



EARMARKS

“RESTORING EARMARKS IN TODAY’S CONGRESS WOULD BE LIKE OPENING A BAR TAB FOR A BUNCH OF RECOVERING ALCOHOLICS.”

**U.S. Senator Tom Coburn, 2014
The Wall Street Journal**

Democrats take every opportunity to spend your tax dollars. The GOP was supposed to know better.

Unfortunately, the first thing the GOP did after they took control of the U.S. House - before the new Congress was even sworn in - they held a secret vote on earmarks. Last December, 158 GOP members of Congress voted to include earmarks in the year-end omnibus spending bill.

House Republicans “opened the bar” for the spendaholics.

Those 158 secret-voting members caused **\$16,012,272,565 of your tax dollars** to be spent on **7,509 earmarks**.

Not only did those 158 members adopt earmarks, the Republicans spent more of your tax dollars than their Democratic earmarking colleagues.

In the fiscal year 2024 spending bills being debated this fall, the top 63 earmarkers in the U.S. House are Republicans. Eight of the top ten earmarkers in the U.S. Senate are Republicans.

The U.S. House has a bartender at the spendaholics earmark bar—**Rep. Kay Granger** (R-Texas). She chairs the Appropriations Committee that approves every one of those earmarks. **When she was elected to Congress in 1997, the federal debt was \$5.4 trillion.**

Here are a few examples of what these big spending members of Congress - in both parties - think is more important than the exploding federal debt.

Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) earmarked \$302 million last December and \$556 million stuffed inside the 2024 bills. Maine’s population is only about 1.3 million and Collins earmarked \$2,640 per family of four. When Collins was first elected in 1997, the federal debt was \$5.4 trillion.

If every member of Congress earmarked the same for each citizen in their state as Sen. Collins did, the total amount of earmarks would be \$220 billion!

Last December, **Senator Patrick Leahy** (D-Vermont) earmarked \$30 million to the University of Vermont Honors College. **In May, the trustees renamed the college after Leahy.** Leahy earmarked \$34 million into the international airport at Burlington. **In April, the city council renamed the airport after Leahy.** Senator Leahy’s pattern - getting his name on buildings using your tax dollars is more important than reducing the federal debt.

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When President George W. Bush took office, the federal debt was less than \$6 trillion—this after 225 years of wars, Depressions, etc. In the last 20+ years, the federal debt exploded, up nearly **six times to \$33 trillion—with no end in sight.** In fact, the exploding debt is accelerating.

THE REBIRTH OF EARMARKS IS A STATEMENT FAR MORE DEVASTATING THAN THE NUMBERS:

- **It is a statement of the culture within Congress.**
- **A culture that shows no respect for your tax dollars.**
- **No respect for the lurking danger the exploding federal debt poses for our country.**

IF OUR GREAT COUNTRY IS TO SURVIVE, THE CULTURE WILL HAVE TO CHANGE.

Voters need to hold their elected officials accountable for tax and spend decisions. OpenTheBooks.com gives them the tools to do just that.

Once the voters understand how much of their tax dollars are being wasted. Once elected officials know that, unlike the past, there is no place to hide financial irresponsibility, the culture within government will begin to change.

Doing so will not only work to diminish the federal debt, it will also make our government more effective, more efficient.

Transparency can transform how we govern ourselves.

We greatly appreciate all of your help. **Transparency has never been more important to the survival of our country as our founders envisioned it, as we have lived it.**



THOMAS W. SMITH
Chairman
OpenTheBooks.com



ADAM ANDRZEJEWSKI
CEO & Founder
OpenTheBooks.com

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