

WebMemo



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Congress Returns to Spending Bills Loaded With Pork

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Congress's pork gravy train rolls on despite promises to slow or stop it. As Congress returns to finish the final 11 appropriations bills for fiscal year 2007, it will take up House and Senate bills currently containing an estimated 10,000 pork projects, about as many as last year. Members of Congress should listen to the demands of frustrated voters and eliminate these projects.

Historically, Congress funded grant programs and then asked federal agencies, governors, and mayors to award the grants competitively to the most capable applicants. But over the past few years, Congress has increasingly bypassed such competition and selected (or "earmarked") grant recipients on its own, such as the Alabama Beef Connection and the Montana World Trade Center. No longer do grant seekers just submit persuasive grant proposals to unbiased agencies; today, they must play the Washington influence game and hire lobbyists to win federal funds.¹

Giving lawmakers their own pot of taxpayer dollars to distribute as they wish invites corruption. Not surprisingly, the media has been saturated with stories of lawmakers earmarking federal grants to projects directly benefiting campaign contributors, friends, relatives, and even themselves.

In addition to waste and corruption, lawmakers' obsession with pork raises a larger concern about the role of the federal government. Members of the U.S. Congress—a national legislature that has historically debated war, Americans' rights, and broad economic policy—have become, in the words of

Rep. Dan Lungren (R-CA), "mere errand boys for local government and constituents."²

This year, Congress did not address the looming spending tidal wave of Social Security and Medicare but did decide that State Street in Madison, Wisconsin, could use some upgrades. Congress did not pass comprehensive immigration legislation, but it did decide that the public swimming pool in Banning, California, could use another \$500,000 in renovations. Vital national issues go ignored by lawmakers who are instead focused on whether a certain intersection in Westchester County, New York, needs a traffic light.

Tending to such matters is why state and local governments exist. Perhaps Congress does not believe that local governments can handle the job; House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL) endorsed congressional pork by asking rhetorically, "Who knows best where to put a bridge or a highway or a red light in their district?"³ Not mayors or city councils, apparently.

Of course, lawmakers say these projects are vital to "bringing home federal dollars." In reality, earmarks are carved out of funding streams that were already coming back to state and local governments

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and local organizations anyway. All of the earmarks taken from the \$5 billion Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program for parks, pools, street signs, and community centers just reduce the pot of money left over to distribute to local governments for the projects they would choose, such as housing subsidies for poor families now stuck on the waiting list. But earmarks generate press releases and campaign contributions for lawmakers who have only tied strings to federal money that was already coming home.

A recent *Wall Street Journal* poll stated that voters' top domestic priority was banning pork projects, and the recent elections proved voters' contempt with business-as-usual in Washington. Congress should clean up waste and corruption by ending pork so that Members can focus on the vital national issues they were elected to address.

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1. See Ronald D. Utt, Ph.D., "Is Pork Barrel Spending Ready to Explode? The Anatomy of an Earmark," Heritage Foundation *Webmemo* No. 608, November 10, 2004, at www.heritage.org/Research/Budget/wm608.cfm.
 2. John Fund, "Time for a Time-Out?" *OpinionJournal.com*, September 18, 2006, at <http://www.opinionjournal.com/diary/?id=110008960>.
 3. Robert Novak, "Looking to Fry Pork," *The Washington Post*, January 30, 2006, p. A17.

