Dicks Announces Retirement

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : March 2, 2012 at 9:00 am

OLYMPIA, Wash. - Washington Democratic Rep. Norm Dicks, top Democrat on the influential House Appropriations Committee, announced Friday he'll retire at the end of the year after 18 terms in the House.Dicks says he and his wife have decided to "change gears and enjoy life at a different pace."

The 71-year-old lawmaker has a reputation as a staunch advocate of the Pentagon and is a defender of Boeing Co. and its unionized workforce. The company employs thousands of people in his district.

Dicks took over as senior Democrat on the appropriations committee last year and fought vigorously to block Republicans from using annual spending bills to attack the Obama administration on the environment, labor and energy.

Over the years, Dicks has been skilled at "earmarking" pet projects like roads and community development grants to his northwest portion of the state. But Republicans controlling the House have banned the practice, much to the disappointment of lawmakers on the spending panel who had controlled earmarks and awarded themselves an outsized share.

Dicks earned a reputation over the years as an inside player, popular with Democrats and Republicans alike on the clubby panel. "I have rarely had the chance to work with someone of his decency, strong work ethic, jovial character, and honesty," said Rep. Harold Rogers, R-Ky. "Norm has never hesitated to work together to maintain the comity and spirit of bipartisanship that is the hallmark of the appropriations committee."

He said in a statement that he's particularly proud of the work he's done to protect the waters of Puget Sound and Hood Canal and help restore the downtowns of Tacoma and Bremerton, the main cities in his district.