

# Pork barrel essay



Formerly known as the Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDA), the pork barrel is government spending for projects intended to benefit the constituents of the legislators. It has a noble intention but is at the same time an invitation to corruption. In fact, one may call it institutionalized corruption. Senators and Congressmen are given millions of Pesos as an automatic appropriation in the General Appropriations Act to implement projects that they think their constituents need only to have them pocket the amount given to them.

These amounts are lump sum and given even without proposed projects. This kind of pork barrel system puts all its faith in the Senators and Congressmen to actually do what they're supposed to do with the pork barrel given to them. I'm not saying all of the Senators and Congressmen are guilty of this crime but letting a crime happen is just as much a crime as committing it yourself. The pork barrel scam has opened many eyes to the reality of corruption which has resulted to taxpayers demanding explanations from the government.

So thank you Napoleons for this eye-opener! In light of the recent scam, many people think that abolishing the pork barrel system outright is a much better option than merely forming the system. At first, I was against abolishing the pork barrel system and was for its reformation. After all, it's a great way to get things done. Besides, they say that the pork barrel will never be abolished. It will just have a different name but substance wise, it is what it is – pork barrel.

I thought that the problem was with the execution and the accountability of the pork barrel. I thought that better monitoring, control and evaluation of the pork barrels would be enough to lessen corruption. But as I read different articles, my opinion changed. In the old system, the planning of the projects didn't necessarily come before the lawmakers receive their share of the pork barrel. It could happen after or even never.

But under the new system, lawmakers propose projects that can benefit their constituents which will be listed as line items under the national budget if approved. The approved line-item projects are then included in the budget of the implementing agency. This alone was enough to change my opinion about abolishing the pork barrel. I think that it is much more efficient and centralized rather than leaving it to the discretion of the lawmakers alone. Abolishing the pork barrel will also tend to discourage people from entering Philippine politics.

If you think about it, what traditional politicians are really after is the pork barrel. Why go into politics when higher remuneration is available elsewhere? This will thereby increase politicians who actually have the betterment of the Philippines in mind despite the lower pay. Of course this isn't an assurance as well but in my opinion, if there is no more pork barrel, there is lesser if not no incentive at all to run for office (other than the betterment and service of fellow Filipinos) Pork Barrel By darkened