Some of the Pork Projects in the Remaining FY 2007 Appropriations Bills

Chamber	Approps Bill	Amount	Project
House	TTHUD	\$500,000	Renovate the Public Pool in Banning, California
House	Labor-HHS	\$175,000	Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy
Senate	Agriculture	\$1,000,000	Mormon Cricket & Grasshopper Activities in Utah
Senate	TTHUD	\$800,000	National Women's Hall of Fame, Seneca Falls, New York
House	TTHUD	\$500,000	Traffic Calming, Windermere, Florida
House	Commerce	\$250,000	Montana World Trade Center
Senate	Labor-HHS	\$1,000,000	Clinton School of Public Service, Little Rock, Arkansas
House	Labor-HHS	\$75,000	ArtsQuest—The Banana Factory, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
House	TTHUD	\$700,000	Parking Lot Repairs, Asnuntuck Community College, Enfield, Connecticut
House	TTHUD	\$150,000	Mt. Zion Federal Credit Union, San Antonio, Texas
Senate	Commerce	\$575,000	Detroit Renaissance
House	Agriculture	\$365,156	Potato Breeding, Aberdeen, Idaho
Senate	Agriculture	\$842,000	Alabama Beef Connection
Senate	Agriculture	\$227,000	Dairy Education in Iowa
House	Agriculture	\$387,976	Manure Management Research, Ames, Iowa
House	TTHUD	\$400,000	Signal/Intersection Improvement, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Senate	Interior	\$250,000	Mother's Day Shrine Building, Grafton, West Virginia
Senate	Agriculture	\$591,000	Montana Sheep Institute
House	Agriculture	\$392,832	Citrus Waste Utilization, Winter Haven, Florida
House	Interior	\$250,000	Capitol Music Hall, West Virginia
Senate	Agriculture	\$573,000	Food Marketing Policy Center, Connecticut
Senate	DC	\$350,000	National Council of La Raza, Washington DC
House	TTHUD	\$250,000	Construction of a Park, Portland, Indiana
House	TTHUD	\$500,000	Intermodal Parking Garage, Fitchburg, Massachusetts
House	TTHUD	\$1,000,000	Xerox Area Road Improvements, Monroe County, New York
Senate	TTHUD	\$200,000	Tom Green County Library, Texas
Senate	Commerce	\$300,000	City of Columbus Train Depot
House	Agriculture	\$603,409	Pecan Scab Research, Byron, Georgia
Senate	Agriculture	\$587,000	Ohio-Israel Agriculture Initiative
Senate	Agriculture	\$6,371,000	Wood Utilization Research in 10 States
House	TTHUD	\$100,000	Signage & Streetscape Improvements, Fashion District Business Improvement District, Los Angeles, California
House	TTHUD	\$300,000	Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center, California
House	Commerce	\$750,000	Fairplex Trade & Conference Center
House	TTHUD	\$100,000	Convert the Coca-Cola Bottling Plant into a Culture & Arts Center, Romney, West Virginia
House	Labor-HHS	\$50,000	Documents & Artifacts Relating to the Public Service of Sens. Francis Case & George McGovern, George & Eleanor McGovern Library, Dakota Wesleyan University, Mitchell, South Dakota
Senate	Labor-HHS	\$250,000	Jazz Education Programs in Alaska Schools, Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, Washington, DC
Senate	Labor-HHS	\$250,000	Jazz at Lincoln Center, New York, New York
House	Labor-HHS	\$200,000	American Jazz Museum, Kansas City, Missouri
House	Labor-HHS	\$100,000	Toledo Jazz Society, Toledo, Ohio
House	Commerce	\$200,000	Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism
Senate	Agriculture	\$350,000	World Food Prize
House	Agriculture	\$628,843	Grape Genetics, Geneva, New York
Senate	Energy & Water	\$500,000	Green Shingle Initiative, Tennessee
Senate	TTHUD	\$2,500,000	Tongass Coast Aquarium, Ketchikan, Alaska
Senate	TTHUD	\$750,000	Repaving the Battleship New Jersey Access Road (Clinton Street), New Jersey
House	TTHUD	\$250,000	Paving of SD 34 East from Madison, South Dakota
House	Agriculture	\$3,743,014	Formosan Termite, New Orleans, Louisiana
House	TTHUD	\$150,000	Demolish an Abandoned Church in Raytown, Missouri
House	TTHUD	\$500,000	4th Street Underpass, Monroe, Louisiana
Senate	Energy & Water	\$1,750,000	Mine of the Future, New Mexico
Senate	Agriculture	\$198,000	Horn Fly Research, Alabama
House	TTHUD	\$250,000	Library Construction, Miami-Dade College, Florida
House	TTHUD	\$400,000	South Valley Community Dental, Albuquerque, New Mexico
House	TTHUD	\$450,000	Expansion of Southfield Road, Southfield, Michigan

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Some of the Pork Projects in the Remaining FY 2007 Appropriations Bills (continued)

