

# Reps. Udall, Musgrave display rare bipartisanship

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They didn't play the theme music to *The Odd Couple* upon entering the room at the state Capitol on Thursday morning, and when the lawmakers shook hands it didn't create an irreparable rip in the space-time continuum.

In fact, U.S. Rep. Mark Udall, D-Eldorado Springs, and U.S. Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, R-Fort Morgan, actually appeared to get along — to enjoy each other's company, to joke with each other.

And agreeing on legislation, too? Holy bipartisanship!

"It's a Colorado delegation quality that we work together," Musgrave said.

Both showed up to promote legislation in the House of Representatives that would essentially work like the line-item veto asked for by

President Bush during his State of the Union address last month.

They agreed that the federal deficit is out of control, and said they believe this proposal is the best way to stop politicians from stuffing last-minute bills with superfluous spending items.

Those bills, Musgrave said, come in at the last minute and often contain funding for things such as the Cowgirl Hall of Fame or building a rain forest in Iowa. Both agreed that the omnibus spending bills are so big that they often can't read all the text before voting.

"That's a novel idea," Udall said



**Udall helped promote legislation similar to the line-item veto.**



**Musgrave, "It's a Colorado delegation quality that we work together"**

about the whole read-it-before-you-vote-it concept.

The duo took turns speaking at the podium, with Udall going first.

Surely that would result in partisan charges from Musgrave that it was unfair that he got to talk first.

It didn't.

Udall said the debt is strangling

the country, and Musgrave nodded her head in agreement. When he said much of the debt is held by foreign governments — namely China — she didn't argue.

When it was Musgrave's turn, a similar dynamic took place. She said lawmakers should be forced to

defend their own spending proposals before a budget vote. She likened the process to a "peer review" before items could slip into the spending bills.

Musgrave thinks now is a good time to make this proposal. Udall agreed.

"I would call on my party to lead," Musgrave said, explaining how Republicans control both the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. "We need to be very serious about deficit reduction."

Both are up for re-election this year. Neither of them was troubled by the video and photographic evidence that would emerge from their joint appearance at the Capitol. Udall said he used to represent residents in Longmont before a redistricting line carved that piece out for Musgrave.

"They're used to seeing us," he said.