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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

January 8, 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 the Republican vacancy on the House Appropriations Committee.

We all recognize that one of the major factors in the loss of our congressional majority was our failure to control spending. We simply didn't give the voters much reason to think that we still believed in limited government.

During the first session of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress, we Republicans started to regain our fiscal footing. With the help of the President, we were able to slow the growth of government to a rate not seen in recent years. We held firm on the overall spending amount, and the Democrats were forced to move in our direction.

But while our party has done a bit better in terms of the *level* of spending, we still have a huge credibility problem regarding the *type* of spending we're doing. For all the talk about earmark reform, by the end of the year Republicans requested and received nearly as many pork barrel projects as the Democrats. It's tough to argue that there is a real difference between the two parties on this issue.

Over the past few years I have offered nearly 100 amendments on the House floor to strike wasteful earmarks in appropriations bills, with very limited success. By the time these bills come to the House floor the die is pretty much cast.

This doesn't have to be the case at the committee level. There are currently 29 Republican slots on the Appropriations Committee. At present, all 29 Republicans participate to some degree or another in the earmarking process and are thus subject to logrolling. Consequently, far too little oversight occurs at the committee level.

Wouldn't it make sense to have at least one Republican member of the Appropriations committee who doesn't earmark?

You have often said that “we have to earn our majority back.” I agree. But I think we can all agree that earning our majority back is going to take more aggressive action on earmark reform than we took during the first session of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



JEFF FLAKE  
Member of Congress