

By: Van Arsdale

H.C.R. No. 14

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, On November 20, 2004, the 108th United States
2 Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 -- a
3 \$388 billion omnibus spending bill containing 11,772 "special
4 projects," totaling nearly \$15.8 billion; traditionally referred
5 to as "pork barreling," this type of spending manifests itself as a
6 specific line item or earmarked appropriation that provides funds
7 for local improvements to ingratiate legislators with their
8 constituents; and

9 WHEREAS, The use of "pork barrel" spending has accelerated so
10 much in recent years that the number of earmarks doubled in five of
11 the 13 appropriations bills passed by Congress between fiscal years
12 1998 and 1999 and has continued unabated despite a total national
13 debt estimated to be over \$7.5 trillion as of December 2004; and

14 WHEREAS, In contrast to projects and priorities determined by
15 the states through comprehensive review and analysis, as well as
16 consultation with local officials, many congressional earmarks
17 tend to arise in the few weeks or months leading up to a bill's
18 enactment as votes are sought to ensure passage, with the result
19 that each project's financial needs and related costs tend to be
20 roughly estimated and, consequently, incorrect; these items
21 represent a federal rebuke of the priorities set by governors and
22 state legislatures far more familiar with the needs of their
23 constituencies, and should the trend continue, federal programs
24 will quickly approach the point at which a majority of spending in

1 critical government functions will be dedicated to only specific
2 projects in specific places; and

3 WHEREAS, Recognizing this danger and leading bipartisan
4 efforts to end "pork barrel" politics, U.S. Senator John McCain has
5 developed criteria to identify such unnecessary, low-priority, or
6 wasteful items in appropriations bills, including: (1) whether the
7 spending is not properly authorized by the Senate or not requested
8 by the Administration; (2) whether the spending is an unauthorized
9 and unrequested, locality-specific or facility-specific earmark;
10 (3) whether the item is a budget add-on that would be subject to a
11 budget point of order; or (4) whether the earmark consists of new
12 items added in conference committee that were never considered in
13 either bill in either chamber of Congress; and

14 WHEREAS, These issues can be resolved by amending Clause 7,
15 Section 9, Article I, United States Constitution, to eliminate
16 federal spending on budgetary earmarks not in the national
17 interest; such an amendment would result in more efficient use of
18 revenue and allow state governments to determine the best use of
19 funds to serve their constituents; now, therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas
21 hereby memorialize the United States Congress to propose and submit
22 to the states for ratification an amendment to the United States
23 Constitution to prohibit federal spending on budgetary earmarks not
24 in the national interest; and, be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
26 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
27 the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the

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1 senate of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the
2 Texas delegation to the congress, with the request that this
3 resolution be entered officially in the Congressional Record as a
4 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.