



## **Arsht Research on Ethics and Community Grant**

**Is the American Dream For Sale?**

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### **Abstract**

How rampant is corruption in the political process? Is the quid pro quo exchange of policy favors for money the exception, or is it the rule? Does the empirical evidence support the popular belief amongst the American public that politicians and lobbyists are dishonest and unethical? Our research agenda is aimed at better understanding the link between money and policy outcomes. At the heart of the analysis is a unique data set tracking the timing of political contributions by potential earmark recipients, and the progression of earmark requests through the US congressional budget process. By comparing the timing of individual political contributions over the course of a congressional budget cycle, we will determine how closely linked earmark success is to political contributions.

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