

# WisDems: Derrick Van Orden's hypocritical earmark reversal

Posted on Monday, May 8, 2023

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**MADISON, Wis.** — After railing against earmarks on the campaign trail as a practice which would “open the door for corruption,” Derrick Van Orden [backpedaled in recent weeks](#), requesting nearly \$73 million in federal spending for his district—more than the rest of the Wisconsin House delegation combined.

**Milwaukee Journal Sentinel:** [Candidate Derrick Van Orden said earmarks would ‘open the door to corruption.’ In Congress, he’s seeking \\$73 million](#)

On the campaign trail, Derrick Van Orden was critical of Democrats’ revival of earmarks and claimed the practice would “open the door for corruption.”

But now, in his first year in Congress, the Wisconsin Republican appears to have changed his mind on the federal spending lawmakers can direct to projects in their home districts. Van Orden last month requested just under \$73 million in earmarks — more than the rest of the state’s House delegation combined.

Democratic U.S. Reps. Gwen Moore and Mark Pocan requested \$33 million and \$24 million in earmarks, respectively. And Republican U.S. Rep. Scott Fitzgerald was the only other member of Wisconsin’s GOP delegation to file a request, which totaled about \$4 million.

Van Orden’s request came two years after he criticized Democrats for reinstituting earmarks when he was a candidate for the 3rd Congressional District seat that he won in 2022.

The earmark process, he told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel in a May 2021 statement, “is just another way for (Democrats) to continue to solidify power.” He

referenced his opponent, who announced his retirement later that year.

“Representative Ron Kind and others are strictly beholden to special interest groups who have funded them and this will open the door to corruption.”

Asked about Van Orden’s decision to request earmarks despite previously opposing their renewal, a spokeswoman for the freshman congressman pointed to new rules for earmarks put in place by Republicans earlier this year.

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Van Orden’s office did not detail specific changes made by Republicans this year that made the process more acceptable for the first-term lawmaker.