

Murphy Supports Renewed Investment in Community Programs, Historic Increase for the Neediest Students

Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) supported legislation, the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill (Labor-HHS), which provides for the future of northwest Connecticut by reinvesting in education, Community Services Block Grants, economic development, and healthcare for the uninsured.

Contact: Kristen Bossi
(202) 225-4476

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) supported legislation, the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill (Labor-HHS), which provides for the future of northwest Connecticut by reinvesting in education, Community Services Block Grants, economic development, and healthcare for the uninsured. In particular, the bill includes \$1.9 billion over the 2007 level for Title I, the largest increase in the history of this education program which provides for the neediest students. This investment could give an additional 161,000 low-income children nationwide extra help with reading and math.

"After years and years of Republican neglect, the federal programs that hold our communities together are finally being given the attention they deserve. For education, health care, and job training, it's a new day in Washington," said Murphy.

The Labor-HHS appropriations bill that the House of Representatives passed today rejects the President's proposal to cut programs and adds \$7.6 billion above last year's levels. Before these programs receive increased funding, the Senate must pass their Labor-HHS appropriations bill, the two bills must be reconciled in a conference, and the President must sign it.

The bill increases the maximum Pell Grant by \$390, which is on top of an increase of \$260 enacted in February. If signed by the President, the maximum Pell Grant could be raised from \$4,050 to \$4,700 in two years, which could help as many as 39,000 students in Connecticut.

Murphy's vote today also secures a \$2 billion increase in the federal government's investment in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). NCLB has been shortchanged since it was passed, creating a mandate on states to implement the law without the tools to accomplish its goals. The bill also invests in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to reverse a two-year decline in the federal contribution toward the rising costs of special education, increases grants for improving teacher quality, and increases access to after-school programs, which could benefit an additional 163,000 students.

With 46.6 million Americans without health insurance, Murphy and his colleagues supported funding several initiatives that could open the door to healthcare for more than 2 million people. For example, the bill provides 10 percent more than the President's request for community health centers – with this increase, these centers could serve an additional 1 million uninsured Americans. And the bill invests in life-saving medical research by increasing National Institutes of Health funding by \$1 billion over the President's request.

In response to the President's proposal to eliminate the Community Services Block Grant, which local communities use to help low-income families with child care, job training, and nutrition, the House passed an investment of \$660 million for these families.

Job training is also vitally important to the Fifth District of Connecticut. This bill rejects the President's proposal to cut dislocated worker training and Job Corps, a successful program which gives intensive training and job placement help for at-risk youth. This bill will keep 4,310 Job Corps training slots.

"The programs funded in this bill are what people back in Connecticut care about. When I am meeting with constituents in my office or outside of supermarkets, they tell me they want to invest in our future. The education and community programs we are investing in today will make a difference for these families," said Murphy.

The bill also includes funding for projects that Murphy requested. The following projects may receive funding once the Senate passes their Labor-HHS appropriations bill, the two bills are reconciled in a conference, and the President signs the bill.

- Family Children's Aid of Danbury - \$250,000 to construct "Harmony House" to provide outpatient clinical services to support children in foster homes.
- City of Waterbury - \$200,000 to expand programming that provides quality medical care to uninsured low-income individuals in the Waterbury area.
- Prime Time House in Torrington - \$125,000 to expand programs which assist adults with serious mental illness find pathways back to independence and recovery.
- Family Services of Greater Waterbury - \$125,000 to support their efforts to expand the Outpatient Counseling/Psychiatric services to more uninsured and underinsured children and families.
- Greater New Britain Teen Pregnancy Prevention - \$125,000 to assist Pathways/ Senderos in helping low-income, primarily Hispanic, families in New Britain, CT to improve high school outcomes, go to college, gain valuable job skills, and avoid teen pregnancy through a successful youth development model and teen pregnancy prevention program.
#