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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

November 20, 2008

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The Honorable John Boehner
Republican Leader
The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Republican Leader Boehner:

I am contacting you regarding my interest in being considered for a seat on the House Appropriations Committee in the 111th Congress.

One of the major factors in our loss of the congressional majority in 2006 and subsequent losses this month is that House Republicans have made ourselves indistinguishable from Democrats on federal spending. Voters simply no longer associate us with limited government.

Earmarks make up a small fraction of the federal budget, but they receive an inordinate amount of public attention. It is difficult for Republicans to convince voters that we have turned a corner on spending if we continue to use the House Appropriations Committee as little more than a vehicle for securing earmarks.

With the executive and legislative branches under Democratic control, the primary focus of Republicans on the House Appropriations Committee needs to be the oversight of federal expenditures, rather than merely the dispensation of them.

As you know, as soon as a member of the Appropriations Committee accepts an earmark from the Committee, he or she essentially forfeits the opportunity to challenge other earmarks. Consequently, tens of thousands of earmarks are approved by the Appropriations Committee annually with minimal, if any, scrutiny. Wouldn't it make sense to have at least one member on the Committee who doesn't seek earmarks?

Thank you for consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Flake".

JEFF FLAKE
Member of Congress