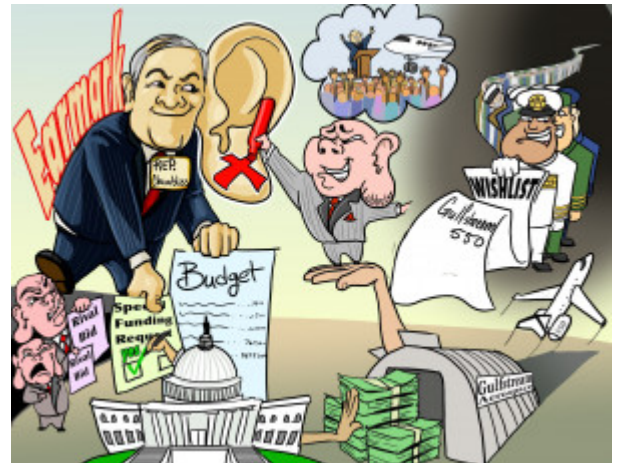


Earmarks

Earmarks are essentially wish lists that each government service puts out to cover all the extra spending they want, but can't afford once their annual budgets are set. These lists circulate and lobbyists use them to promote their clients' products. They try to influence the legislators where their goods will be manufactured. Once these congressional leaders are convinced to make an earmark, they don't have to consider cheaper, rival bids. These earmarks are then added to legislation, and voted on. Once passed, this leads to extra spending for a government service.



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Unfunded Request List

Wish list

Think of earmarks as unfunded request lists, or wish lists. For example, if the Navy requests a Gulfstream 550 jet, and it isn't funded by the government. They then make a "wish list" or set of earmarks, which then circulates amongst lobbyists. This is a backdoor way to get the Navy the goodies they wanted, but the government didn't initially approve.

Lobbyist

Lobe-ist

These unfunded request lists circulate amongst lobbyists on Capitol Hill. They scour these lists for their clients' products, and work with the companies to hit up the home state legislators where the goods will be manufactured. They help convince the legislator that this will help create jobs back home.

Not required to consider rival bids

Ignoring Rival Bid

After lobbying influences congressional spending, these legislators are not required to take a rival bid. For example, if a congressional leader wants to make an earmark for a new jet, he does not have to consider a cheaper alternative. He wants to create jobs back home, in Georgia, where the Gulfstream 550 is made, and a cheaper offer would not benefit him, or the lobbyist who influenced him.

Congress approves Budget

Congress checking Yes on Budget

These earmarks, once made by the legislators, are added to bills. For example, the Gulfstream 550 jet being added to a defense bill. Congress cannot vote on parts of the bill, but rather the whole bill. So when they pass the defense bill, any earmarks added also pass.

Federal Funds Allocated

Federal Check

After the passing of a bill with added earmarks, federal funds are then allocated. In the case of the Navy and their request for a Gulfstream 550, they took a backdoor method to get their request funded, despite the fact that their request was not funded initially.