

STEPHEN C. ELLIS

Taxpayers for Common Sense

Profile

Steve Ellis has thirty-five years of on-the-water, policy, and advocacy experience, has testified before numerous congressional committees, and has appeared on local and national network news, including ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Bloomberg, Fox, MSNBC, PBS, Live Now, and NPR. As President of Taxpayers for Common Sense, Ellis directs the organization, raises the budget, oversees programs and serves as the lead media and legislative spokesperson. Ellis served as an officer in the Coast Guard for six years before working in non-profit advocacy.

Experience

President

October 1999 – present

TAXPAYERS FOR COMMON SENSE (TCS)

Leads a three-decade old national, non-partisan budget watchdog organization managing staff and day-to-day operations, working to stop more than \$1 billion of wasteful government spending annually. Sets policy and serves as spokesman to media, Congress, Executive Branch, public and funders. Provides Congressional testimony, produces reports on a variety of subjects. Key organization expert in budget and tax, national security, earmarks, agriculture, water resources, insurance, government operations, and waste and fields.

- Successfully raised millions of dollars in charitable contributions to fund the organization and staff of ten.
- Led efforts to database and publish thousands of earmarked projects and programs across the federal budget. Unprecedented effort included analysis and additional research. Lead to hundreds of earned media stories, reforms and finally a moratorium on earmarks six years after first annual release.
- Lead spokesman for organization. Opined on far ranging issues and architect of organization message and identity. Regular appearances in all national broadcast and print media outlets. Known to be able explain complicated budget issues in a straightforward manner.
- Direct organization's annual efforts to analyze President's budget request, Congressional budget resolution and appropriations legislation.
- Testified before eleven different Congressional committees, more than twenty different times. Issues ranged from: earmarks and budget policy; national security project spending; waste in federal budget; insurance programs; agricultural programs; Iraq and Hurricane Katrina-related emergency spending; disaster policy and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers programs; Environmental Protection Agency grants and Department of Interior programs and policies.
- Drove organization efforts to create a water program that grew to four people (one-third of organization staff) working on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, FEMA, NRCS, and Bureau of Reclamation issues. TCS retains a strong presence in the water arena.
- Built a sustainably funded ongoing program to oversee federal agriculture policy programs through five five-year farm bill cycles. Led agriculture program until effectively training new lead to takeover.
- Named "Top Lobbyist" by the *The Hill* newspaper for more than a decade.
- Frequently-requested speaker at events from a senior center to large conference of insurance industry professionals to Brookings Institution event on tax expenditures.

Coastal Program Coordinator

January 1999 – September 1999

COAST ALLIANCE

Managed organization's coastal activities, serving as a media spokesperson, legislative analyst and advocate. Worked closely with member groups on preserving Reagan-era Coast Barrier Resources System denying federal development subsidies high risk, sensitive undeveloped coastal barrier islands and developed a multi-faceted campaign to stop expansion of port dredging subsidies. Served as representative to federal-private Marine Transportation System Task Force.

Campaign Coordinator**August 1997 – December 1998****AMERICAN RIVERS**

Built coalition of local, regional and national organizations concerned with Mississippi River to reauthorize key federal restoration program. Worked with 58 riverfront mayors to obtain American Heritage River designation for the Upper Mississippi. Key media and legislative spokesman on Mississippi River, floodplain and flood insurance issues.

Planning Coordinator**July 1993 – June 1997****U.S. COAST GUARD**

Conducted planning review of all facility change and construction projects for more than 75 facilities and 40 ships nationwide. Supervised four vessel construction project; served as Contracting Officer's Technical Representative; managed contract through delivery of first two boats – on time, under budget. Managed project with high level of congressional interest; crafted Coast Guard position, conducted site visits and interagency discussion, briefed and negotiated position with congressional staff; obtained funding for new vessel, personnel, facility construction and operation of new unit. Member of rapid response team that devised options and plans for new facility in St. Louis area after 1993 floods.

Department Head/Vessel Operator**June 1991 – June 1993****USCGC SORREL (WLB-296)**

Managed Deck Department and staff of fifteen. Ensured upkeep of ship, supervised several panels and boards, and maintained all classified information and weapons. Operated ship in high volume traffic area, New York Harbor and environs.

Education and Honors

B.S., U.S. Coast Guard Academy – 1991

Coast Guard Commendation Medal – 1997

Coast Guard Achievement Medal – 1996

Top Lobbyist – *The Hill* newspaper

Financial Services Volunteer Corps Volunteer Budget Transparency Expert – Angola 2016, Moldova 2018