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WATCHDOG GROUPS URGE SENATORS TO OPPOSE BUDGET SECRECY

Washington, D.C. – Twelve non profit organizations concerned with oversight and transparency in government sent a letter to members of the United States Senate urging them to oppose an eleventh-hour secrecy provision added to the Conference Report on the FY 2008 Transportation-HUD Appropriations bill. The provision, cited as Section 193 in the bill, would severely limit the ability of congressional authorizing and budget committees to provide proper oversight in the federal budgeting process. The House already approved the conference committee version yesterday, and the Senate is set to vote on the legislation by the end of the week.

The provision, if passed, will have multiple implications – among them, curtailing the ability of lawmakers to restrain earmarks and their ability to abide by the Congressional Budget Act. It would deny congressional committees and potentially public access to the fiscal year budget justifications for the Department of Transportation, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and numerous independent agencies until after May 31st of each year. The House and Senate transportation appropriations committees would be the only committees allowed to view the budget justifications prior to that date.

In addition to the Project On Government, other groups signing the letter include National Legal and Policy Center (Ken Boehm, 703-237-1970); Government Accountability Project (Mark Cohen, 202-408-0034); Citizens Against Government Waste (Leslie Paige, 202-467-5334); Sunlight Foundation (Gabriela Schneider, 202-742-1520 ext 236); OpenTheGovernment.org (Patrice McDermott, 202-332-6736); Citizens for Responsibility & Ethics in Washington (Naomi Seligman Steiner, 202-408-5565); Americans for Prosperity Foundation; National Taxpayers Union (Pete Sepp, 703-683-5700); National Freedom of Information Coalition (Charles Davis, 573-882-5736); American Association of Law Libraries (Mary Alice Baish, 202-662-9200); and Freedom of Information Oklahoma (Joey Senat, 405-744-8277).

For addition sources: [link to letter and fact sheet](#)

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Founded in 1981, the Project On Government Oversight is an independent nonprofit which investigates and exposes corruption and other misconduct in order to achieve a more accountable federal government.