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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

December 5, 2007

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The Honorable David Obey  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
H-218 Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

I am contacting you regarding recent media reports that have indicated your willingness to consider cutting earmarks in their entirety from the remaining 11 spending bills in order to reach a deal on discretionary spending reductions sought by the Administration. Simply put, I cannot overstate my support for this course of action and believe we have been presented with an opportunity to demonstrate that Congress is serious about fiscal discipline.

Based on information provided by Taxpayers for Common Sense, the appropriations bills yet to be signed into law this year contain at least \$3.3 billion in earmarks requested by Members of the House of Representatives. While this figure alone is considerably shy of the cuts necessary to reach the President's spending target, these spending reductions would be a step in the right direction, especially when combined with the previously proposed "split the difference" strategy. In addition to your efforts to lower the number of Member requests in the appropriations bills, eliminating earmarks from the remaining 2008 spending bills would send both the President and taxpayers a clear and impressive message of fiscal restraint.

Without such a bold move, both you and I know that it is likely that Congress stands a good chance of sending taxpayers the opposite message. It is my fear that, rather than tightening our belts and seeking ways to reduce spending, passage of a spending package prior to adjournment will be achieved by increased spending. Clearly, reducing wasteful spending on Congressional earmarks is a preferable strategy to tacking on billions of dollars in domestic spending to garner support.

Though our reasons may differ, you and I share a dislike for earmarks. I can see no more fitting an end to this year's appropriation process than ensuring their untimely demise and urge you to move in this direction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Flake".

JEFF FLAKE

Member of Congress