

Pork-barrel spending alive and well

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The Democrats in control of the U.S. Congress are slipping pet projects into big spending bills just like the Republicans used to.

"Meet the new boss, same as the old boss," Rep. Jeff Flake, R-Ariz., and a critic of so-called pork-barrel spending told the Los Angeles Times.

A new congressional rule this year requires pet projects, or earmarks, added to spending bills to have a sponsor's name attached to them. The lack of anonymity didn't keep pet projects out of the first big spending bill to come before Congress, a water authorization bill.

The Times reported the Senate version of the bill had 446 earmarks, while the House version had 692.

Steve Ellis, of the watchdog group Taxpayers for Common Sense, told the Times he thinks the new rules will eventually reduce the number of earmarks in spending bills.

"It's going to take a while before the greater transparency has a dampening effect on Congress' appetite for earmarks," he said. "Increased scrutiny is going to force members to be more responsible with taxpayer dollars."

Copyright © 2007, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Pork-barrel spending alive and well by UPI