

WASHINGTON - Congressman Lee Terry today made the following comments regarding the attempt by Democratic Appropriations Chairman David Obey to keep earmarks from being challenged on the floor of the House of Representatives and earmarks requests secret until the end of the legislative process:

"Many of us went to the floor to protest the decision by Chairman Obey that committee staff members alone would be allowed to review and approve earmarks to be later added to spending bills already passed by the House of Representatives. Reforms from last year to bring more transparency to the process were ignored, and we went into the late hours Tuesday night challenging this and the fact that Chairman Obey would keep billions of dollars from the scrutiny of the House, media or public," Terry said. "Not only were we fighting uncontrolled spending increases proposed by the new Majority, but also the undisclosed earmark funds which simply did not match up with the pledges of openness and reform Speaker Pelosi promised the taxpayers last fall."

Last night, Democratic Leaders conceded that spending bills, including earmarks requests, must be vetted by the House committees with jurisdiction before they move forward to the full House of Representatives where again, earmarks will be fully disclosed and may be challenged by any Member. Two spending bills move forward today without earmarks: Homeland Security and Military Construction and Veterans.

