

Murphy Announces New Bipartisan Congressional Group to Promote Buy American Effort to Grow Jobs

Congressman Chris Murphy's (CT-5) effort to fix the country's "Buy American" laws and keep jobs here at home recently took another step as he and Republican Congressman Walter B. Jones (NC-3) founded the Congressional Buy American Caucus.

April 21, 2010

Contact: Kristen Bossi

(202) 225-4476

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Chris Murphy's (CT-5) effort to fix the country's "Buy American" laws and keep jobs here at home recently took another step as he and Republican Congressman Walter B. Jones (NC-3) founded the Congressional Buy American Caucus. The two representatives will serve as co-chairs of the Caucus, which aims to strengthen laws that require the federal government to make buying American-made products a priority.

"Our national manufacturing downturn isn't a Republican or Democratic crisis - it affects communities across the country. This new group will work to fix decades-old laws so that we're not sending American tax dollars overseas in the midst of an unemployment crisis here at home," said Murphy.

Murphy and Jones believe the federal government has not done enough to enforce and update the Buy American Act, which governs federal procurement and has been on the books for over 75 years. Members of the Buy American Caucus will work together to achieve bipartisan consensus on how to strengthen those laws in order to boost manufacturing job creation in Connecticut and across the country.

Murphy has introduced legislation in Congress, the 21st Century Buy American Act, to require that American taxpayer dollars be spent to buy products from American manufacturers. Right now, the laws are full of loopholes that allow agencies like the Department of Defense (DoD) to waive requirements to spend tax dollars at home for a variety of reasons. In 2007, the DoD granted 14,159 waivers worth more than \$5.7 billion in taxpayer dollars. In the same year, Connecticut lost over 3,000 manufacturing jobs.

Murphy's bill will:

- Require federal agencies, for the first time, to give a leg-up to bidders for federal contracts that commit to building a large portion of the purchased product here in the United States;

- Provide assistance to American companies who are the sole supplier to the federal government of a particular product to make sure they can stay in business;

- Increase the minimum percentage of a product that must be made in the U.S. from 50% to 60%; and

- Mandate that agencies report, in a public database, what waivers of the domestic sourcing laws they have issued so that American manufacturers have the information necessary to compete for those contracts.

"My hope is that this bipartisan group will not only boost our manufacturing sector, but also show people that for all the acrimony they hear about in Washington, we can put politics aside and work together to move our country forward," said Murphy.

###