Q29 – Name your U.S. representative.

DOUGLAS GINSBURG, Federal Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit:
You can find the name of your representative at House.gov. You may wonder, what exactly does a representative do?
The powers of the House are spelled out in the Constitution – at Article I, Section 8. To exercise these powers, representatives are assigned to committees that oversee areas of government policy, such as health, or education, or foreign affairs.

Representatives seek assignments to committees important to their district – such as the Agricultural Committee, for a member from a farming district.
Representatives also seek ways to spend federal dollars in their districts -- for a new post office for example. Then they can brag about that spending when they run for re-election. Members of Congress call that kind of spending earmarks: routing federal dollars to pet projects. Critics call it pork.
Notorious examples are the “bridge to nowhere” in Alaska – and an indoor rainforest in Iowa.
Critics of chasing pork also argue that it distracts members from what they were sent to Washington to do: govern for the good of the nation – not just for the benefit of their constituents.