Chamber	Approps Bill	Amount	Project
House	Labor-HHS	\$300,000	Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati, Ohio
House	Energy & Water	\$750,000	Sewer Project, Guernsey County, Ohio
House	Commerce	\$300,000	Bronx Council, to Market Local Business Arts Initiatives
Senate	TTHUD	\$800,000	Build a Cobb Performing Arts Centre, Cobb County, Georgia
Senate	TTHUD	\$200,000	Build a Downtown Parking Structure, Provo, Utah
House	Labor-HHS	\$200,000	National Teachers Hall of Fame, Emporia, Kansas
Senate	TTHUD	\$200,000	Daly Mansion Preservation Trust
Senate	Agriculture	\$232,000	National Wild Turkey Federation
House	Labor-HHS	\$300,000	American Ballet Theatre, New York, New York
House	Agriculture	\$1,913,866	Bovine Genetics, Beltsville, Maryland
Senate	Agriculture	\$495,000	Citrus Canker, Florida
House	Labor-HHS	\$150,000	Fair Play, Girl Scouts of the USA, Washington, DC
House	TTHUD	\$150,000	Greenpoint Manufacturing Design Center, Brooklyn, New York
House	TTHUD	\$1,500,000	Construction of the William Faulkner Museum, University of Mississippi
Senate	TTHUD	\$400,000	Four Bands Community Fund, Eagle Butte, South Dakota
Senate	DC	\$50,000	Youth Baseball Partnership with Payne Elementary School, Washington DC
Senate	Labor-HHS	\$200,000	Monterey Bay Aquarium, California
House	Interior	\$400,000	Tennessee Civil War Heritage Area
House	Commerce	\$150,000	Local Business requirements & Improvements, Arthur Avenue Retail Market
House	TTHUD	\$250,000	Construction of a Facility, Bogalusa, Louisiana
Senate	TTHUD	\$1,000,000	Port of Anchorage Road Improvements, Alaska
Senate	TTHUD	\$200,000	Hudson Valley Community College Model Automotive Dealership, Troy, New York
House	TTHUD	\$250,000	Renovate the Diamond Bar High School Community Sports Field, Diamond Bar, California
House	TTHUD	\$350,000	Streetscape Improvements & Off-Street Parking, Valdosta, Georgia
House	TTHUD	\$500,000	Bridgeview Bridge Bike Path, Michigan
House	Commerce	\$1,000,000	Southern & Eastern Kentucky Tourism Development Association
House	Labor-HHS	\$300,000	Play It Smart Program, National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame, Morristown, New Jersey
Senate	Labor-HHS	\$750,000	Ed Roberts Campus, Berkeley, California
Senate	TTHUD	\$200,000	Development of the Performing Arts Centre, Temple, Texas
House	Interior	\$75,000	Tom Custer House, North Carolina
Senate	Commerce	\$300,000	Central Alabama Woman's Business Center
House	TTHUD	\$400,000	Pedestrian Trail Extension, Hammond, Indiana
House	Interior	\$8,754,000	Water System, Death Valley National Park, California
House	Interior	\$100,000	Gold Bug/Meagher House, California
House	Labor-HHS	\$150,000	History Museum of East Otter Tail County, Perham, Minnesota
House	Commerce	\$50,000	Community Development, Out-of-Doors Program, Bronx, New York
House	Commerce	\$50,000	Economic & Community Development, Thorpe Family Residence, Bronx, New York
House	TTHUD	\$500,000	Renovate the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, Hyde Park, New York
House	TTHUD	\$500,000	Next Generation Hybrid Electric Transit Bus, Broome County, New York
House	TTHUD	\$100,000	MacArthur Park, Los Angeles, California
House	Labor-HHS	\$100,000	Youth For Tomorrow, Bristow, Virginia
House	Interior	\$200,000	Opera House Theater, Texas
House	Interior	\$250,000	Maverick Concert Hall, New York
House	Interior	\$100,000	Brown Mansion, Kansas
Senate	Labor-HHS	\$500,000	Sister to Sister—Everyone Has a Heart Foundation, Washington, DC
Senate	Labor-HHS	\$200,000	Western Folklife Center, Elko, Nevada
House	TTHUD	\$150,000	Brays Bayou Hike & Bike Trail, Houston, Texas
House	TTHUD	\$1,500,000	Sawyer County Airport, Wisconsin
House	TTHUD	\$500,000	Belleville Road & Ecorse Road Intersection, Michigan
House	TTHUD	\$250,000	Convert the Strand Theater Arts Center Into a Performing Arts Center, Plattsburgh, New York
House	TTHUD	\$500,000	WAMC Northeast Public Radio, Albany, New York
House	Interior	\$50,000	Spencer Ice Plant, West Virginia
House	Interior	\$200,000	W.A. Young & Son's Foundry, Pennsylvania
Senate	Interior	\$250,000	Forsyth, Georgia City Hall
House	Labor-HHS	\$100,000	Cyber Seniors, Detroit, Michigan for the ExperienceSeniorPower Program

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Some of the Pork Projects in the Remaining FY 2007 Appropriations Bills (continued)

