

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 580

Expressing opposition to congressional spending on earmarks.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 7, 2024

Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BRAUN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. LEE, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. PAUL, and Mr. DAINES) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Appropriations

RESOLUTION

Expressing opposition to congressional spending on earmarks.

Whereas fiscal year 2022 marked the return of “congressionally directed spending” and “community project funding”, also known as “earmarks”, after a 12-year hiatus;

Whereas the return of earmarks marked the return of lawmakers using their powers to circumvent the rules of the Senate in order to direct taxpayer dollars to wasteful projects;

Whereas, while Congress has the power of the purse, it must be prescriptive and effective in funding programs, projects, and activities of the Federal Government, which is now more than \$34,000,000,000,000 in debt, rather

than focus on funding earmarks that are wasteful in nature;

Whereas the 118th Congress has reinstited and embraced the wasteful practice of earmarking, as shown by the more than 5,000 requests for earmarks in the House of Representatives and the more than 19,000 requests for earmarks in the Senate for fiscal year 2024;

Whereas Congress has already dramatically increased earmarking since its return, increasing from \$9,000,000,000 for 4,970 earmarks passed in fiscal year 2022 to \$15,300,000,000 for 7,234 earmarks passed in fiscal year 2023;

Whereas the reckless, 1,653 page, \$1,700,000,000,000 Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law 117–328) enacted in December 2022, appropriated billions of dollars to earmarks even though the United States is more than \$34,000,000,000,000 in debt and experiencing the highest level of inflation seen in 40 years;

Whereas the massive, fiscal year 2023 omnibus spending bill included funding for earmarks, including \$3,600,000 for the Michelle Obama Trail in Georgia, \$2,500,000 for a Chinatown arts building in San Francisco, \$7,000,000 to fix staircases in the city of Pittsburgh, \$12,000,000 for a pedestrian walkway in Vermont, and \$3,000,000 for a theater and event space in Pennsylvania, in addition to other earmark projects such as botanical gardens in California, bike parking in Maryland, streetscaping in Connecticut, and a dance festival in Massachusetts;

Whereas the fiscal year 2024 minibus spending bill released on March 3, 2024, includes 605 pages of earmarks with 6,630 individual projects totaling \$12,700,000,000, in-

cluding \$3,500,000 for Michigan’s Thanksgiving Parade Foundation, \$1,000,000 for an environmental justice center in New York City, \$500,000 for gardens in San Francisco, \$4,000,000 for a waterfront walkway in New Jersey, theater and opera house renovations in Georgia and Pennsylvania, and city hall renovations in Washington and Rhode Island;

Whereas former Senator Tom Coburn condemned the use of earmarks as a “gateway drug to overspending” and former Senator John McCain called earmarks “the gateway drug to corruption and overspending in Washington”;

Whereas several former Members of Congress and lobbyists have been convicted of crimes related to earmarking;

Whereas it is crucial that Congress spend taxpayer dollars wisely and with the best return on investment, especially during times of historic inflation and Federal debt levels; and

Whereas Congress must stop this reckless Federal spending and corrupt political dealing, start paying down the debt of the United States, and get the United States back on track: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) condemns the use of “congressionally directed spending” and “community project funding”,
 3 known as “earmarks”, to direct and appropriate taxpayer dollars in any form;
 4
 5

1 (2) reaffirms the previous ban on the use of
2 earmarks and affirms to restore the ban perma-
3 nently and immediately; and

4 (3) affirms the need for Congress to reign in
5 overspending to help curb the inflation crisis that is
6 crippling the families of the United States.

○