

'Open' U.S. Congress not forthcoming

by UPI

WASHINGTON - Despite pledges of "openness and transparency" few members of the U.S. House of Representatives gave CNN a list of pet project funding requests.

The offices of 31 of 435 members of the House supplied a list of so-called earmark budget requests for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, the cable news network reported.

Sixty-eight representatives declined to provide a list of pet projects and 329 either didn't respond to the request or said they would provide the list later but didn't, CNN reported. Seven House members said they had no earmark requests.

"As long as we are not required to release them, we're not going to," Dan Turner, an aide to Rep. Jim McCrery, R-La., told CNN.

Democrats promised to bring openness to the budget process when they won control of the Congress last year.

"We will bring transparency and openness to the budget process and to the use of earmarks," Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said in December before she became speaker of the House.

"Their behavior isn't better than the last Congress and in some ways worse because they know they have those requests," Ryan Alexander, president of Taxpayers for Common Sense, told CNN.

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