Chamber	Approps Bill	Amount	Project
House	Labor-HHS	\$100,000	Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, Tri-County Educational Service Center, Wooster, Ohio
House	TTHUD	\$200,000	Buses, Gainesville Florida
House	TTHUD	\$180,000	Recreational Park Road, Kentucky
House	TTHUD	\$50,000	White Plains Youth Sports Complex, Calhoun County, Alabama
Senate	TTHUD	\$3,000,000	Carson City Freeway-Phase 2, Nevada
House	TTHUD	\$300,000	Pedestrian Walkway/Streetscaping, Ellenville, New York
Senate	TTHUD	\$200,000	Construct a Multi-Generational Recreation Facility in North Las Vegas, Nevada
House	TTHUD	\$200,000	Franklin Streetscape, West Virginia
Senate	Labor-HHS	\$140,000	Sports Done Right, University of Maine
House	TTHUD	\$3,225,000	Bus Replacement, Detroit, Michigan
Senate	Labor-HHS	\$250,000	Carnegie Hall, New York, New York
House	TTHUD	\$50,000	Field Improvements, Fairfax County, Virginia
House	TTHUD	\$400,000	Chassahowitzka Refuge Access Road Improvement, Florida
House	TTHUD	\$250,000	Alpine Traffic Relief Route Study in Texas
Senate	TTHUD	\$750,000	Acquisition of the Ward Cove Cannery Property, Craig, Alaska
Senate	TTHUD	\$200,000	Hawaii Nature Center, Honolulu, Hawaii
House	TTHUD	\$500,000	Rehabilitate Kapiolani Boulevard & Atkinson Drive, Hawaii
House	TTHUD	\$50,000	Community Theater Renovations, Lineville, Alabama
House	TTHUD	\$100,000	Industrial Park Development, Birmingham, Alabama
House	TTHUD	\$600,000	Isanti Bike Trail, Cambridge, Minnesota
House	TTHUD	\$150,000	12th & 14th Avenue Road Reconstruction, Madawaska, Maine
Senate	TTHUD	\$200,000	Stadium Theatre, Woonsocket, Rhode Island
House	TTHUD	\$250,000	Construct a Business School at Shenandoah University, Winchester, Virginia
House	TTHUD	\$1,500,000	Pinellas Bicycle Trail Extension, Florida
Senate	TTHUD	\$200,000	Historic Plaza Theatre, Laredo, Texas
House	TTHUD	\$1,000,000	State Street Improvements, Madison, Wisconsin
House	TTHUD	\$450,000	Regional Bus Replacement, San Diego County, California
House	Commerce	\$800,000	JARI for a Regional Business Incubator
Senate	Interior	\$250,000	Polish American Cultural Center, Pennsylvania
House	Labor-HHS	\$125,000	National Museum of Industrial History, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
House	Interior	\$150,000	John Henry Historical Park, West Virginia
House	TTHUD	\$1,000,000	Diley Road Improvements, Pickerington, Ohio
Senate	Agriculture	\$300,000	Medusahead Research, Burns, Oregon
House	TTHUD	\$400,000	Shaw Road Extension, Puyallup, Washington
House	Labor-HHS	\$100,000	Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, for its National Summer Teacher Institute
House	TTHUD	\$100,000	Community Center Construction, Marin County, California
House	Labor-HHS	\$300,000	Guam Memorial Hospital, Tamuning, Guam
House	Energy & Water	\$1,000,000	City of Orrville Water Main Replacement
House	TTHUD	\$800,000	Devils Lake Airport, North Dakota
Senate	Commerce	\$400,000	City of Pascagoula Economic Development
Senate	Interior	\$500,000	Beaver Creek Watershed Restoration Project, Knox County, Tennessee
Senate	TTHUD	\$200,000	Providence Performing Arts Center, Rhode Island
Senate	Agriculture	\$361,000	Center for Rural Studies, Vermont
House	Labor-HHS	\$650,000	Virtual Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Lubbock
Senate	Interior	\$150,000	Big Timber Carnegie Public Library, Montana
House	TTHUD	\$450,000	Demolition of a Structure in Fort Dodge, Iowa
House	Interior	\$450,000	Automobile National Heritage Area
House	TTHUD	\$1,700,000	Chesapeake & Delaware Canal Recreation Trail, Delaware
House	TTHUD	\$500,000	Construct a Multipurpose Athletic Facility at Crafton Hills College, Yucaupa, California
House	Labor-HHS	\$100,000	PRONTO of Long Island, Inc., Bayshore, New York
House	TTHUD	\$250,000	Ossian Park, Fairfax County, Virginia
Senate	Agriculture	\$150,000	Shellfish Genetics, Oregon State University
House	Commerce	\$350,000	National Center for Community Renewal
Senate	Interior	\$250,000	Grand Opera House, Iowa
House	Labor-HHS	\$75,000	"Building Foundations" Project, Women's Center of Beaver County, Pennsylvania
Senate	TTHUD	\$300,000	Reconstruction of the Robert Frost Farm, New Hampshire Department of Resources & Economic Development