

WASHINGTON – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) said that Members of the House and the American people are due an explanation from Speaker Nancy Pelosi on why the majority has done a sudden about-face on disclosing earmarks in spending bills.

In a speech Tuesday night during debate on the Homeland Security appropriations bill, Bachus requested that Speaker Pelosi appear to explain who made the decision to bring the first four spending bills to the floor without full disclosure of earmarks.

As of the release of this statement, Speaker Pelosi had not addressed why promises of disclosure and transparency made before and after last November's elections have not been kept.

A transcript of Congressman Bachus' remarks follows.

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Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I have a question I think the American people would like answered. It is a question that has not been asked tonight. We know Chairman *Obey*, and we know he has taken a position that he is not going to publish or disclose these earmarks. He has expressed his opinion.

What we don't know, Mr. Chairman, is, the Speaker is not sitting in the Chair and we don't know where the Speaker stands on this whole procedure. We do know that the majority leader said that all earmarks would be published, there would be complete transparency. We know that he said in committee they would be debated. We know that the Speaker on a number of occasions, I think we have all seen those quotes, we have heard a few tonight, the Speaker make it clear during the campaign and after the campaign that all earmarks would be disclosed prior to any vote on the House floor.

So, Mr. Chairman, I believe it is incumbent on the Speaker to come before this body and address the body and tell the body whether or not the procedure that we are witnessing, whether it is chairman of the Appropriations Committee has taken this on himself, whether he is doing it on his own accord, whether he has polled the Democrat Members to see where they stand.

But more important, we want to know where the Speaker stands. We want to know whether the Speaker consulted with the chairman, whether she has blessed this. We know what she said in USA Today. We know what she said in the Christian Science Monitor and what she said in a news conference just last month. We know that in a press conference on March 13, 2007, she specifically said that all earmarks would be made public before a vote on the House floor. We know that, so it is a mystery to us why we are going through this process.

Now, the chairman of the full committee said back in 1999 there was a bill, one bill, that the Republican majority did not publish the earmarks before the vote on the floor. We know that is part of his reason for doing this. But we also know that the Speaker of the House told the American people that this would never happen as long as she was Speaker. And she, as a late as a month ago, said there would be no votes on the House floor on an appropriations bill where earmarks were not published.

In fact, the gentleman from Illinois, the majority whip, says, if possible, we are going to put them on the Internet weeks before we vote on them on the House floor. They are not on the Internet. We don't know how many earmarks there will be, what earmarks are under consideration, the total amount of those earmarks.

But more importantly, we do know one thing, Mr. Chairman, we know that the Speaker of this House, the Speaker of this House said that this wouldn't happen. She said it many times on many occasions, both during the campaign when she asked the American people to turn the Republicans out and put the Democrats in.

And we know that from exit polls that many people went to the polls on election day with that promise in mind; and they voted for Democrats who now serve in this body under the assurance that this wouldn't happen, and it is happening.

Now, we know that the chairman of the full committee, we know his position. He said we just have to do. He talks about what we have done and what they have done. The important thing is the American people.

In fact, earlier tonight on one of the news network, it was not Fox, they asked: Where does Speaker *Pelosi* stand on this? The American people are asking, where does the leadership of the majority stand on this issue?

That is my question, Mr. Chairman. I would ask that before we proceed in this body, that the Speaker of this House come before this body and not tell, I don't care if she tells Republicans, I don't care if she further explains to Democrats, I want her to tell the American people why, only 3 weeks after promising that earmarks would be fully disclosed both in committee and on the floor of this House, that we backed away from this.