

Murphy Secures Victory on Buy American Effort

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Contact: Kristen Bossi

(202) 225-4476

WASHINGTON, D.C. - In his ongoing effort to require that American taxpayer dollars be spent to purchase products from domestic manufacturers, Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) today won passage of three key amendments to a defense budget bill to close loopholes in the nation's Buy American laws.

"Our manufacturers are getting killed in this economy, and the federal government is part of the problem. My focus is simple - by spending more of our existing authorized defense dollars here in America, we can help rebuild our domestic industrial economy without spending any additional federal money," said Murphy.

Murphy, co-chair of the bi-partisan Buy America Caucus, has been pushing for months for changes in the way federal agencies spend tax dollars. The federal "Buy American" laws, which generally require that 50% of federal purchasing dollars be spent on U.S. goods, 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 2008, the Bush Administration allowed 65,000 waivers to the nation's Buy American laws - a 450% increase over the previous year - shipping millions of American tax dollars overseas and affecting thousands of manufacturing jobs in the U.S. In 2007 alone, Connecticut lost 3,000 manufacturing jobs. In recent months, Murphy has visited small businesses in Burlington, Meriden, New Britain, and Waterbury that could benefit from more stringent Buy American policies.

Murphy's three amendments, offered during debate on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011, include:

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An amendment to require the DoD to solicit bids from domestic suppliers when procuring supplies for use outside of the United States (currently, supplies used outside of the U.S. are exempt from Buy American laws);

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An amendment to require the Department of Defense to include in its yearly assessment of waivers granted under the Buy American Act an analysis of the domestic capacity to supply the items procured from overseas and an analysis of the reasons for the yearly increase or decrease in Buy American waivers granted; and

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An amendment to force DoD to force the Department to consider the impact on U.S. jobs of granting waivers to Buy America laws.

"The eighty thousand Buy American waivers the Bush Administration granted on its way out the door begin to explain why this country has been bleeding millions of manufacturing jobs. We've got to stop this trend and refocus on spending tax dollars here at home to bring some of those jobs back to Connecticut and other parts of the country," said Murphy.

Murphy has also introduced legislation, the 21st Century Buy American Act, to further strengthen these laws. He co-chairs the Buy American Caucus with Republican Congressman Walter B. Jones (NC-3).

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