

WASHINGTON, DC - Feb. 23, 2010 - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence released the following statement announcing he was extending his moratorium on requesting earmarks to include Fiscal Year 2011.

"For years, I have been advocating for a fundamental reform to the earmarking system in Congress. The American people deserve a transparent and accountable system that allows them to ensure their hard-earned tax dollars are being spent fairly and responsibly.

"When I decided two years ago to forgo requesting earmarks, I noted that there was too little accountability and too much waste in the earmarking process. Despite bipartisan calls for reform, that is still true today. Just this past December, Congress rushed through a bloated omnibus spending bill and defense spending bill containing thousands of earmarks totaling billions of dollars.

"The sad reality is that countless earmarks continue to be slipped into massive spending bills in the dead of night with little or no debate. Members of Congress still can request projects thousands of miles away from the area he or she represents. In fact, the earmark system of today bears a striking resemblance to the one that in recent years has been tied to numerous instances of waste and public corruption. Simply put, the way Congress spends the people's money remains broken.

"To be clear, not all earmarking is wrong. The U.S. Constitution specifically grants power to Congress to spend the people's money, but the current system is a far cry from what the Founding Fathers intended. Every earmark should be publicly accessible with enough time for a full examination by the Congress and more importantly, by the American people, before it is voted upon.

"Throughout my career in Congress, I have sought to meet the high ethical standards of transparency and accountability which Members of Congress are charged to uphold. I was one of the first in Congress to post appropriations requests on my website and I have never traded my vote for an earmark. For years, I have advocated for earmark reform and will continue to do so in an effort to end earmarking as we know it and overhaul a process that has become emblematic of a Congress that is out of touch and out of control.

"It is my hope that leaders on both sides of the aisle will come together in a bipartisan way to enact meaningful reforms that restore the integrity this system so badly needs and the American people deserve."