufficient to win the "Taxpayers' Friend Award" (at least 80 percent in the House and 76 percent in the Senate). Meanwhile, a record 267 Senators and Representatives captured the title of "Big Spender" for posting "F" grades (scores of 25 percent or less in the House and 14 percent or less in the Senate).

Unlike those of other organizations, NTU's annual Rating does not simplistically focus on only a handful of equally weighted "key votes." For this reason, it has received praise from lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, including the late Sen. (and "Golden Fleece Award" creator) William Proxmire (D-WI).

"If every Member of Congress were as principled as Cliff Stearns, current and future generations of Americans could enjoy much lower taxes and a less wasteful government," Parde concluded. "Hard-working families in Florida and across the nation owe Stearns a debt of gratitude for his effort on their behalf. Cliff Stearns has truly earned the title 'Taxpayers' Friend.'"

NTU is a nonpartisan, nonprofit citizen group founded in 1969 to work for lower taxes, smaller government, and economic freedom at all levels. *Note: The 2008 Rating and a searchable Rating database from 1992 to 2008 is available at [www.ntu.org](http://www.ntu.org). For questions about the Rating, its history, or methodology, please contact NTU Vice President for Policy and Communications Pete Sepp or NTU Communications Manager Natasha Altamirano at (703) 683-5700.*