

## Section 2: Congress

In FY 2010, the Legislative Branch received \$4.7 billion in discretionary funding, a six percent increase over last year's level. This amendment would rescind \$245 million, the full increase in funding given to Congress last year, funding it at last year's budget. In FY 2009, Congress gave itself a 10.9% increase over the FY 2008 level.

These budget increases for Congress far outpace family budgets of taxpayers across the national working hard to make ends meet, which did not see an increase in their annual budgets this year, due to the difficult economic times, increased taxes and government spending, and hundreds of thousands of lost jobs across the private sector.

Last year, Congress rushed to pass its own appropriations bill before sending any other spending bills to the President. Congress gave itself a six percent raise first before considering any other bills, and then months later, finally passed the Defense spending bill to fund the military and our troops stationed overseas.

The Legislative Branch appropriations bill included several dubious provisions, using taxpayer funding to pay for questionable initiatives, including the following.

- A \$200,000 earmark, requested (and given to himself) by the chairman of the Senate Leg Branch Appropriations Subcommittee, the earmark provides \$200,000 for the Durham Museum in Omaha, Nebraska for digitalization of materials related to the "development of Nebraska and the American West."
- \$500,000 for a pilot program for postcard mailings by senators "for the purpose of providing notice of a town meeting by a senator in a county at which the senator will personally attend." (\$5,000 per senator)
- \$125,000 for members and staff foreign travel, for the "domestic portion of transportation costs and travel expenses incurred by members and staff when engaged in authorized foreign travel."
- \$72,000 for the communications budget for leadership offices for "cell phones and mobile data devices."
- \$4 million for "Consultants" for the majority and minority leaders offices, Legislative Counsel, and the President Pro Tempore.
- \$950,000 for the Appropriations Committee for "administrative expenses," in addition to the \$15.8 million they received elsewhere in the bill.