

ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

Majority (202) 225-5051
Minority (202) 225-5074

February 10, 2009

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
The Capitol, H-232
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

A report by Oversight and Government Reform Committee Republican staff has found – despite denials by the House Appropriations Committee – that Craig Obey, a lobbyist for the National Parks Conservation Association and son of Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey, led a successful lobbying campaign of his father’s committee to secure an earmark of more than \$2 billion for National Parks spending in H.R. 1. This earmark is more than twice the funding level for the National Park Service allocated in the Senate proposal and nearly equal to the entire annual budget for the National Parks Service.

While I am concerned that effectively doubling the budget for an agency such as the National Park Service will lead to waste and abuse and do little to stimulate the economy, I am much more concerned about the ongoing cover-up and false denials from the Appropriations Committee concerning the lobbying activities of Mr. Craig Obey as well as the non-transparent process used to craft this massive spending bill. Written primarily behind closed doors under your direction and that of Chairman Obey, this spending bill has made a mockery and undermined President Barack Obama’s pledge to create unprecedented levels of transparency and work with Republicans.

Two years ago, you pledged to “drain the swamp” in the House of Representatives and create the most ethical Congress in history. The secret lobbying of the Appropriations Committee by special interest groups and false denials by the Committee itself is yet another example showing that your ethics reform proposals have done little to create a culture of ethical conduct.

Considering that Craig Obey’s efforts to lobby his father’s committee have created the appearance of an ethical impropriety and the credibility of the Appropriations

Committee has been damaged by issuing a false denial about lobbying activities that clearly did occur, I ask that you take immediate action addressing the \$2.065 billion spending provision for the National Parks Service included in the version of H.R. 1 approved by the House of Representatives. Specifically, I ask that you direct Chairman Obey to accede to the lower funding allocation proposed by the Senate in any conference committee or negotiation. I am attaching an Oversight and Government Committee Staff Report that has examined the provision in H.R. 1 sought by the National Parks Conservation Association to aid you and your staff as you consider this request.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Darrell Issa", written in a cursive style.

Darrell Issa
Ranking Member

Enc.: Republican Staff Report