

# Stop Secrecy in Spending

## Oppose Section 193 of the FY08 Transportation Appropriations Bill Conference Report

November 15, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

We are concerned by a provision recently added to the Conference Report on the FY 2008 Transportation-HUD Appropriations bill which would undermine congressional budget oversight of the included agencies. The provision, Section 193 of the bill, would deny all congressional committees, except the appropriations committees, access to agency budget justifications for subsequent fiscal years until after May 31 on the legislative calendar.

This level of secrecy runs counter to the congressional oversight function and renders the budgeting process defined in the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 virtually meaningless. If the transportation authorizing committees and congressional budget committees are unable to consider agency budget justifications prior to May 31, they cannot realistically provide budget reviews and estimates six weeks after the President releases a budget request in February or pass a concurrent budget resolution before the April 15 deadline.

Moreover, this provision was added to the transportation appropriations bill after the bill had already reached conference committee, thus sidestepping normal legislative and amendment procedures. If enacted, the provision would become applicable to every subsequent fiscal year.

The House has already passed the conference committee language. It is now up to the Senate to take action by removing Section 193 from the final version of the bill and uphold congressional budget oversight.

Sincerely,

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